

# **EDUDOC SERVICES: BOOK REVIEWS**



## **Book Reviews**

**May - 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 **May, 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**

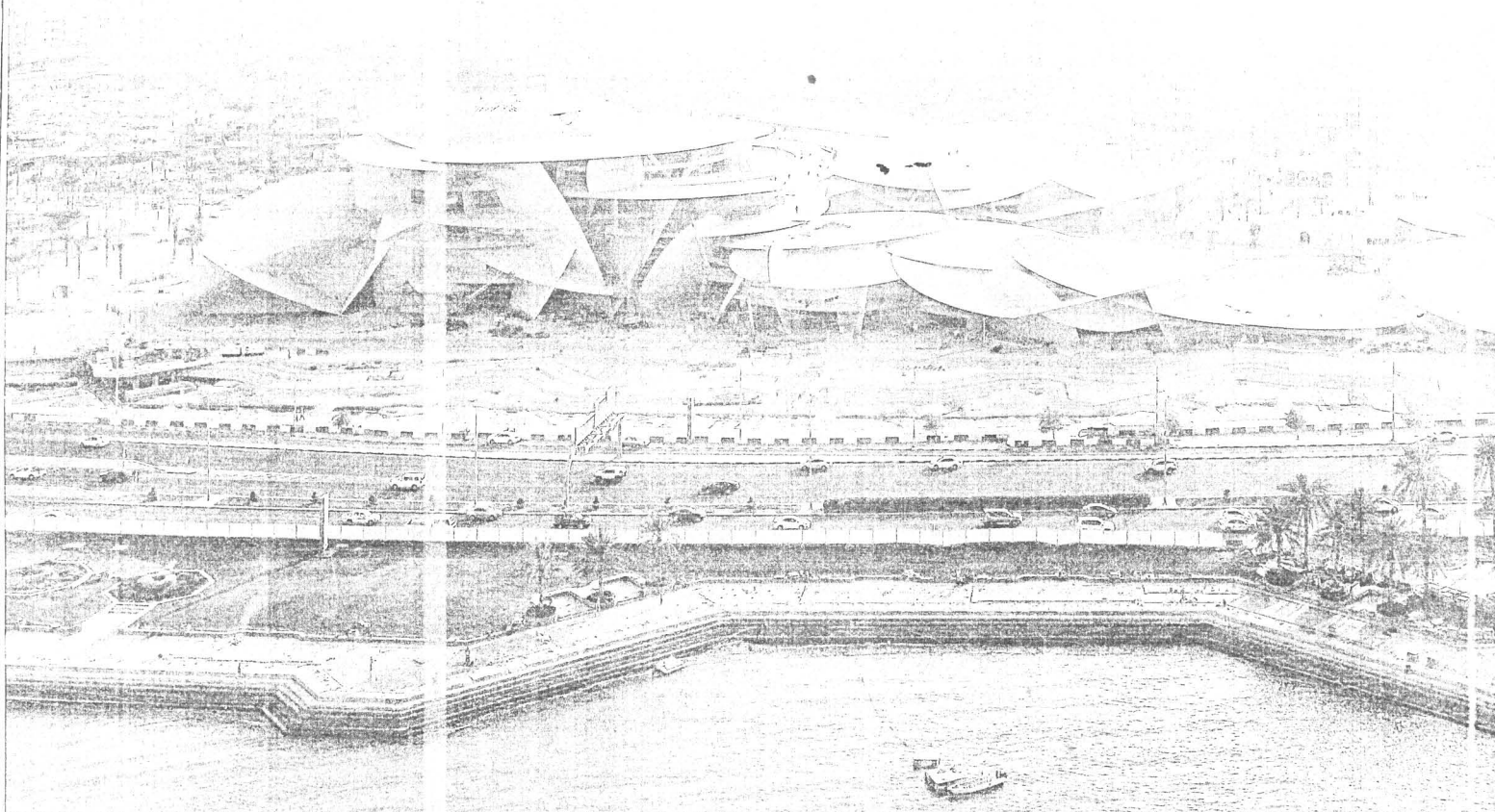
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## ARTS AND CULTURE

## Qatar looks to the future

The Gulf nation's new museum celebrates the country's biodiversity, cultural heritage, and what's to come

By **Becky Cramer**

The small desert nation of Qatar underwent a crisis on 5 June 2017. Neighboring countries imposed a blockade that turned it into a virtual island, surrounded on three sides by water and on one side by hostile territory, isolating it politically and eliminating the transport lines that previously supplied 80% of its food. Qatar's response has been to develop domestic resources and consolidate its national identity. The 28 March opening of the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) in the capital city, Doha,

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served as a defiant celebration of that identity as an open Muslim society.

Designed by world-renowned architect Jean Nouvel, the stunning building that houses the NMoQ is convincingly modeled after the desert rose, a fantastically shaped mineral. Enormous discs intersect and project unpredictably, creating intriguing spaces that demand exploration and recall the twisting alleys and courtyards associated with historic Middle Eastern cities.

Upon entering the galleries, visitors encounter exquisite high-definition video, projected from floor to ceiling directly on the museum's slanted walls, that beautifully captures Qatar's sand dunes, night skies, and desert land-

scapes. The video serves as a backdrop to a display bench with a handful of birds and mammals, including a honey badger, a greater hoopoe-lark, and a lesser kestrel, which represent three desert ecotypes found in the region. Most impressive is the herd of Arabian oryx, Qatar's national animal, which the country helped return from the brink of extinction through captive breeding programs.

Moving from desert creatures to the nomadic people known as the Bedouin, the bold geometric patterns of the traditional sadu-woven textiles take center stage.

These fabrics form the walls and ceiling of Bedouin tents and provide ornate adornments for humans and camels alike. The simplicity of the weaving tools—drop spindles and basic floor looms, with a tensioning device formed from a goat horn—contrasts with the complexity of the patterns created. Children can

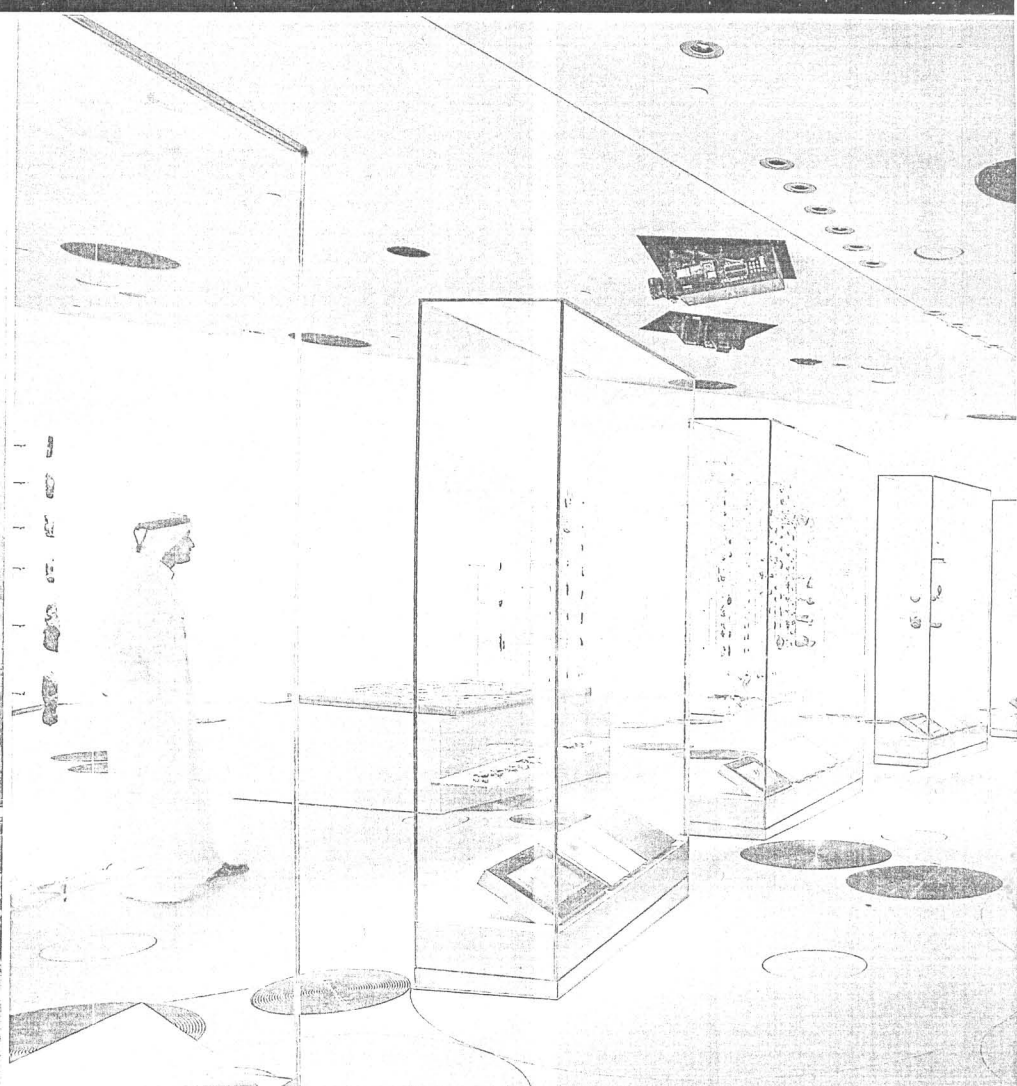
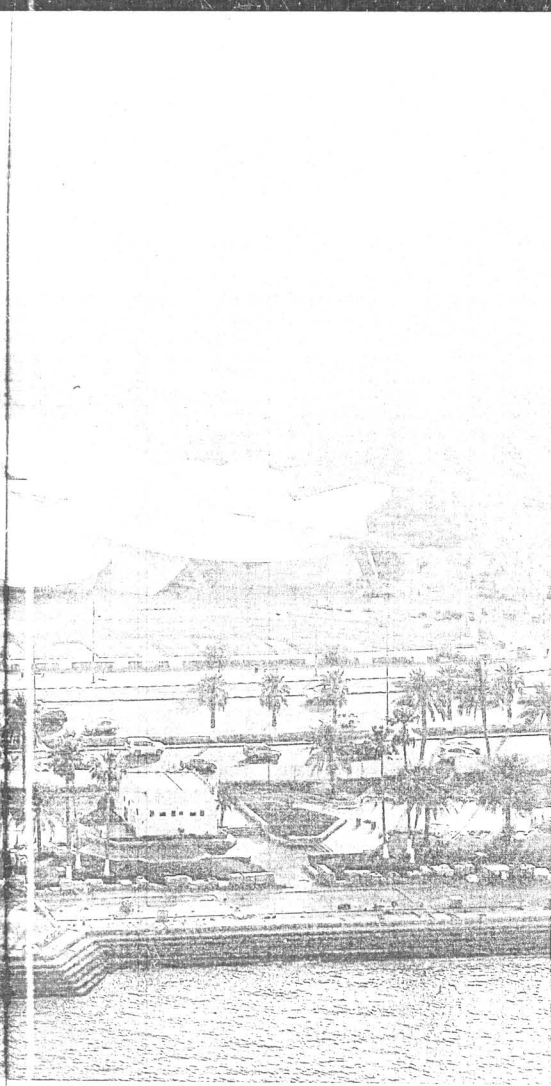
learn the over-under-over-under rhythm of weaving in an associated family room using sadu-printed strips.

Images of diverse and striking woven

**National  
Museum of Qatar**  
*Sheikha Amna  
bint Abdulaziz  
bin Jassim  
Al-Thani, director*  
Museum Park  
Street, Doha, Qatar

PHOTO: ©IWAN BAAH

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patterns escort visitors down the broad staircase as they exit the desert life galleries for an exhibit dedicated to the coast. One masterpiece of the collection is the Baroda Carpet, which emblemizes the importance of trade and pearl diving in early coastal towns. Displayed in the center of a gorgeous exhibit of pearl tiaras, earrings, and necklaces, the carpet was commissioned in the 1860s to honor the grave of the Prophet Mohammed. It is encrusted with precious stones and an estimated 1.5 million seed pearls, all obtained through the toil of pearl divers in the Gulf.

In *Nafas (Breath)*, a film commissioned from famed director Mira Nair, visitors experience the intensity of diving for pearls. Before the discovery of oil, Qatari men had to leave wives and family for months at a time as they voyaged to rich pearl beds, where they free-dove to 25 m in the quest for pearls. Harrowing though the livelihood was, it was once a critical source of income.

With the discovery and development of oil in the mid-1900s—the focus of the final galleries—came incredible change and growth. A scale model of Doha illuminates how the city has grown from a mere cross-

roads to a city of well over a million inhabitants. Commonplace glass jars from only 100 years ago (excavated in Doha) are displayed alongside ancient arrowheads and potshards in the archaeological gallery, making the turn of the 20th century feel distant indeed in this rapidly changing and growing society.

Qatar is preparing for further change as it seeks to move from a petroleum-based to a knowledge-based economy. Visitors see evidence for this just beneath the museum's surface. The art films that form the backbone of the museum are all produced locally by the Doha Film Institute, and the country's focus on educating the next generation is evident in six fabulous children's rooms.

Exhibit information is presented in Arabic and in English, and the opening attracted an eclectic set of international elites, including French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, renowned artist Jeff Koons, and pop culture icon Victoria Beckham, suggesting that the museum will serve as an effective vehicle for the country to engage with a global audience. One could, however, wish for a more nuanced conversation about the tension between

With its striking exterior (left) and captivating exhibits (right), the National Museum of Qatar is a welcome addition to the country's capital city.

Qatar's desire to preserve the natural environment versus its rapid development of land and its reliance on fossil fuels for income and lifestyle.

Nonetheless, visitors will leave the NMoQ with a deep appreciation for the Qatari land, the resilience of its people, and the richness of its heritage. For those who can't visit in person, or for visitors who want a richer experience, Thames & Hudson will publish a companion book as well as a museum guide later this year (1, 2). Visitors and readers alike will feel the duality of a country maintaining a strong connection to its past as it prepares for the future, where it is determined to maintain an independent position on the global stage.

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10.1126/science.aax4593



## Book Review

**My Journey from Marxism-Leninism to Nehruvian Socialism: Some Memories and Reflections on Inclusive Growth** by C. H. Hanumantha Rao, Academic Foundation, New Delhi, (2018), pp. 309, Price: Rs. 1295/-

As a matter of fact review of an autobiography is not an easy task, especially of a stalwart of the stature of Hanumantha Rao. However, I have made a modest attempt to write the review simply because Professor S. S. Johl advised me to do so. My own liking for Hanumantha Rao also motivated me to read this wonderful book dwelling on the mix of high level intellect and activism. In my opinion, Hanumatha Rao's life is role model for all the pro-people and liberal academia and intellectuals.

This multi-dimensional auto-biography reflects upon the politico-economic history of India ever since Independence. While recapitulating the memories of many actively engaged innings of his long life, C. H. Hanumantha Rao reflects back on his own politico-economic activities as well as the evolution of the Indian polity, economy and democracy.

The book is divided into two parts which are further arranged in sub-parts. Part-1-A consists of 13 chapters which dwell on the early and formative years as well as the academic, professional and administrative engagements of the author Part-1-B, having six small chapters, deals with various aspects of Telanganan movement in the 1960s and challenges before Telangana state.

Part-II-A, running into 12 chapters, dwells on Professor Rao's reflections and concerns about inclusive growth having bearing on the marginalised sections of India. These are basically lectures delivered by him on various important occasions during the last three to four years. Part-II-B, running into 11 chapters, dwells on his comments on some books and papers. Most of them are reviews of books and papers written by eminent economists/social scientists. As such, this section does not need any review.

Jumping into political activities at the age of 15 (birth 15 May 1929), Hanumathe Rao became secretary of the Karimnagar unit of the All Hyderabad students union affiliated to the All India Students Federation. This led to his rustication from the school. Being member of the Communist Party of India (CPI), then banned, he was arrested in February 1949 and remained in Jail and concentration camp till September 1949. However, while his constant company and interactions with other member and leaders of the CPI in the jail, his political commitment to the party and the cause became stronger. His commitment persuaded him to join the underground struggle of the party but later left the

underground activities on the advice of senior leaders of the party. From November 1951 to May 1952, he again served a jail term.

After passing his intermediate examination as a private candidate, Hanumantha Rao joined the Nizam College, Hyderabad in June 1953 from where he completed his B.A. Then after completing M.A. in Economics in 1957 from Osmania University, he got his Ph.D. degree from the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi in 1962. From there starts his journey as an economist and his long association (1961-1992) with the Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi. This Marxist-Lennist, turned Nehruvian socialist, has been a member of the Planning Commission, Finance Commission and on the Board of Directors of the RBI; Member National Advisory Council; and Chancellor, University of Hyderabad. He was awarded 'Padma Bhushan' in 2004 in the field of literature and education.

The book also reflects back on the history and activities of the Communist Party of India (CPI); and provides critical appraisal of the party's policy and strategy. The Marxist Lennist ideology imbibed in the younger days continues till now. Nonetheless, his field work in villages during his Ph.D. work made him to critically think the difference between the ground-reality and ideology. Nehruvian Socialism through planning in a mixed economy under democracy provided an alternative ideological framework for Hanumantha Rao's distancing from Marxism-Lennism and tilting towards Nehruvian model of democratic socialism. Hanumantha Rao got convinced that Nehruvian vision of equitable development and the possibilities provided by the democratic framework for mobilizing large sections of people for implementing progressive measures continue to hold promise under Indian conditions. Such an understanding made him an enthusiastic supporter of the progressive policies of Mrs. Indira Gandhi despite his opposition to Emergency in 1975. Nonetheless, the Nehruvian model got diluted in 1980's and a complete reversal since 1990s.

Hanumantha Rao's conviction that civil liberties including freedom of expression are essential to successfully implement and sustain the government's progressive agenda convinced him to be critical of Emergency and expressing his inability to concede to government's request to write paper on "Emergency and Economic Development in India" for the volume "The Emergency: Its Impact". Interestingly, the present political scenario is also not giving space to freedom of expression, difference of opinion and dissent. Hanumantha Rao's understanding of Emergency and firm belief in freedom of expression provides a cautionary note to the political party in power and lends a support to all those who are for freedom of expression, dissent and difference of opinion. The political parties across the board, particularly the one curbing the freedom of expression, must understand that freedom of expression provides a safety net to the vent of the people corrects the governance and is in their enlightened interests. The

Constitution of India also upholds the 'Right to Speech' and 'Freedom of Expression'. The declared emergency suppresses all such rights but 'un-declared emergency' is worse than the former as people continue to remain under the illusion that they have the fundamental rights.

During his tenure as Planning Commission Member (1982-1986), Hanumantha Rao strongly advocated for raising public investment by mobilising resources through widening the tax base and reducing inessential subsidies. He was of the firm view that public investment in social and physical infrastructure works as stimulant for private investment. He was supporter of decentralization of power to rural and urban local government (72<sup>nd</sup> and 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution) but was concerned about slow process of devolution of functions and adequate finances and functionaries. This is largely true even now in the case of large number of states and union territories in India which is mainly because of resistance from the entrenched interests in the society and polity.

As a member of the Economic Administration Reforms Commission, headed by L. K. Jha (1981), Rao was party to a series of recommendations towards liberalization of the economy. This is departure from Nehruvian Socialism. However, Rao was votary of strengthening the socio-economic position of weaker segments along with the release of market forces. Nonetheless, in pursuit of economic efficiency by the successive governments, social equity suffered a serious neglect. In the process agriculture, rural development, health and education suffered from neglect. The adverse consequences of the economic reforms (despite 8% annual growth rate of GDP) were manifested in electoral defeat of NDA in 2004. It was because this that inclusive growth rate became the prime goal of the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (under UPA-1). However, integration of economic efficiency with social equity is still a long way to go. The market-led neo-liberalism shall not be able to promote an inclusive growth and development.

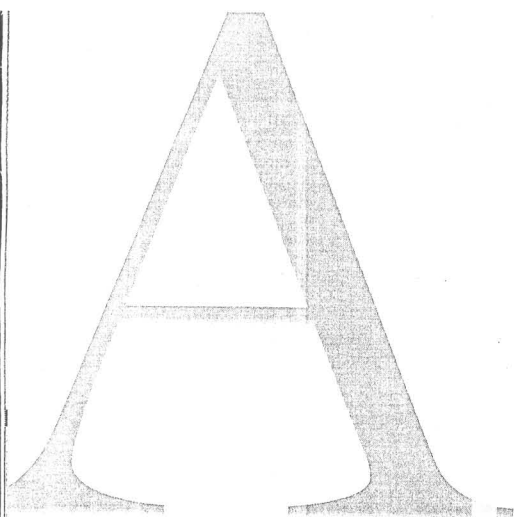
While discussing the challenges of Post-Nehru era, Rao writes that stabilizing democracy and strengthening of institutions, despite numerous constraints, were the towering achievements of Nehru-era. However, no significant institutional changes were affected towards redistribution of assets, including land. The 'politics of consensus' and 'class neutral' economic policies in effect strengthened the affluent segments. This, in turn, pushed the goal of 'socialism' under the carpet. The rise in the consciousness and unity among the poor themselves is the pre-condition for social justice. The role of the state as vanguard is extremely important. However, Rao must know (and I am sure he knows very well) that the Indian state has been completely overtaken by the privileged segments. How can then we expect the state to be the vanguard of social justice and equity.

Nonetheless, there is growing worldwide concern about the rising inequalities in income and wealth, global financial and economic crises and global warming because of unsustainable use of natural resources. Rao emphasizes that this point towards the continued relevance of the Nehruvian vision of equitable development through appropriate state intervention in a mixed economy within a secular and democratic polity.

Hanumantha Rao actively participated and contributed in the debate on Indian development which is reflected in. He is candidly aware of the fact that the progress towards achieving inclusive development is determined by socio-political pressures brought to bear on the ruling establishments not merely by electoral outcomes but basically by the organised movements of the poor and the marginalized sections.

Equity and social justice are very close to Rao's heart. It is out of this concern that he expects from economists to formulate a theory of inclusive growth and emphasises that economic policy-makers need to present alternative models of such a growth where equity and social justice are built into the growth process itself.

**Ranjit Singh Ghuman**



At 4 am on June 16, 1993, A.K. Ramanujan wrote an unpunctuated paragraph of what he called 'free writing': 'Whatever comes to your mind consciousness epiphenomenon Bosnia Mogadishu children with problems Chinese immigrants . . . pain in the ankle arch instep acute as sting diffuse as a cloud of poison emitted by a savage squid cyclical is a phonograph stuck on a phrase'. This goes on for several more lines, describing vividly the pain he had been experiencing. Four hours later, at 8 am, he started another: 'Pain in the leg, sleep still in my eyes, waking up in childhood with conjunctivitis'. He then went on to remember his mother and the Mysore house he grew up in. The same evening, in a separate entry, he wrote, 'To write continuously like the trickle stream of thick honey from a slanted bottle.' His preoccupations over the decades had not changed: memory; a sharp awareness of suffering; a desire to write, continuously. Less than a month later, as he was being prepared for a spinal operation to relieve the pain in his leg, he was dead. The University of Chicago, where he had taught since 1961, lowered the US flag to half-mast.

*Journeys: A Poet's Diary*, co-edited by Ramanujan's son Krishna, draws on the papers—71 boxes worth—the family had donated to the university's Joseph Regenstein Library after Ramanujan's death. The book also contains short fiction, one letter (written from Bangalore in February 1962 to his future wife Molly), unpublished poetry and drafts of poems. It also includes several published poems, among them the frequently anthologised *A River* and *Chicago Zen*. As the editors explain, the poems were chosen either because their earlier drafts had been included or 'on the basis of

their relevance to particular themes and allusions in the prose.' There are also photographs from Ramanujan's life (one in a beard), and the notes at the back are both helpful and thorough.

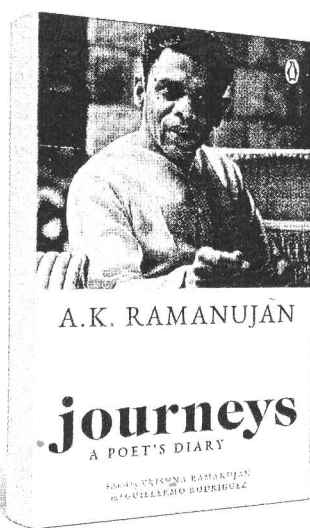
The earliest entry in *Journeys*, from September 1949, is an autobiographical story *A Poem is Born* written when he was 20. Its opening line, 'He was writing a poem', uncannily prefigures the title of William Carlos Williams's *I Wanted to Write a Poem*. In it, the young protagonist, Ramoo, though he wears 'a modest mask of diffidence', is an ambitious poet with thoughts 'of a young worship-eyed posterity' admiring his 'small neat hand'. He has a new poem buzzing in his head: 'The words come to his head in English.... He brought out the paper, a clean folded sheet, unscrewed the pen, wiped the nib warmly, but found no ink on his finger.' The pen was dry. He filled it with ink 'and in a minor triumph wiped the overflow against his hair'. But just as he was settling down to write, his mother called out to him, 'Ramoo, Ramoo! Haven't you brushed your

teeth as yet...'. One thing and another and the poem never gets done. It's a light sketch, written in 'a transparent, witty, completely well-tuned English.' The description is Ramanujan's, but he said it of R.K. Narayan, who, like him, grew up in Mysore. It might be said of Ramanujan's English as well. It has the same mellow, observant, unhurried, one can say, southern quality.

Readers of Ramanujan are familiar with the monument that is his work. In *Journeys* we can see some of the preliminary drawings, as well as some of the features that didn't make it to the finished building, but they are no less rewarding. 'I rummaged through old papers,' Ramanujan tells Molly in the letter, 'and found literally scores of old fragments of poems, and salvaged some forty very short ones which could be reworked or expanded, and threw away a great heap of papers.' One of the 'salvaged . . . short ones' was the near finished *Self-portrait*, whose opening lines 'I resemble everyone/ but myself' have been described by Vidyan Ravinthiran as 'one of the best first lines, and line-breaks, in 20th century verse'. At the top of the sheet enclosing the material that he was sending Molly, Ramanujan wrote 'Just a few, at random'. It is a reminder that the beginning of all art is provisional, tentative. Several of these 'salvaged' poems, including *Self-portrait*, appear in *The Striders*, Ramanujan's first collection published in 1966, but others that seem equally good were left out.

In the same pages as the letter to Molly and poems, the editors reproduce a photograph with the caption 'AKR and Molly Daniels, wedding day in Chicago, Illinois, June 1962'. Both look radiant, as only newlyweds can. But 10 years later, after their divorce, in another fragment, he wrote 'We'll not part / till marriage do / us part -'. Which is immediately followed by: 'What div- / orce brought together / let no marriage / put asunder.' Ramanujan was constantly ringing variations on whichever theme he happened to be playing. ■

—Arvind Krishna Mehrotra



**JOURNEYS**  
A Poet's Diary  
by A.K. Ramanujan  
Edited by Krishna Ramanujan  
and Guillermo Rodriguez  
HAMISH HAMILTON  
₹599; 351 pages



Aditi Sriram

Beyond the Boulevards: A Short Biography of Pondicherry |  
Aleph | 201 pages | Rs 399

## Music In Rue Dumas

A slim volume engagingly rounds up all the quirky cosmopolitanism of Pondicherry

BY SATISH PADMANABHAN

I have spent most of my school summer vacations in Pondicherry. My paternal grandfather ran a lodge-cum-canteen there and I had dozens of uncles, aunts and cousins of all ages. We would hurtle down the sleepy little lanes in cycles, getting our hands burning with boils as we tried to rip open the cashew kernel from the milky fruit in a nearby plantation and, of course, every afternoon walk down to the beach, splash around in the sea till it was dark and return home with the sandy slippers in our hands.

For a long time, Pondicherry for me was just like any other Tamil town, with its men in lungis and women with cloying jasmine, 'Meals Ready' 'Ootels' and the blazing, white sun, though there would be some curious differences: the cycle-rickshawallah or bus conductor would address my father as 'misa' (derived from monsieur), not 'saar' like in Madras, the streets were 'roo' (rue) and Bastille Day was a big deal, which would fall while we were there in the summer. Years later, when friends talked of the tranquility of Auroville or the authentic European cuisine in the sidewalk cafes, I would be foxed. Where was this Pondicherry, how did we miss it in our summer holidays, did it only come up later? Aditi Sriram's book answers all those questions.

Years later, when friends talked of tranquil Auroville or authentic European cuisine, I'd be foxed. How did we miss this Pondicherry in our summer holidays?

The author, too, has a distant connect with Pondicherry and she sets out to find out everything about the city with Napoleonic vigour. The White Town, still called so, the French-coastal town-like promenade, the imposing and austere Sri Aurobindo Ashram, the officious and phlegmatic JIPMER, the aging Old Lighthouse, the busy Gandhi Thidal, the bustling Barathi Park, Rathna Theatre, The Eglise de Notre Dame des Anges, Manakula Vinayagar Kovil, Rue Caron, Rue Chermon and Rue Latouche, the Muslim Quarter, and Auroville, all come alive. Sriram's enthusiasm is infectious and the reader hobbles along with her to walk with Peter Heehs, historian and guardian angel of the city, to meet Thribhuvan Manoharan, the owner of Rathna Theatre, chat with the frail Lata di and Urmila di who have taught in the Ashram's school with Sri Aurobindo and Mother, discuss how plural the culture of the place is with Father A.S. Antonisamy or just shoot the breeze riding pillion on Aneesh Raghava's motorbike.

Sriram, who teaches writing at Ashoka University, brings in her academic rigour (a book this slim has 177 notes at the end) and dives deep into Pondicherry's history, geography and anthropology. Its complex relationship with the French—a sort of a poor cousin whom the French neither accepted wholeheartedly nor abandoned entirely—is discussed at length. The only two things I found missing in the book from my memories of those summer holidays, and a few subsequent trips later, is the weather—hot and humid one minute, blustery and drenched the next—and the food, quite the same like the *sappadu* from the other nearby towns of Tamil Nadu and yet so different, with the surprising existence of a crepe stall in the middle of idli-vadai vendors. □

## ON THE RACKS



Roshan Ali

Ib's Endless Search for Satisfaction | Penguin

Ib lives with his schizophrenic father and "quietly sane" mother. His quest to figure out life and understand himself has to confront the roadblocks set by family, religion, love and death. With its playful prose and insightful characterisation, this debut novel is a poetic meditation on loneliness and mental illness.



Sanjay Kumar

Katihar To Kennedy: The Road Less Travelled | Vani Book Company

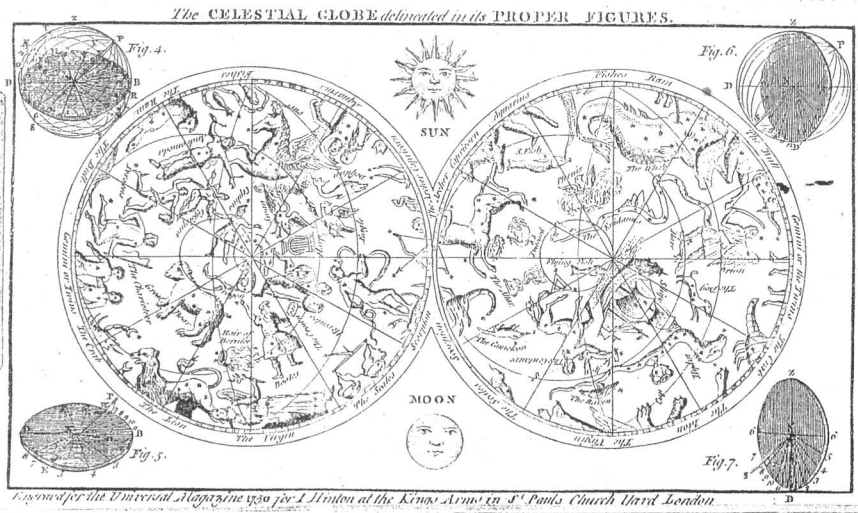
The author chronicles his journey from Bihar to Harvard's Kennedy School and his efforts to give back to his hometown after returning. From his lacklustre performance in school to his academic excellence in college and work with SEWA, a non-profit, he explores the challenges, setbacks and achievements that shaped him.



Rajesh Patil

Maa, I've Become A Collector | HarperCollins

Translated from Marathi, the sub-title of this honest memoir ('my journey from crushing rural poverty to the corridors of power') explains it all. Like similar, near-mythical tales from pre-'47, Patil was born into chill penury, worked as a child labourer and through sheer academic brilliance and will-power fought to get an education, later entering the IAS. Overcoming lesser odds are termed 'inspiring'. Read this to find out what truly is.



# Connecting the micro- and macroverse:

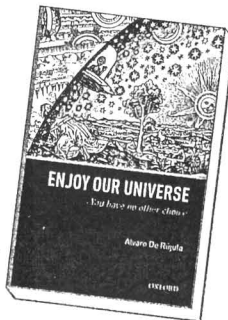
Our understanding of the universe is in the midst of a revolution that rivals the one brought on 100 years ago by the birth of quantum mechanics and the discovery of the expansion of the universe. The standard model of particle physics provides a well-tested mathematical description of the basic forces and particles of nature and a springboard for speculation about a grander unification of all forces, and the lambda-cold dark matter ( $\Lambda$ CDM) cosmology describes the universe from quantum fluctuations and quark soup to the formation of galaxies and today's accelerated expansion.

Profound puzzles lie at the frontiers of inner and outer space and link them: the identity of the mysterious dark matter that binds galaxies and clusters, the nature of the dark energy whose repulsive gravity drives accelerated expansion, and the cause of the putative early inflationary epoch whose quantum fluctuations became the seeds for cosmic structure. Few books have attempted to tell the full story of the microverse and macroverse and their deep, unexpected connections. Alvaro De Rújula's *Enjoy Our Universe: You Have No Other Choice* has done so with success.

De Rújula is a brilliant and opinionated Spanish particle theorist who spent most of his career at CERN. There he par-

## Enjoy Our Universe You Have No Other Choice

Alvaro De Rújula  
Oxford U. Press, 2018.  
\$25.95



ticipated in the current revolution of our understanding of the universe. He is also known for his dazzling illustrations drawn on transparencies. Fifty or so are reproduced in the book in full color, capturing the reader's attention and getting the author's points across. His unique voice comes through loud and clear in the text, just as Stephen Hawking's does in *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (1988).

De Rújula tells us that his book is "intended for anyone—independently of the education (s)he has suffered—who is interested in our basic current scientific understanding of the Universe." You won't find the multiverse or superstring theory here; he sticks to what we really know—which is already amazing enough—and eschews speculation.

The book is organized into 37 bite-sized chapters, each in essence a mini-lecture. (Oops, I have revealed the big secret, De Rújula is teaching the reader a lot of physics.) Some of the chapters are

as short as one page—for example, chapter 8, which sums up the standard model. Others cover more technical detail or asides to the main narrative, such as chapter 15, "Is Basic Science Useful?"

The author also has a star system for flagging the more challenging material; like the Michelin guide, he awards each chapter from one to three stars. Brace yourself: Chapter 13, on renormalizable relativistic quantum field theories, rates only two stars. In the same spirit, *Enjoy Our Universe* features 104 footnotes, some of which are quite entertaining, and a useful glossary of terms and acronyms. De Rújula revels in acronyms, including ones of his own creation such as WEAHM (With Exactly All His Might), so the glossary is essential.

The first four short chapters are a warm-up on the basics of science. De Rújula does a wonderful job of covering the scientific method and conveying that science is a human activity. He even makes a discussion of units interesting. From there, he moves on to explain the standard model of particle physics. This is where *Enjoy Our Universe* really shines. Particle theory is De Rújula's specialty, and he participated in many of the field's most important events, including the discoveries of the charm quark in 1974 and the Higgs boson in 2012. On the other hand, although it is important to understand the twin paradox, and the pedagogy is great, two chapters on the twins is a bit much.

The last third of the book is devoted to modern cosmology and the  $\Lambda$ CDM model, the cosmological counterpart to the standard model. It is all there and clearly explained, but with less passion and a few errors. For instance, De Rújula includes a picture of Edwin Hubble with his 1909 championship University of Chicago basketball team, but in the text refers to Hubble as an outstanding football player and law major. Neither is true. De Rújula also doesn't do justice to the tortured path to recognizing the expansion of the universe for what it is—the expansion of space—and he muddles the fascinating history of the cosmic microwave background. However, none of these are major flaws.

The biggest surprise is what De Rújula doesn't cover or comment on: supersym-

## BOOKS

metry, superstrings, particle dark matter, or other big mysteries. The author is not a fan of supersymmetry or superstrings, which have so dominated particle theory for 30 years, and I was hoping to hear him opine as he did in his 1986 *Nature* essay "Theoretical physics: Superstrings and supersymmetry" or in his 1985 workshop talk entitled "Supersymmetry or Superstition?" The title of his final chapter, "In Spite of Our Admitted Igno-

rance," had me ready for his thoughts on dark matter and dark energy. I was eager to learn where he thinks the two now-intertwined fields are going. But I was disappointed when the book ended abruptly and with a whimper rather than a bang.

There is much to recommend in this book: the beautiful drawings that chronicle, teach, and entertain; the passionate recollection of the 1974 "Charm Revolu-

tion," in which De Rújula was instrumental; the story of Michael Faraday, the first scientist with a vision to unify physics; and the art and history sprinkled throughout. As you will learn if you read *Enjoy Our Universe*, De Rújula is an engaging tour guide of this remarkable revolution in physics.

**Michael S. Turner**  
University of Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois

## The life of a physicist in Victorian Britain

THEODORE BLAKE WIRGMAN, C. 1876; WELLCOME COLLECTION, CC BY 4.0



VISIT OF THE QUEEN TO THE LOAN COLLECTION OF SCIENTIFIC APPARATUS AT SOUTH KENSINGTON  
PROFESSOR TYNDALL EXPLAINING THE ACTION OF THE FOGHORN

**JOHN TYNDALL** demonstrates a foghorn to Queen Victoria and her entourage.

John Tyndall's death was nearly as remarkable as his life. The celebrated Irish physicist was known for his popular lectures on science, his daring climbs in the Swiss Alps, and his discovery of the phenomenon that we now know as the greenhouse effect. By the time he was in his early seventies, Tyndall suffered from severe insomnia and took a pair of medications to combat it: chloral and magnesia. But on 4 December 1893, his wife, Louisa, unfortunately confused the two bottles, which resulted in his death from chloral overdose 10 hours later.

The grief-stricken Louisa set out to complete a "life and letters" volume in her husband's honor, the usual way to commemorate a great thinker in Victorian Britain. Books such as *Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley* (1900) and *The Life and Letters of Faraday* (1870) helped secure the legacies of other men of science. But Louisa was unable to complete the massive task of transcribing her husband's correspondence before her own death in 1940. Despite fame during his lifetime, Tyndall faded into near-obscurity during the 20th century.

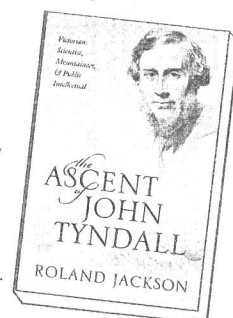
Now historian Roland Jackson has given Tyndall a weighty biography, *The Ascent of John Tyndall: Victorian Scientist, Mountaineer, and Public Intellectual*, that explores both Tyndall as a person and his place in Victorian science. *The Ascent of John Tyndall* chronicles the man's varied and fascinating life using quotes from his journals and from his extensive correspondence. From those sources, Jackson provides a fine-grained account of Tyndall's day-to-day life—his social circles, his financial situation, his romantic hopes and disappointments. Here is a typical passage: "Tyndall now terminated his employment with [Richard] Carter... [He] believed that Carter owed him £257, but offered to settle for £200, of which £180 was left on account. Carter hosted a farewell dinner on 16th August, inviting [Thomas] Hirst and their colleague Jemmy Craven too. A few days later, Tyndall left for Manchester and from thence the south."

Many readers will welcome the chance to immerse themselves in Tyndall's world this way, but others may find themselves bogged down and skimming passages on topics that interest them less.

Tyndall came from humble origins. Born around 1820 in the Irish town of Leighlinbridge, he began his working life as a land surveyor. His interest in science blossomed in early adulthood,

**The Ascent of John Tyndall**  
Victorian Scientist,  
Mountaineer, and  
Public Intellectual

**Roland Jackson**  
Oxford U. Press, 2018.  
\$34.95



and after doctoral work in Germany, his research on diamagnetism eventually won him a position at London's Royal Institution. There, Tyndall became known for his work on the mechanics of glacier formation, the properties of light, and the absorption and emission of radiant heat—including the earliest description of the greenhouse effect. His lively Friday Evening Discourses at the Royal Institution became a sought-after ticket for fashionable Londoners and, along with his popular writings, made him one of Britain's most famous scientific figures. Tyndall was also a daring mountaineer; the chapter on his Alpine adventures—including a harrowing accident climbing the Matterhorn—is especially gripping.

After many romantic disappointments in his twenties and thirties, Tyndall eventually married Louisa Hamilton, the oldest daughter of Lord Claud Hamilton, in 1876. Despite the age difference—Tyndall was 55 and Louisa, 30—the marriage was a happy one. Louisa was an intelligent woman who gave Tyndall an enormous amount of help with his correspondence and proofreading, occasionally at the cost of her own health.

But even Louisa's example could not shake Tyndall's belief in the intellectual inferiority of women. Jackson does not shy away from Tyndall's beliefs on topics such as sex and race or excuse them as mere by-products of the Victorian era; as he writes in the introduction, "that they were typical of the time does not reduce their impact today." Even so, the book occasionally has a tendency to soften or quickly move past unpleasant statements and views.

For example, when writing about Tyndall's belief in female inferiority, Jackson concludes that "it was not only over women that Tyndall sought to assert his scientific authority. His books and lectures all conveyed a superior expertise that he communicated to a relatively inexpert public." But Tyndall's work as a popularizer and his faith in his own knowledge do not change the fact that he could regard men but not women as potential equals.

Similarly, Jackson delves into Tyndall's participation in the "Eyre affair," the 1867 trial of Jamaican governor Edward John Eyre, whose declaration of martial law during a protest resulted in the murder of more than 400 black Jamaicans. Tyndall spoke out in Eyre's de-

fense, and Jackson quotes passages in which Tyndall argued that enslaved men and women in Jamaica were inherently inferior to "Englishmen." Jackson writes that "Tyndall and others did not see this as prejudice; it was simply the way things were." But many others in the 1860s did not see it that way, and in a book of this length and detail, a fuller discussion was warranted.

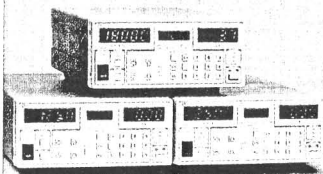
I came to this book familiar with Tyndall; I spent five years as a postdoc and

editor on the John Tyndall Correspondence Project. Even so, I learned something new on every page of *The Ascent of John Tyndall*. Jackson's careful scholarship has produced a thorough and absorbing account of Tyndall's life and work. Historians of science and anyone fascinated by Victorian life will be glad that Tyndall has a biography at last.

Melinda Baldwin

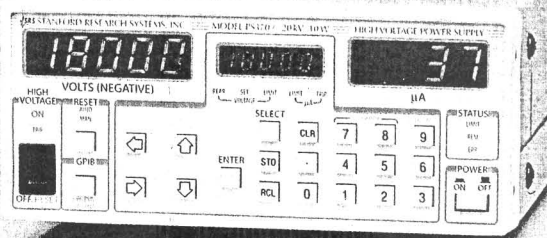
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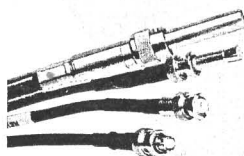


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## Where did the “New Books” go?



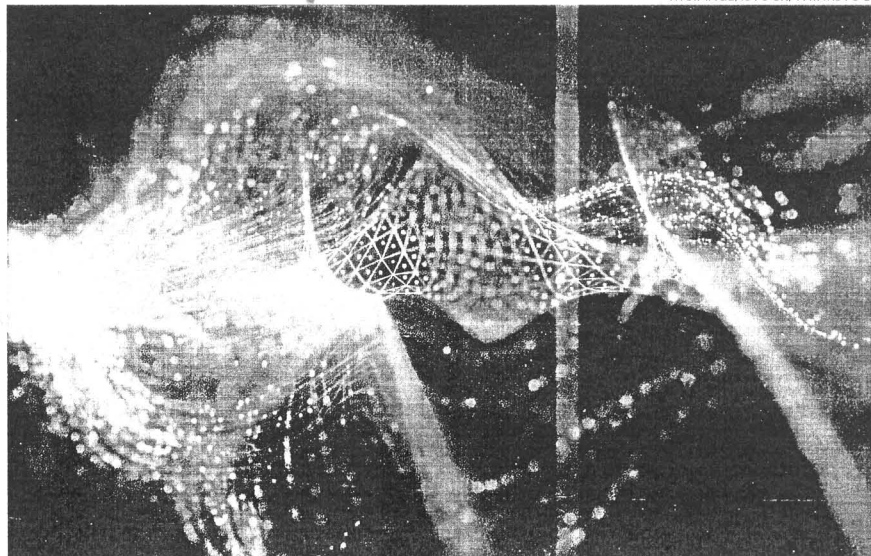
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## BOOKS

KTSIMAGE/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK



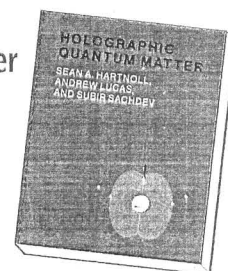
# The unexpected duality of gravitational and condensed- matter physics

High-energy and condensed-matter physicists have long enjoyed a fruitful interchange of ideas and techniques. The microscopic laws that govern elementary particles share a surprising number of similarities with the collective behavior of matter at macroscopic scales. For example, the standard model of particle physics relies heavily on the notion of spontaneously broken global and local symmetries, concepts that have their roots in the observed behavior of ferromagnets and superconductors.

A relatively new example of the continuing dialog between the two fields is holographic quantum matter, a subject physicists have been vigorously pursuing for more than a decade. Developments originating in superstring theory have led to the remarkable realization that strongly interacting quantum matter can be modeled in terms of gravitational physics in one higher dimension and that gravitational physics can also be modeled as quantum matter. That approach is variously referred to as gauge/gravity duality, holography, holographic duality, or the anti-de Sitter/conformal field theory correspondence, and there is by now a vast literature on the subject. *Holographic Quantum*

### Holographic Quantum Matter

Sean A. Hartnoll,  
Andrew Lucas, and  
Subir Sachdev  
MIT Press, 2018.  
\$65.00



*Matter*, a new book by Sean Hartnoll, Andrew Lucas, and Subir Sachdev, gives an excellent conceptual overview of the field while providing enough technical detail for the reader to perform relevant computations.

A few key ideas that underlie holographic duality are useful to keep in mind to appreciate the scope and limitations of that approach. First of all, we have the large- $N$  approximation. Since the 1970s physicists have known that strongly interacting quantum systems can simplify drastically if the number of degrees of freedom is taken to be large. Indeed, the theory becomes effectively classical when expressed in terms of the appropriate collective variables. Remarkably, under the right circumstances this collective description includes gravity in one higher dimension. Hence classical general relativity, cou-

pled to matter fields of various types, emerges out of strongly interacting quantum matter.

If the gravitational theory is sufficiently simple—that is, accurately governed by a Lagrangian with a small number of fields and interactions—holographic duality becomes useful. The emergence of a new holographic spatial dimension leads to physics at different scales in the original system being projected to physics at different locations in the holographic direction.

Next, entropy generation and dissipation are key concepts governing the out-of-equilibrium dynamics of interacting matter. Thermal systems are mapped by the duality to black holes, whose thermal nature is due to Hawking radiation. Entropy generation arises when matter falls through the black hole horizon, a process readily described by solving, often numerically, systems of differential equations.

Finally, the physics of ordinary metals can be formulated in terms of quasiparticles and the associated Landau-Fermi liquid paradigm. Physicists have a strong understanding of the thermodynamic and transport properties of

such systems, but there is intense interest in materials that fall outside that paradigm. When no quasiparticles are present, the physics is instead governed by a quantum critical soup of gapless degrees of freedom. Traditional quasiparticle-based tools are ineffective in that context, but holographic duality maps those systems to classical field theory modes, yielding a description that is tractable analytically.

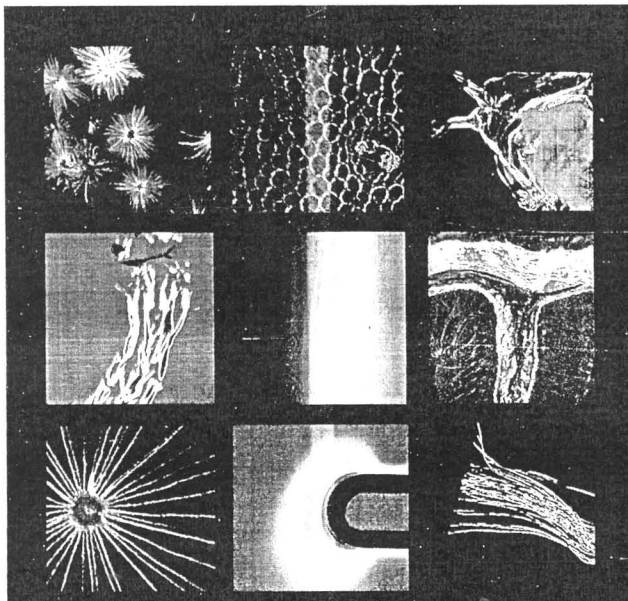
The authors of *Holographic Quantum Matter* systematically develop all these fundamental ideas along with their applications to thermodynamic and transport phenomena, both near and far from equilibrium. Some connection is made to experiments in systems such as cuprate superconductors, graphene, and heavy fermion compounds. To properly absorb the material, the reader should be comfortable with general relativity and quantum field theory and should have broad familiarity with condensed-matter physics, although some topics could be learned on the fly as needed. The reader should come away appreciating that holographic duality provides a novel class of solvable models for strongly in-

teracting quantum matter. However, holographic duality is best viewed as a way of placing certain universal phenomena in a tractable framework. It is not reasonable to expect a specific gravitational model to accurately describe in full detail a specific physical system of interest.

The authors are exceptionally well qualified to review the given subject; they are responsible for many of the developments discussed in this review. The prose is clear and authoritative throughout. I appreciated the efforts the authors made to identify unifying themes rather than simply describing one model after another. The extensive list of references will be very helpful for the reader who wishes to delve deeper. Each chapter contains a collection of well-thought-out problems taken from the literature. I recommend *Holographic Quantum Matter* without question to anyone who wishes to pursue research at the interface of condensed-matter and high-energy physics or to anyone interested in a broad overview of an active and fruitful field.


Per Kraus

University of California, Los Angeles



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Online applications must be submitted by May 31, 2019 at 5 PM EST.

# Striking finding

This book is a must-read for all those with an interest in the defining Indian problem of the day, mass unemployment. BY V. SRIDHAR

IT would require an enormous leap of faith to deny that the crisis of joblessness ranks among the topmost of India's social and economic woes. Yet, the Narendra Modi government, instead of conceding this, let alone addressing it meaningfully, has chosen to create another crisis, the jobs-data crisis. A number of election surveys conducted in the run-up to the Lok Sabha election have confirmed that the issue of jobs, or rather the lack of employment opportunities, is the most important issue that voters—irrespective of their voting preference—have identified.

Undaunted by the vacuum in official data, the 2019 edition of the *State of Working India*, sets out the grim scenario of the terrain in which unemployment has acquired such critical significance as a popular issue articulated by Indians. It posits that the controversy caused by the suppression of the release of official statistics by the National Statistics Commission continues to simmer because "there is now fully established politics of unemployment in India".

In other words, irrespective of whether polit-

ical parties pay heed to it or not, there is now a groundswell of popular demand for a war on unemployment, reminiscent of India Gandhi's *Garibi Hatao* slogan that swept her to office in the 1971 Lok Sabha election.

This study has been compiled by a team of researchers led by Amit Basole, who teaches at Azim Premji University. It makes a painstaking analysis of data available in a situation in which official statistics on employment/unemployment are in disarray, which some would allege has been deliberately created by the Modi government in order to avoid embarrassment. Academics attempting to piece together a profile of employment and unemployment find that the an-

nual household surveys of the Labour Bureau (the last one was in 2015) and the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO) five-year employment-unemployment surveys (EUS) have both been discontinued.

The void in data availability on this vital national question has been caused by the suppression of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) of the NSSO, which came out into the open only because an enterprising journalist managed to access the report. Obviously, a report on the state of jobs in India could not do without some reliable data set, even if official data are not available.

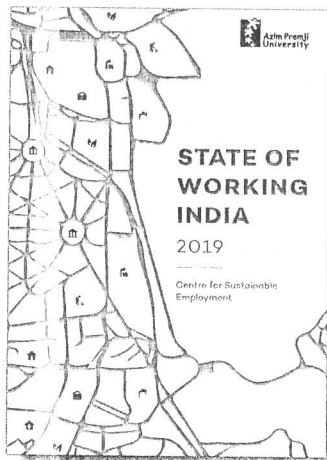
*State of Working India* uses the privately run Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE) data that are based on

household surveys covering 1,60,000 households and 5,22,000 individuals. The CMIE data are based on a Consumer Pyramids Survey that goes back to each respondent in three "waves" during a calendar year.

The report includes a few basic comparisons with other data sets and concludes that the labour force participation rate and the workforce participation rate for men estimated by the CMIE are comparable with the EUS of both the NSSO as well as the Labour Bureau, although they vary significantly for women.

## UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTHS

The findings are striking. The analysis of the CMIE data reveals that five million Indian men lost their jobs between 2016, when demonetisation was unleashed on a hapless population, and 2018. Significantly, there is no estimate of how many women lost their jobs. Given that the nature and terms of employment for women are far more tenuous, the total number of jobs lost since November 2016 could be much higher, possibly at least eight million. Both the CMIE as well as the leaked PLFS data reveal that the overall unemployment rate in India was about 6 per cent in 2018, double the levels prevailing in the 2000-11 period. But a disaggregated picture provides a clue as to why unemployment is such a burning political issue now. Strikingly, the levels of unemployment among



**State of Working India, 2019**

Centre for Sustainable Employment, Azim Premji University, 2019

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youths is unconscionably high. Even more appalling is the fact that young women bear an even bigger burden of joblessness.

Consider this: the rate of unemployment among urban women graduates is 34 per cent even though they constitute just 10 per cent of the working age population in urban India. The situation is even more pathetic for men in the 20-24 year age group. Urban men in this age group account for 13.5 per cent of the working age population, but a whopping 60 per cent of them are unemployed.

To be sure, the rising levels of unemployment are not merely an urban phenomenon nor are they a problem that is confined to the educated. The youth dimension is obvious: the median age of the Indian population is just 28. It is obvious that the much celebrated demographic dividend that India was expecting to cash in on has passed on.

But it would be a travesty of truth to consider that the scourge of unemployment is confined to the ranks of the educated. The less educated and those working in informal occupations have also been hit hard, especially since demonetisation, as has been repeatedly confirmed by numerous anecdotal examples from across the country since 2016. The introduction of goods and services tax in 2017 worsened the already grim situation for the less educated who were more dependent on informal sources of employment for a livelihood.

An analysis of the CMIE's raw wave-wise

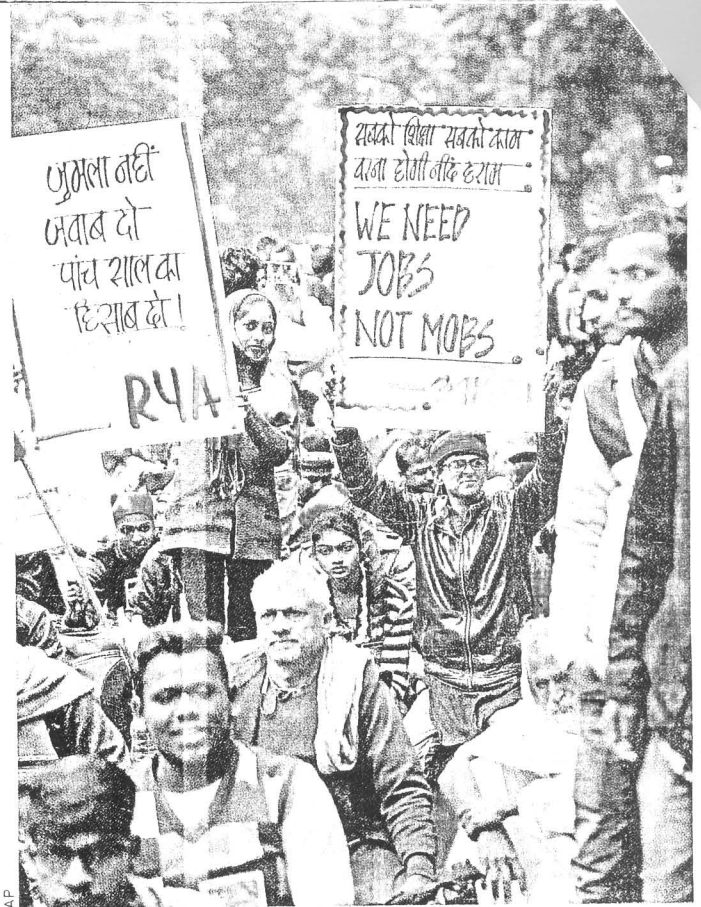
data by the authors reveals that "open unemployment" among this section of the workforce has also fallen since 2016. How is it possible for the desperately poor, those with less educational attainments, to remain out of work?

The report suggests that it is possible that people engaged in such jobs may have lost access to the more regular jobs that they earlier had, which meant that the probability of them being captured as being "employed" in the surveys may have diminished significantly.

The report warns that despite heightened media and political attention on joblessness among the educated in the aftermath of the jobs-data crisis, it would be a mistake to ignore the problem of unemployment in this section of the population. "[I]n absolute terms, this is a much larger number of people in the more vulnerable sections of society," it warns.

The question of why the educated prefer outright unemployment even if they could find lower-paid and less secure jobs may appear perplexing at first glance. The report observes that cultural, or to use the more fashionable term "aspirational", factors may explain why people from this section prefer to remain poor. However, a more plausible explanation could be that the relatively better educated do not wish to remain caught in a low-wage trap.

Of course, there are also cultural factors, under whose rubric would come those performing the most demeaning of tasks, such as manual scavenging.



STUDENTS BELONGING to various organisations participate in a demonstration demanding more job opportunities, in New Delhi on February 7.

The Magsaysay Award winner Bezwada Wilson has repeatedly, and poignantly, pointed out that the sons of manual scavengers want nothing more than an escape from perhaps the filthiest of all Indian occupations. Clearly, it is not a matter of wage rates for these poor, mostly Dalits. But this "mindset" of choosing to remain out of work is not confined to the poorest. This correspondent recently met an Uber driver who, with a diploma in printing technology in Chennai, had worked many years in several media establishments until he lost his job about two years ago. "I started driving a cab last year because I was not able to get a job in my field, but this is a thankless job too and I barely make ends meet," he said. He said he

would rather get back to a job in his area of expertise even if it meant a pay climbdown. This same "mindset" is visible in young women who would rather work in a chain store or a garment factory with extended hours of work and not-so-great pay rather than work as domestic help with possibly a higher earning.

What these examples demonstrate is not irrationality as casual observers of the world of Indian joblessness would interpret but a view in which workers try to maximise their earnings over a lifetime in the workforce instead of the immediate. The Uber driver cited earlier said: "If I get back to my earlier work, even at a lower wage, there is at least the prospect of my expertise being recognised

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VIBHAV BIRWATKAR

**UNEMPLOYED MEN** and women holding envelopes containing their biodata addressed to the Prime Minister, during a protest organised by the Nationalist Congress Party against rising unemployment, outside a post office in Thane, near Mumbai, on February 11.

later, but if I stay hitched to Uber, I have nothing to look forward to." Clearly, the mainstream view on unemployment in all its dimensions is a bankrupt one, one that has outlived any relationship to reality.

For far too long, employment has been seen as a byproduct of economic processes, an extension of the trickle-down theory of economic growth, if you will. This simple-minded reasoning was based on the logic that growth would automatically lead to employment. So all that governments needed to do was to promote growth through encouragement of the private sector, and jobs would start rolling out. The empirical evidence, particularly on the elasticity of employment to investment, utterly demolishes this fallacy. The study points out that

Rs.1 crore (standardised to the value of the rupee in 2015) of investment in organised manufacturing generated 80 jobs in the early 1980s; by 2015, the same investment resulted in only 10 jobs. Greater automation, accompanied by higher labour productivity, has disrupted the link between the quantum of investment and employment.

The report adds value by suggesting that there is a need to introduce an urban employment programme that would address the serious deficit in the provision of social services such as health, education and public works. It offers detailed proposals for initiating works that would not only improve the quality of life, while being ecologically sustainable, but also address the problem of rampant un-

employment. Combined with a programme of providing universal basic services, these have enormous potential to address the problem of joblessness.

The problem of unemployment in India has been generally addressed by two kinds of approaches. The first has been the utterly witless focus on the economic, the mindset that proposes economic growth as the magic wand.

At the other end of the spectrum, but which only appears in fits and starts, lies the proposition that treats welfarism as a cure. This more populist view, with no clear and transparent underpinning to the economy, has also been rendered ineffective, especially since liberalisation began in the 1990s. In both these views, employment

is whatever results from policies pursued in other realms, social and economic. These approaches need to be turned on their heads, the focus being on increasing employment to solve problems in other realms. And, given the huge backlog of underdevelopment, there are plenty of opportunities waiting.

Clearly, the articulation of joblessness as the defining Indian problem, especially of youths, demands a new economics, a new sociology and a new politics of unemployment in India. If this is not undertaken on an urgent basis, the legitimacy of the Indian ruling establishment may well be in peril. This book is a must-read for all those with an interest in the defining Indian problem of the day, mass unemployment. □

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# A Mediatished Half-decade

MEENA MENON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched his “Main Bhi Chowkidar” campaign to kick-start his 2019 election campaign, which, while attracting criticism, was already trending on Twitter globally with over 1.4 lakh tweets on 17 March, with many of his followers calling themselves chowkidar to pledge support. This is a change from the earlier 2014 campaign line of “Ab ki Bar Modi Sarkar” signifying his humility and keenness to serve the nation again, which was already reflected in labelling himself “pradhan sevak.”

One of the features of social media platforms is the intensely personal nature of communication and the instant response they can provoke. This would be as good a time as any to read Pamela Philipose’s new book that takes us through the “mediatished half decade,” from 2011 to 2015, and her analysis of select events covered by the media in a world that has dramatically changed in the way it communicates and the forms of social media platforms available.

## Agenda Setting

Other than the prescient analysis of the media and its diverse avatars during 2011–15, the most significant takeaway from Philipose’s new book is how the media, through its agenda setting, made corruption a major issue in India. This was an important precursor to the “media’s shifting terrain” that the author analyses in the course of six chapters. By exclusively focusing on corruption and wantonly ignoring other crucial issues that have an impact on the poor and lower middle class, the media in a way manufactured a new, all-encompassing grouse and it was an easy one to focus on. Almost anyone in India has had to deal with corruption in some form or the other and it struck a chord immediately with the middle class in the country. Political parties latched on to corruption campaigns and several important elections were won based on this single theme.

## Media’s Shifting Terrain: Five Years That Transformed the Way India Communicates

by Pamela Philipose, *New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2019, pp 302, ₹575.*

Social movements came up to demand the right to information (RTI) and organisations like the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan spearheaded campaigns that enabled people to fight for their rights and entitlements. However, Philipose points out,

It was the mediatished middle class which developed a more intimate feeling of being denied their due entitlements as citizens, consumers, voters and were quick to take ownership of anti-corruption activism, spurred by the perception (furthered by mainstream media editorialising) that corruption was an attempt to steal the assets of the tax paying public. (p 36)

It is not as if the media had not covered corruption before. The author looks back to post-independence scams, including one involving the government-run Life Insurance Corporation, the Nagarwala scandal, and the Antulay cement scam. The attention newspapers of the day paid to the issue was undeniably one of the reasons why the post-independent Indian state was under constant pressure to be seen to address the issue. The 2011 mobilisation against corruption drew on earlier campaigns built up by the media.

The making of corruption as a political cause through the India against Corruption (IAC) campaign of 2011 was undergirded by network communication and media convergence on a scale never before deployed in the country for a single focus crusade. It held significant sociopolitical consequences for the country, both at the juncture when it took place and in the years that followed (p 28).

These lines set the tone for the chapter, “Framing Corruption in Today’s Times,” which unpacks the reasons why the Indian media came to train its energies once again on this issue.

The book tries to explain the role of the media, which she calls an “empathetic sutradhar” in propelling Modi to the centre stage of national politics, and the impacts of mediatisation with its social and political consequences. Starting with a scrutiny of the Anna Hazare fast, the author goes on to dwell on the public protests against the gang-rape of Nirbhaya in 2012, the Delhi elections of 2013 and 2015, and the general elections of 2014. These five developments taken together constitute what the book terms as the “mediatished half decade.”

Each of these five developments featured in the book as a “mediatished” event. Modi’s emergence from a leader universally condemned for the Gujarat riots in 2002 to an acceptable public leader and, eventually, Prime Minister, would not have been possible without media framing. Similarly, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) could not have captured Delhi electorally, not once but twice in succession, without deliberate communication strategies and micro-management of voter sentiments through media messaging. Similarly, the spontaneous public outrage over the Delhi rape case and the huge mobilisation in support of the assaulted woman would have been unthinkable without widespread media engagement.

## Expanding Digital Media

To understand the phenomenon a little better, Philipose cites sociologist John B Thompson’s definition of mediatisation as a general process by which transmission of symbolic forms and public discourse “becomes increasingly mediated by the technical and institutional apparatus of the media industries” (p 19). The years 2011–15 saw heavy investment in the media as well as the expansion of global giants like Google, Facebook and Twitter, and private consolidation of media empires, according to her. “Path-breaking communication technologies and social media platforms” invaded new geographical spaces, and “new discourses seeped in communal rhetoric emerged.”

In India, according to Philipose, 2010 could be considered as the year that served as a springboard for the mediatished

half-decade. The rapid expansion of different kinds of media was reflected in the data thrown up in the 2011 Census, which showed how, while less than 47% households had toilets within the premises, 47.2% of them had television sets and 63.2% had telephones. Newspapers were also growing at this point but, as she says, the real transformations were taking place in mobile telephony and digital media. Media content, practices, and technologies were coalescing in innumerable ways.

India was now witnessing media convergence, which was bringing together older and newer media in various ways on a scale never hitherto imagined. The rapid spread of communication technology in a disparate, heterogeneous, unequal country like India over the first decade of the 21st century allowed it to join the ranks of the most mediated societies in the world. It is the mobile telephone and the internet that acted as the enablers of this leap (p 15).

A range of corruption issues, including the 2G licence allocation scam and Commonwealth Games frauds, many of them exposed by the government's own audit mechanisms, segued into the IAC protests in 2011. The information built upon these cases stayed in the limelight for a long period thanks to sustained media coverage. The author quotes a study by the Centre for Media Studies which found that the time TV channels gave to news stories on corruption in 2010 had increased by over four times from 2005, with the focus on state, rather than the private sector, corruption. Most important was the finding that people's perception that corruption was rising more sharply than ever, drew more directly from the media's coverage rather than their own experience of it.

### India against Corruption

The IAC protest drew on a widespread perception that corruption was denying people their rights and robbing taxpayers of their dues. Citing John Mason, Philipose says that this politics of anti-politics came out of a feeling among the urban middle class that those in power cannot resolve the crises and it was they themselves who could change

the system by coming together. The IAC protests reflected the public mood against corruption like few others had, feeding directly into the strategic plans of the opposition parties which used it to attack the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA). The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) notably grabbed the chance "presented by the anti-corruption mood in the country to present itself as the moral arbiter of the country's politics." Hazare's fast against corruption became a wake-up call to political parties but it also gave them a stick to beat the ruling alliance with and set the stage for a future victory based on promises of returning black money, ending corruption and the like.

The author finds that the social media's coverage of the IAC protests attracted mainstream media attention. "In that sense," she observes that "social media acted as a catalyst to achieve the impressive convergence of media presence that marked the IAC protests." For the mainstream media, engaging with the campaign was also a way to shore up their own image which had been battered after the Radia tapes episode (which exposed the media's affinity to business houses and their emergence as mediators in political appointments).

In 2011, Modi took to Twitter, the first among politicians to tweet on the IAC fast. He attacked the Congress and gave Hazare's fast an almost Gandhian stature by saying that the nation was concerned about his health. Industrialists too issued letters in favour of the mobilisation. Television anchors like Arnab Goswami on Times Now changed track to focus solely on Hazare's fast and it was the visual medium that came to provide it with a larger-than-life aura. According to one study cited in the book, from 3 to 11 April 2011 there were 655 hours of coverage and of the 5,657 news clips reviewed, only 65 had negative undertones. The coverage also netted ₹175.86 crore for the channels. However, "Anna fatigue" did set in soon, and when Hazare went on fast in the third phase of the protest held in Mumbai, it drew very thin crowds, with the Jan Lokpal Bill that was one of the demands, coming in for strong public criticism.

The coverage of the fast was a case of mainstream media following social media, and the person who realised the effectiveness of social media was Arvind Kejriwal, then a little known RTI activist. Innovative techniques like the dispatch of bulk messages to 1,00,000 at a time using International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) technology bumped up the presence and visibility of the protest. An exclusive Facebook page ("the mothership of the campaign") bringing together diverse protestors located in different parts of the country, Twitter hashtags, and even an app to take the fight against corruption to the next level, were among the pantheon of devices used.

Yet, as Philipose concludes, while the media can act as a force multiplier to build support for a campaign, it can just as easily contribute to its dissipation. While being able to expedite agenda setting on a national scale, they do not wish to disrupt power relations within society because they emerge from those very same structures of power themselves.

### Coverage of Rape Case

In the case of the coverage of the Nirbhaya rape case, however, it was the media coverage and the spontaneous outrage on the streets that led to a government-appointed committee headed by Justice J S Verma. This also fed into subsequent election discourse, where violence against women became an important issue in the elections that followed, for the first time in the country's history, as Philipose notes. Incidents of rape, even brutal rape, did not usually figure so prominently in mainstream media, but this time it did. Television channels devoted 125 hours of prime time and information from traditional media was posted on social media leading to a "circularity of media content."

Analysing media messages, she finds that the crowds came in response to the push and pull of what they read and the desire to do something. The media played the role of a catalyst in these protests in a way. Some protestors felt the need for offline action, and online and offline protests coalesced with "media consumers becoming media producers and vice versa." Tweeting rose rapidly

during this period averaging 5,781 tweets per day and rising up to 15,421 on 23 December, the second day of the India Gate protests.

When Nirbhaya's death was announced, some 12,000 tweets came in within a few hours. Why did this case get so much attention? Philipose attributes it again to the middle-class appeal it held, given the victim's background and the urban location of the crime. The media generally tends to ignore crimes committed against women of poorer and lower-caste backgrounds. In this case, according to Philipose, the young woman's desire to change her life for the better resonated with many urbanites, and the extensive and emotional media coverage, often carrying intimate details, rendered her into someone everyone felt they knew closely.

The flip side of this was a trial by the media and the demands for the public execution of her rapists, including the juvenile offender. It was after this case that the law, lowering the age at which juvenile delinquents could be tried as adults from 18 to 16, came into force. The question that Philipose asks is very pertinent: Did the media coverage make "adequate use of the power of journalism to understand a brutal criminal act and interpret it for large and diverse audiences in a manner that meaningfully confronts endemic violence?" According to her, it did not. The media coverage also, in a way, gave rise to a coarseness in public response, with the demand for retribution emerging loud and clear. Many crass videos which attracted millions of viewers appeared at this time. The media also failed to call out the misogynist, communal and casteist ways in which violence against women manifested itself. There were many gaps in the media coverage, not the least of which was the presumption that only "deviants" commit rape. The coverage exploited the incident without any far-reaching consequences.

### The Remaking of Modi

It is in the section on the 2014 elections that Philipose analyses how the digital media came to define Modi's communication strategy. Modi took a leaf out of

former United States President Barack Obama's election campaigns of 2008 and 2012, which used the entire range of communication technologies and social media to carve out victories. With a detailed analysis of each social media used and the media convergence achieved, Philipose traces how Modi successfully controlled the public perception about him. While the BJP has always used media extensively, the 2014 elections saw a "quantum leap" in the use of social media platforms.

While much of the information presented here is not all new, what emerges from her analysis is the Goebbelsian way the media was used by the BJP and Modi, to lend credibility to the Hindutva project. The Gujarat growth story and "Vibrant Gujarat" gained prominence at the expense of the Gujarat riots story, for instance. However, on a different note, in the case of the two AAP elections, the emphatic use of the social media to counter the hostility of the mainstream media helped Kejriwal reinvent himself as a leader in whom the people of Delhi could repose their trust.

The book contrasts the social media use and projections of each event and tries to briefly understand the reality behind them. The extent to which the various forms of media can influence and manipulate public minds is evident and by evoking the instant engagement and intimacy enabled by social media, political parties particularly can use it at will. One tends to forget that the "fourth

estate" has a responsibility to portray the truth and it has to be ethical while doing so. The multiple media platforms gave it the opportunity to either go with the tide and succumb to agenda setting, or stand back and analyse the sweep of events. Sadly not many chose the latter option as is evident in the coverage of the Nirbhaya rape case where the media passed up the chance it had for more nuanced debate. In the case of the Modi makeover, the media was a willing participant. Impressions and opinions dominated facts and fake news thrived.

But, for the few media which are doggedly exposing fake news, it would be hard to tell the truth of all the viral messages passing off as news. This book brings to light the high-tech con game across diverse media where reality is obfuscated in the flurry of constant sharing of information, often with a deliberate agenda, either by tweeting, Facebooking, or through WhatsApp, etc, which may not always be true or have any balance. "News" is a cover for views, propaganda and uncritical information which is lapped up. In the end, Philipose strikes a note of caution: We may be living in mediatised times, but sustainable social change requires real struggles on the ground, not just the use of technology. It must also not be allowed to work against the possibilities of achieving such an outcome.

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### EPWRF India Time Series Expansion of Banking Statistics Module (State-wise Data)

The Economic and Political Weekly Research Foundation (EPWRF) has added state-wise data to the existing Banking Statistics module of its online India Time Series (ITS) database. State-wise and region-wise (north, north-east, east, central, west and south) time series data are provided for deposits, credit (sanction and utilisation), credit-deposit (CD) ratio, and number of bank offices and employees.

Data on bank credit are given for a wide range of sectors and sub-sectors (occupation) such as agriculture, industry, transport operators, professional services, personal loans (housing, vehicle, education, etc), trade and finance. These state-wise data are also presented by bank group and by population group (rural, semi-urban, urban and metropolitan).

The data series are available from December 1972; half-yearly basis till June 1989 and annual basis thereafter. These data have been sourced from the Reserve Bank of India's publication, *Basic Statistical Returns of Scheduled Commercial Banks in India*.

Including the Banking Statistics module, the EPWRF ITS has 18 modules covering a range of macroeconomic and financial data on the Indian economy. For more details, visit [www.epwrfits.in](http://www.epwrfits.in) or e-mail to: [its@epwrf.in](mailto:its@epwrf.in)

## Book Review

**Emerging Water Insecurity in India: Lessons from an Agriculturally Advanced State** by Ranjit Singh Ghuman and Rajiv Sharma, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, UK, pp. 324, Price: £66.99

Water is a pre-condition for the human survival and life on the planet Earth. It is one of the most precious natural resources available on the Earth because it does not have a close substitute. Still, the scarcity and insecurity of water is the reality of life for nearly one-fifth of the world population. Although India does not fall under a severe water deficit country as compared to the countries of African sub-continent, yet uneven distribution of water and rainfall pattern and severe neglect of monitoring water resources, several regions in the country experience water stress from time to time. The book titled '*Emerging Water Insecurity in India: Lessons from an Agriculturally Advanced State*' highlights the importance of emerging water insecurity in the broader contexts of the food security, ground water depletion, sustainability of fresh water and its fair quality. It also views the water scarcity from the perspectives of its ever-rising demands from different sectors of economy — agriculture, industry, domestic, etc. — and for its alternative uses. The book motivates readers to go through data-driven facts and cautions them about the alarming realities of water insecurity and emerging challenges in agriculturally advanced state of Punjab or elsewhere in India.

Structurally, the book is divided into ten chapters. In the first two chapters, the authors analysed the emerging water insecurity at global level, sector-wise water requirements, development of water resources and water usages in India. The central argument in these chapters revolved around estimating the available water sources, state's role in developing water sources, and rising requirements of water across sectors of the economy. The logical reasoning in these chapters navigates around the definition of water insecurity, water requirements and demand-supply gaps of water across alternative uses and sectors. The analysis also established that availability, quality and access to water are central elements for measuring water insecurity in any region.

In the next two chapters, authors analysed secondary data over the last five decades time period (since 1966) and laid down a detailed account of Punjab's water resources, factors behind success of green revolution, increasing needs of water in agriculture, emerging cropping pattern favouring wheat-paddy rotation, depletion of ground water and future of fresh water sources in the state. Here, the wheat-paddy crops (the later as a water guzzler crop) become a natural choice of farmers in Punjab because of many favourable factors such as the MSP based market clearances, free electricity to the famers, interests of nation's food security and state paraphernalia. In the light of discussion in these chapters, the

*School Integration Matters: Research-based Strategies to Advance Equity*, edited by Erica Frankenberg, Liliana M. Garces, and Megan Hopkins, New York, NY, Teachers College Press, 2016, 244 pp., \$38.95 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-0-80775-755-0

In *School Integration Matters: Research-based Strategies to Advance Equity*, the editors and chapter writers examine the historical significance of integration efforts, contemporary arguments for advancing efforts to integrate schools, and persisting challenges for integration in both K–12 and postsecondary institutions. An overarching argument raises a question of whether equity is truly a goal of contemporary reform efforts. Although the majority of arguments in the book are not necessarily new, its authors and organization may remind readers that policies intended to address inequity in schools have to also consider external factors that create those inequities. To fully appreciate the book's contribution to sociohistorical and sociopolitical analyses of school integration, I deconstructed and considered the ways in which individual chapters speak to and build on others while constructing a cohesive and compelling argument as a whole.

Paramount to the arguments in the book is the premise that substantive changes to policy and implementation must be made for integration to be a tool for crafting equitable schools throughout the public education system in the United States. In Chapter 11, Philip Tegeler offers a reasonable starting point: establish and conduct federal equity assessments that analyze the potential future consequences of proposed education reform initiatives at the state or local level. According to Tegeler, the U.S. Department of Education has been reactive instead of proactive when addressing issues of inequity that could violate the civil rights of students of color. To understand why this might be the case, Daniel Kiel's work (Chapter 2) is extremely helpful. Kiel argues schools in the United States are sites of inequality by design; a major culprit, according to Kiel, is the seemingly race-neutral sorting system that relegates students into particular schools and districts based on geographic locations. In various ways, Chapters 3–10 echo this point by highlighting school enrollment, city housing, and language learning policies that perpetuate inequitable and harmful schooling experience for students of color. However, race is not the sole category for examining structures of inequity in public schools. The authors in this book discuss intersections of race, class, and language to help readers understand the multiple ways segregation occurs in schools. For example, in Chapter 9 Rachel Garver focuses on and examines how Asian immigrants are treated in a predominantly Black school. This fresh perspective on school segregation supports approaches to integration that include ensuring a critical mass of students of each race yet acknowledges that advantages and disadvantages for students of color in integrated

schools can shift based on the contextual factors being considered.

Several scholars in this book address legal challenges to meaningful integration efforts that might create such a critical mass, particularly in higher education. In Chapter 3, Hoang Tran problematizes courts' involvement in public education through an analysis of the recent *Fisher vs. University of Texas* Supreme Court case. The Supreme Court essentially warned universities that, despite the outcomes in *Fisher*, not all affirmative action programs would be considered constitutional. In response, Tran acknowledges the salience of race in Supreme Court decisions and positions the colorblind jurisprudence seen in *Fisher* and other cases as a form of structural violence against students of color. Tran not only builds on Kiel's historical analysis but also adds to the conversation the importance of recognizing the social construction of race and the unique racial stigma of subordination that is experienced by people of color. Later in the book, Matthew Patrick Shaw's (Chapter 13) quantitative analysis of affirmative action bans in 19 states along with Lilian Garces and Cortney Cogburn's (Chapter 14) qualitative study of the University of Michigan's attempts to increase and sustain racial diversity identify additional legal barriers to equitable access to postsecondary education. These studies imply that empirical data support the necessity of race-based admissions and support in higher education if universities face legal challenges to their policies.

Readers interested in delving into school segregation with limited historical context for what is happening in schools today will appreciate the thorough sociohistorical analyses in *School Integration Matters*. Readers familiar with scholarship surrounding segregated schools, critical race theory in education, or the sociopolitical challenges of urban school reform will likely come to this book with a bevy of prior knowledge that might make the chapters seem banal. However, the central argument of the book and the research used to support it can inform future scholarship on obstacles and possibilities surrounding school integration. If as Kiel suggests, schools are inequitable by design, then the hope for truly reforming them is slight; what might be required is a reimagining of the system and all of the policies and practices that have sustained it.

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# Piecing the Puzzle

## Debates, Practices, and Policies of Education

SMRITI SINGH

“Education” in its broadest sense has been a matter of great scholastic, policy and moral interest. Despite this, a comprehensive understanding of the scope of the term “education” and its various facets is difficult to map. Education, given its relevance, dynamism, and complexities forms a subject that is both generic enough for anyone to venture a dialogue with and complex enough for anyone to completely grasp. With multiple agencies, stakeholders and institutions interpreting what constitutes education, the dialogue on education in the Indian context is fraught with challenges. Amidst the cacophony created by research findings and studies being done by universities, government agencies, non-governmental agencies, and many other stakeholders, it is difficult to make any comprehensive sense of the state of education in the country. There is a lack of consensus among, and even within these various agencies. For instance, there exists an implicit divide between departments of education (DOE) and centres for educational studies (CES) at various universities. There is little or no engagement between these two as they maintain distinct spheres of influence. As a result, there is a huge body of non-convergent research and parallel running scholarly dialogue.

With a gamut of research themes, locales and stakeholders and a number of competing world views, it is immensely difficult to produce a coherent sense of education in India. What must, therefore, be borne in mind is that compiling an edited volume on education is a challenge, in that, it needs to cover a wide ground, capture realities of diverse socio-economic contexts, all the while negotiating the different perspectives and voices to maintaining coherence and focus. To, therefore, embark on the quest to make a handbook of education is in itself an

### BOOK REVIEWS

**Routledge Handbook of Education in India: Debates, Practices, and Policies** edited by Krishna Kumar, *Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2018; pp xiv + 302, ₹2,495.*

ambitious endeavour. To espouse to write a handbook of education in a context as diverse as the Indian subcontinent is a mammoth task. In this regard, *Routledge Handbook of Education in India: Debates, Practices, and Policies* takes on a brave challenge by deliberating over in scholarly voices situated across CES and DOE along with sociologists, geographers, anthropologists, historians, and physicists, among others.

The book, as its name suggests, seeks to cover a wide ground in one sweeping stroke. It appears to be an effort to pack too much into one book. The effort has caused it to become fragmented and incoherent. Perhaps, what is needed to capture the vastness and complexity of “Education in India” is to dedicate a series or more than one volume to this subject. A handbook of education is essential and critical in helping new generations of scholars, activists and other functionaries to make sense of the subject. Trying to bring out a compact handbook that by its own admission is not exhaustive leaves a lot to be desired.

The book delivers a macro perspective and an overview of education in India in broad brushstrokes. There are five parts/sections, each covering one theme in three or four chapters on varied subjects. The themes “logic of access,” “curriculum and teaching,” “training for professions,” “universities and society,” and “underbelly,” are not continuous and seek to cover a lot of ground. By editor’s own admission, these disparate themes are meant to be “illustrative glimpses” (p xiii).

The preface delves on the kind of dilemma that the editor faced at the onset of this project, as he identified that the book could not be exhaustive and that “coverage is no substitute for analytical depth.” While the statement holds true, how one reached at a point where the two were assumed to be inversely related to one another is not clear. The editor laments about lack of scholarly attention paid to a number of critical areas of education, a claim that is hard to digest without much elaboration on what these critical areas are. The preface also highlights the constraints faced by the editor in identifying themes and selecting chapters. He suggests that the selection was constrained by a lack of contemplative literature available to the contributors and the editor. This reasoning without an explanation is far from satisfying for a reader.

Given the focus of the book on debates, practices, and policies, the absence of regional diversity in the Indian context is precarious. The significance of regional differences on a subject like education (a concurrent subject), it seems, would be imperative to understanding debates, policies, and practices. Individual chapters by Virginius Xaxa and Satish Deshpande address the regional variations and the challenges they pose to policy and debates, but a premeditated attempt at including this critical element seems missing.

### Post-reform India

The preface seems to suggest that the context linking all the chapters is the “fast-paced but not necessarily planned changes introduced in the recent past” (p xiii). Yet, there is neither a consistent effort to connect the themes and chapters to these “changes of the recent past,” nor is there clarity as to what these “changes” may be. Perhaps, an engagement with what these changes mean in terms of “debates, policies and practices” in education in the context of the Indian subcontinent would have been helpful.

The introduction revisits the idea of changes in recent past, and attributes these to the ambiguous “economic reforms that have taken place since the 1990s.” The vagueness of defining the “recent changes”

as “reforms post-1990s” and “new economy” does not give any more clarity about the changes in recent past or their significance with regards to education in India. The observable trend of invoking reforms post-1990s as the root explanation for studying the current scenario is misleading in the absence of clarity about its meaning and its contextual relevance. The vagueness of the terms could be, in its present usage, used to describe absolutely anything and everything happening currently. The themes and selection of chapters thus acquire a generic, ahistorical, and decontextualised rationale from being contextualised within “reforms post-1990s.”

Further highlighted is the historical context of school-, college- and university-level education without discussing the recent changes and what those changes mean in the historical context of how education has developed in India. The introduction maintains a largely frozen-in-time description of issues in education. There are also occasional-observations that abruptly emerge and lack necessary elaboration like, “China and other East Asian countries have taken education ... far more seriously than India has” (p 5). There is no consistent effort at situating the gravity of post-1990s reforms to education in Indian context across chapters. The agenda set by the preface and the opening part of the introduction seems to get lost somewhere along the way.

### Education and Stratification

A very important theme that emerges from the work of authors in this book is the idea of Nalini Juneja, as she looks at the urban space and the development of school education. She traces the roots of stratification in the schools system British colonial times and the development of presidency cities. Padma Sarangapani examines the school diversity (a broader term than school stratification used by Juneja) in one district of Hyderabad. She covers an array of markers to determine school diversity than a more hierarchical notion of school stratification. While Sarangapani begins by outlining the known differences between aided, government, private unaided recognised, and private unaided unrecognised schools, she broadens the lens to examine the school diversity as having

grown around the class and community stratification. She examines the clientele stratification as suggestive of segregation in school selection. These terms are worth engagement as they draw attention to a curious case of school education in the Indian context. Do these concepts and terminology have larger traction in the wider educational dialogue? Will these come to redefine the ways in which the dialogue about education happens in the future? It is worth deliberating how the scholarly definition of school education has changed in recent times.

Disha Nawani looks at examinations as not being a singular objective evaluation of students’ understanding, but as a larger role that examinations and eliminations by cut-offs play in establishing order in society and maintaining them. She does this specifically in the context of assessment-related reforms initiated by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009. She argues that examinations work to control aspirations for upward social mobility and curb social dissent. She suggests that it is in this context that the non-detention of students envisioned in RTE should be seen.

Chaise LaDousa builds on 20 years’ worth of data to highlight a different kind of divide which he calls the language-medium divide as a way of understanding schooling and its effects on metalinguistic reflections among people. He highlights the use of standardised forms of language for curricular materials. He reflects on the importance English has gained over time in organising and instruction of curricular knowledge. He also highlights that the language divide is yet another dimension of understanding school segregation.

While the sorting at entry level in higher education is based on the aggregate percentage and marks in individual subjects studied at school, there is a big disconnect between what is taught at schools and what is taught in higher education. School education and higher education have come to be understood as being disjointed in the Indian context. This is an issue that requires greater engagement than it has received. Shobhit Mahajan’s chapter seeks to situate the issues faced at the level of undergraduate and

postgraduate education of science and mathematics as resulting from the quality of secondary school teaching of science and mathematics. However, assertions with regard to secondary school teaching are largely conjectural. Similarly, citations supporting the majority of other relevant assertions are dated and may not reflect the current scenario.

Hari Vasudevan traces the historical trajectory of social sciences. He outlines the transition that schools underwent from social studies to social sciences. He gives a global perspective on the national dialogue on reform. Importantly, he highlights the critical link between schools, colleges and universities with regard to social science education. He notes that there is wide variance in the ways in which social sciences is taught and learnt at various levels.

Kumkum Roy engages with the constructivist approach adopted by the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005 towards the portrayal of historical events and processes. She looks at the textbooks produced in line with the suggestions in the NCF in the light of the spirit of pedagogy espoused and the disservice that examination systems do to that spirit. What appeared to be a significant point in many of these chapters was how complex and dynamic systems like education are resilient to changes, and how as any big system, mechanisms put in place for efficient functioning resist changes.

### Professional Education

The idea that professional education is an isolated and specialised pursuit runs the risk of being reductive. Professional education is envisioned as one that situates itself in relation to the disciplines within the university structure, thus, separating it from apprenticeship and training. The section titled “Training for Professions” has three chapters that examine the state of engineering education, management, and teacher training. The chapter by Milind Sohoni looks at the emergence of engineering education in the United States and contrasts it with engineering education in the Indian context. He highlights that engineering education in the Indian context is directed at the acquisition of high technical qualification, not necessarily in response to the socio-economic needs

of the society. He concludes by suggesting that it is for this reason graduate engineers and those completing higher education (in general) are no longer tied to a vision of "destination society," for which the higher education was designed.

It would, perhaps, have been a more holistic analysis if one were to connect this with the kind of employment opportunities available and their impact on the way these courses are taught and learnt, which none of the three chapters on professional education do. Professional education has been discussed as divorced from the professional world. Teacher training forms a matter very different from management and engineering education. Teacher training feeds back into the system and so any discussion on teacher training, in the context of education, is best not conflated with other kinds of professional education. There is a need for greater clarity on the difference between professional education and education as a discipline in professional education.

Latika Gupta acknowledges that teacher education cannot and must not be understood as being like any other graduate or postgraduate courses. She analyses the structure of BEd curriculum and examines the ethos of a teacher training institution. She focuses on the divide between theory and practice. Pankaj Chandra looks at the growth of management education in the Indian context. He situates this in the light of the transformation of the global economy and how the world of business in the Indian context has also changed.

### Higher Education

The book looks at professional education and higher education as two distinct themes. What is needed is some critical reflection on the separation of the two and from where such a distinct separation stems. Even though the number of people attaining higher education has been steadily increasing, access to it is not uniform. Higher education is as aspirational in India as elsewhere, however, as Nawani notes access to higher education is controlled as a way of controlling aspirations of the masses for upward social mobility. The section on "Universities and Society" explores the complex matter of access and choice in

higher education. The entire section is more or less a reprint of a previously published version of the respective works (except Xaxa). The acknowledgement by authors is admirable. However, a reprinting of existing works with little modification, although gives the book one of its best curated sections, does not logically justify itself. That said, one must compliment the works of Chanana, Deshpande and Xaxa for capturing the contextually situated internal complexity of gendered choices, and the categorisation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and its consequences on admissions to universities.

Peter Altbach focuses on the inefficiencies built into the administrative structure of higher education. He focuses on the system whereby a number of colleges are affiliated to a fewer number of universities. What is somewhat disconcerting is that while Altbach maintains a deeply critical outlook towards state and central universities, he seems strangely uncritical of not-for-profit and private universities. He laments the reservation policy in admissions and faculty hiring without exhibiting a deeper understanding of its rationale, arguing that it hampers the quality.

Education as a discipline and field of inquiry has been expanding. There are many new issues and themes that have emerged lately seeking serious scholarly attention. A few of such themes have been included in this book too. The final part is termed "underbelly" to capture various aspects of education that lie outside the established themes. Jeffreys and Dyson

look at the phenomena of educated unemployment in Meerut by examining the lives of youth. They argue that the educated unemployed youth can play a significant role as "active partners" in tackling the employment crisis.

Manabi Majumdar looks at the market for the emerging shadow education system alongside the anxious competition in the middle class to stay ahead of the masses. She looks at the extent, effectiveness and equity implications of supplementary tutoring in India. Krishna Kumar looks at an underexplored problem of political corruption in education, aided by the structural mechanism of examinations. He highlights that the manner in which the structure of examinations for intake is built, it almost presupposes corrupt political interference.

There is a rich ground to be explored not just in the context of politics and education nexus, but also the ways in which legislations and amendments surrounding education are to be understood. Mehandale's chapter provides a glimpse into such an exploration. She dissects the RTE Act from a predominantly legal point of view. She examines the context and significance of various provisions of the act. She examines the idea of "compulsory" espoused within the act and the various reinterpretations and revisions by the governments and functionaries that were made necessary by the glitches faced during the implementation stage. She discusses the various ways in which the official agenda and peripheral agendas related to RTE are

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being negotiated between government, lobby groups, and stakeholders.

Nidhi Gaur's chapter describing a village school, Anand Niketan originally started by Mahatma Gandhi and reopened by some Gandhians in 2005, provides a snippet into rural schooling. The school is based on Gandhian ideas of basic education, *Nai Talim*, and analyses various practices at school in the light of the various ideas of different educationists and educational theorists. The chapter though reads well, largely stands apart in the scheme of the book. It seeks to cover "rural education." However, by covering an experimental school, it does not capture the larger reality of rural

education but provides a glimpse of an alternative educational experiment.

### In Conclusion

Even though some chapters stand out in terms of their methodological rigour and powerful central arguments, the overall impression of the book remains mixed. There are some secondary data based chapters that have long paragraphs and sometimes entire pages with no citations. There also are some chapters that use a list of largely dated references to make assertions about the current scenario which seems like an internal incoherence. It also drifts from the original vision of the book. While the book overall remains

rather inconsistent and incoherent, a number of chapters individually are remarkable for their depth and analysis. To be fair, the book does not boast of being extensive or exhaustive, however, it does struggle to stay cogent and focused. The themes do not logically fit together, nor do individual chapters within a theme. This volume at best provides snippets into various specific topics, some in great depth and detail. It does not give a good base for building a thematic understanding of education in the Indian context.

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## Y B Chavan on Politics and Society in Modern India

ASHOK CHOUSALKAR

**Y**ashwantrao Balwantrao Chavan was one of the most important leaders in the history of post-independence India and in his long political career occupied many important positions. He played an important role in the freedom movement of Satara district and joined the provincial government of Bombay led by B G Kher as a parliamentary secretary to the then home minister Morarji Desai in 1946, and retired as deputy Prime Minister in the Charan Singh-led ill-fated government in 1980. He was a self-made man as he had no political lineage. He had a vast experience of working at the state and national levels, and almost for two decades, dominated the Congress party in Maharashtra.

Chavan was a serious student of Indian politics and society, and had a keen analytical mind. Jayant Lele, an eminent political scientist from Canada, who has done substantial work on politics of Maharashtra, interviewed Chavan in 1970, 1974 and 1978, to elicit his views on society and politics in Maharashtra in particular and India in general. The interviews were tape-recorded but Lele could not continue to work on them. But now, with the help of

**Yashwantrao Chavan Reflects on India: Society and Politics** in conversation with Jayant Lele edited by Prakash Pawar, Pune: Diamond Publications, 2018; pp xvii + 582, ₹750.

Prakash Pawar, the material contained in the interviews has been retrieved, transcribed, edited and brought out in the book form. It is a welcome addition to the growing literature on the life and times of Chavan.

### A Long Political Career

Chavan's political career can be divided into three phases. The first phase includes his role in the freedom movement. The second one involves his role in the politics of Maharashtra and his achievements as chief minister of the state. We can say that this was the most creative phase in his life. The third phase is about his role in national politics, when he emerged as one of the important national leaders of the country. In Lele's interviews, all three phases are admirably covered.

Lele has divided this book in three parts and each part is again divided into chapters. In the first part—the introduction—there are three chapters. In the first

chapter, Prakash Pawar has written a brief note on the literature available on Chavan in both English and Marathi. The second chapter is written by a senior Marathi journalist and friend of Chavan, Govind Talvalkar, who characterises Chavan's politics as the art of possible, and the third is written by Lele himself titled "Indian Society at the Time of Chavan." In the second part, Chavan's views on state politics are included. In the third part, his views on national politics are discussed. There are six chapters in both these parts.

In his introductory note, which consists of 43 pages, Lele tries to give a social and political background for Chavan's leadership in the light of emerging neo-liberal politics. He points out that in the era of neo-liberal casino-crony capitalism, Chavan remained loyal to Nehruvian philosophy of social justice. He sought to follow the left of centre policy, but was not very close to the pro-Soviet leftist lobby in India. Lele says that Chavan was a pragmatist and supported democratic socialism. He wanted economic growth with proper distribution of its benefits to different sections of society. Planning, mixed economy, growing role for the public sector industries and welfare state policy were the key aspects of Jawaharlal Nehru's policy that were followed by Chavan. Therefore, instead of supporting community farming, he supported cooperative farming. It is difficult to categorise him as a leftist

Yolanda Ruiz de Zarobe (Ed.), *Content and Language Integrated Learning: Language Policy and Pedagogical Practice*. Abingdon: Routledge. 2016. 179 pp.

Reviewed by Tom Morton (Universidad Internacional de la Rioja)

In its recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages (2018), the European Commission expresses disappointment with the slow rate of progress in achieving the policy goals set out in 2002 for European citizens to have proficiency in at least two foreign languages. As part of a comprehensive approach to language education, it recommends further research in and use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as one of the means to achieve the EU's goals of multilingual competence for its citizens. In this context, the volume edited by Ruiz de Zarobe is a timely contribution to gauging the current state of play on CLIL as a policy, practice and research phenomenon in language education in Europe. The chapters in the volume are all papers published in a 2013 special issue of the *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (16, 3). Their publication in book form should bring them to a wider audience and make a greater contribution to debate on the current state of the art of CLIL in Europe and beyond.

The opening chapter by Yolanda Ruiz de Zarobe provides a useful overview of the background to CLIL as a European policy response to societal demands in an increasingly multilingual and multicultural world. It also surveys some of theoretical models (interestingly, all language-based) which have informed CLIL research and practice. Findings from classroom research on CLIL are reviewed, including studies on motivation, effects on content learning, teacher language awareness, shifts from teacher-centred to learner-centred teaching, and lesson and materials design, including the use of genre pedagogy. A key concern identified in this chapter, and which runs through the whole volume, is the tension between CLIL as a top-down policy issue at national and supra-national (European) levels, and CLIL as a bottom-up, grassroots phenomenon driven by the enthusiasm and pressing needs of practitioners and stakeholders at local levels. While CLIL seems to be flourishing at a local level, with a wide diversity of curricular types and classroom pedagogical practices, Ruiz de Zarobe remarks that "it has proven hard to find conceptual guidelines that link and integrate the different dimensions of CLIL in the curriculum" (p. 4). As will be seen in some of the chapters, there seems to be

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a desire for more standardisation and even uniformity in order to provide clear guidelines at national and supra-national levels.

Chapter 1, by Do Coyle, the only one which focuses on a CLIL setting in which English is not the (main) target language, reports on a study in French, German and Spanish CLIL programmes in 11 secondary schools in England and Scotland. It focuses on what is 'successful learning' in CLIL by incorporating learners' voices through 'respectful discussions' and identification of promising classroom practice and strategies using LOCIT (Learning-oriented critical incident technique). Coyle points out that this study is not about identifying the 'best approach' for CLIL. Rather, it highlights the importance of participants in local CLIL programmes 'owning' the research and together identifying features of successful learning and striving to produce them.

Chapter 2, by Julia Hüttner, Christiane Dalton-Puffer and Ute Smit, also focuses on what 'success' is in a CLIL programme (in Austrian upper secondary colleges of technology). They show that CLIL is perceived as a success (by teachers and students) precisely *because* of a lack of top-down language management statements, prescribed outcomes or pedagogical guidelines. This leads to the other two dimensions of Spolsky's (2004) extended language policy (LP), participants' beliefs and actual classroom practices (in all their variety) being the 'de facto' CLIL policy. The study highlights the importance of affect – feeling better and more self-confident about using English in CLIL, and the constructions of 'English' – with EFL teachers conforming to a 'native' model, while CLIL technology teachers orient more to English as a global Lingua Franca.

Chapter 3, by Jenny Denman, Rosie Tanner and Rick de Graaff, is set in a bilingual junior secondary vocational education CLIL programme in the Netherlands, focusing on a student population which is not normally considered high-achieving or 'academic'. In terms of the dimensions of LP, it deals with the practice level (how CLIL is implemented), and beliefs (how it is perceived by teachers and pupils). The findings are that CLIL in this context is not elitist, conforms to state implementation requirements, and is perceived positively by both learners and teachers, who especially appreciate hands-on activities in which speaking is involved with the possibility of using English to communicate with peers internationally.

In Chapter 4, Liss Kerstin Sylvén presents a framework through which CLIL provision can be profiled at a national policy level across four contextual factors which are "decisive for explaining variation in CLIL research findings" (p.86). These are: policy framework/research, teacher education, age and amount of implementation, and extramural exposure to English. Sylvén uses the framework to profile CLIL provision in four countries (Sweden, Finland, Germany and Spain) showing the importance of taking these factors into account when measuring the success of CLIL programmes at national level. She proposes the framework "as a

tool in making policy level decisions on when, how and why to implement CLIL" (p.86).

Chapter 5, by Anna Czura and Katarzyna Papaja, describes four curricular models for CLIL provision in Poland, covering four L2s (English, German, French and Spanish). This chapter highlights the tension between bottom-up grass-roots initiatives and a lack of regulation at (national) policy level, apart from the requirement to cover subject curricula. Although the authors recognise some advantages of flexibility to local contexts, they call for more regulation and guidance on content and language integration, L1/L2 use, and identification of content and language learning objectives. The inference is that diversity and lack of regulation are seen as a problem, and this, along with a lack of resources and teacher training provision, is detrimental to the ongoing and future success of CLIL programmes in this context.

In Chapter 6, Cristina Escobar Urmeneta turns attention to teacher education in CLIL in one European multilingual context – Catalonia. The study draws on a rich mix of conversational and multimodal data in constructing a narrative of one novice CLIL teacher's development over a one-year Masters course. It focuses sharply on CLIL practices with its use of multimodal classroom data, but also on perceptions, as it highlights the novice teacher's reflections on her own practice. The chapter constructs a narrative of how a data-driven, reflective approach to teacher education in CLIL can lead to professional growth and deeper awareness. The chapter thus has important implications for CLIL policy-making at the level of provision of teacher education, an often-mentioned weakness across contexts where CLIL has been implemented.

The context of Chapter 7, by Maria Grandinetti, Margherita Langellotti and Y.L. Teresa Ting, is the introduction of CLIL in the final year of high school as mandated by the Italian Ministry of Education. They report on how a content (science) teacher, language (EFL) teacher and a university CLIL specialist worked together on producing CLIL materials and activities to meet the challenges of what is seen as a 'suboptimal' setting (monolingual society, relatively low English proficiency of both teachers and students) where the CLIL policy is seen as an 'imposition'. They show how this collaboration led to successful learning among even demotivated and disaffected students, and also energised teachers' professional development. The chapter also shares with Escobar Urmeneta's a concern with teacher education, especially data-led and reflective approaches, as well as the construction of teachers' narratives of experience to communicate with other researchers and practitioners.

In Chapter 8, Francisco Lorenzo reports on an initiative in a bilingual programme in Andalusia to map out the multilingual academic literacy needs for learners across all subjects in secondary school. The framework draws mainly on

the Sydney School systemic functional linguistics approach to genre. While the chapter mainly focuses on the subject history, the ultimate aim is to produce a multilingual genre map across the curriculum. Again, we can see the tension at the level of policy and practice between bottom-up 'grassroots' initiatives and the perceived need for a more top-down approach in Lorenzo's assertion that "Advanced multilingual literacy, like all complex issues, will demand complex remedies, and one-sided individual moves of teachers or areas may be insufficient for the challenge" (p. 156).

The final chapter, by Jasone Cenoz, serves as a discussion of the issues raised in the whole volume. Cenoz distinguishes between CLIL as a 'language teaching' and as an 'educational' approach. She argues that CLIL needs to go beyond merely being a way to improve or enhance (foreign) language teaching, to being an approach which encompasses the whole curriculum (as is suggested by Lorenzo in Chapter 8). In doing so, it needs to place more emphasis on content learning outcomes and to adopt a more clearly multilingual perspective, in which the totality of learners' linguistic and meaning-making resources can be leveraged for language and content learning. One factor that may inhibit this is the fact that CLIL has traditionally been seen, and this is the case in all the book's chapters, from a language rather than a content perspective. It has thus been the preserve of applied linguists, English language teacher educators and practitioners. Cenoz concedes that this is understandable due to the pressures for language learning in an increasingly multilingual and multicultural world.

Cenoz shares the concern throughout the book with top-down theorizing or categorizing of CLIL, presumably as a guide to practice, arguing that it is "urgent to develop a clear definition of CLIL and to devise a taxonomy of its major forms" (p. 161). However, the chapters in the book show clearly that CLIL has progressed to its present state without such an overarching theory or taxonomy. Many different forms of 'CLIL' have flourished in different contexts (as evidenced in the chapters by Sylvén and Czura and Papaja). The question is whether calls for standardisation and uniformity are justified. It is doubtful that there could be a 'one-size-fits-all' CLIL for application in all contexts (even in Europe). Even a taxonomy of forms would be of limited use. It may be too wide, as in Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols' (2008) list of what counts as CLIL (almost everything), or too restrictive (needlessly leaving out useful and promising approaches in some contexts). In the end, it may be prudent to accept Ruiz de Zarobe's claim in the introductory chapter that diversity "is a distinctive feature of CLIL in the European mosaic" (p. 8) along with the idea that CLIL is "a rich and flexible teaching approach" which requires "a range of research perspectives" (p. 10). This volume provides a rich portrait of the teeming diversity of CLIL within this European mosaic, and also captures the tensions inherent in a desire to maintain flexibility and diversity

at the level of practice, while at the same time offering more theoretical orientation at the level of language management. The future prospects of CLIL, at least in Europe, will depend a great deal on how these tensions are managed.

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BOOK REVIEWS / CRÍTICAS / BESPRECHUNGEN /  
RECENZOJ

P.C. Ng & E. F. Boucher-Yip (Eds.). *Teacher agency and policy response in English language teaching*. New York; Abingdon: Routledge. 2017. 204 pp.

Reviewed by Jennifer J. MacDonald (University College London, Institute of Education)

Rare is the introduction of a piece of policy in the realm of education which does not affect teachers in some way. Policy initiatives implicate teachers, and give rise to issues of teacher agency, as teachers interpret, adapt, implement, resist, promote, or respond to policy in their professional practice. Editors Patrick C. L. Ng and Esther F. Boucher-Yip have compiled a volume that departs from much language policy research focusing on macro-level issues in that it delves into the micro-level issues of teacher agency in policy response in English language teaching contexts around the world. The editors have gathered thirteen accounts of how, in the face of myriad policy proposals, from “highly prescriptive policies to poorly defined educational goals”, teachers “rise above these challenges to make conscious and deliberate decisions in the classroom to ensure the best educational outcomes for their students” and “translate policy into instructional practice” (p. 5).

An overview of the variety of contexts covered in the book shows just how universal and pervasive a concern teacher agency is. Four chapters focus on Japan, covering primary, secondary, and higher educational contexts. In Chapter 2, Justin Harris examines the introduction of English activities in elementary schools, finding that teachers with limited experience and training are acting as “positive agents of change” (p. 38) in addressing unforeseen issues that arise in their classrooms. In Chapter 3, Jeremie Bouchard discusses the influence of ideologies of monolingualism on EFL teaching policies in junior high schools in Japan, highlighting discrepancies between the approaches promoted by the government and their presence (or lack thereof) in EFL teachers’ practice. Chapter 4 is centred on the high school context. Gregory Paul Glasgow finds, in the context of the “teach English in English” approach promoted by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports Science and Technology, the existence of tensions between native (NES) and non-native English speaking (NNEST) teachers in schools. He urges us to “reconceptualize the notion of ‘qualified teacher of English’ to empower NNESTs and NESTs and enable them to teach successfully in

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their classrooms" (p. 71). The Japanese higher education environment is the focus of Chapter 11, in Patrick C. L. Ng's discussion of the key role that sociocultural factors play in a teachers' engagement with English-medium instruction (EMI) education in a Japanese university.

But Japan is not the only context with a web of challenges arising around teachers' policy adoption and implementation. Two different American contexts – an undergraduate composition classroom as well as the context of initial ESOL teacher training – are at the heart of Chapters 12 and 6 respectively. Brian Rugen carries out an action-research project to propose curricular reform to better serve the diverse clientele of ESL learners in his first-year composition course in Hawaii. Heather A. Linville investigates the policy directive in the initial public-school teacher licensing standards for ESOL teacher trainees which directs them to "view advocacy [for English language learners] as part of their role and act as advocates in many ways" (p. 101). Chinese curricular reform in ELT is the subject of Chapter 1, where Sarina Chugani Molina details the challenges teachers face as they are expected to "shift their views from the traditional knowledge-based transmission model to the competence-based 'multi-role educator'" while also "being tasked with taking into consideration student affective needs, developing learning strategies and raising global cultural awareness" (p. 22). In Malta, Daniel Xerri and Patricia Vella Briffa describe the positive effect in terms of washback and impact of teacher involvement in the development of high-stakes English language testing at the high school level. Teachers of ESL literacy for adult migrants to Australia are the focus of Chapter 7 by Sue Ollerhead and Anne Burns. They find that teachers of adult literacy endeavour to serve students' literacy and pressing social needs by responding in divergent ways to work both "within and against highly prescriptive policy conditions" (p. 105) created by those at great distance from the ground-level classroom context. Ekaterina V. Talalakina and Denis K. Stukal bring us to Russian higher education in Chapter 8, where universities keen to internationalize consider the introduction of academic skills into their EFL curricula and draw on teachers as agents of change in the implementation of these policies. Chapter 8 focuses on Kazakhstan, the only Central Asian signatory of the Bologna declaration. Sara Osman and Elise S. Ahn discuss the "complex positionality" (p. 146) of university language instructors experience in the face of top-down curricular reform stemming from internationalization of the institution. In Chapter 10 Manar Dhahi calls on teachers to view "change as evolutionary, not revolutionary" and to carry out action research to exercise agency into their teaching practice and to best respond to implementation of educational reforms. Finally, in Chapter 13, Ha Huong and Le Bach Truong present a case study from remote rural Vietnam of the positive attitudes and frustrations of a primary school teacher of English

in the face of a comprehensive revamp of the country's foreign language teaching program.

As might be expected in a volume of this type, within the thirteen chapters, the reader is presented with thirteen literature reviews highlighting different relevant studies in this field, as well as a wide variety of definitions of teacher agency and the factors that play a role in it; namely, sociocultural factors and teachers' beliefs, attitudes, experiences, and knowledge. While this lack of a definitive definition of the concept of teacher agency could be a criticism for some, others might offer the counter argument that allowing space for this breadth of approaches is in fact a strength of this book. While in some chapters the authors deem broad socio-cultural factors such as national political context and locally-rooted approaches to ELT of most importance in how teacher agency is exercised, in other chapters it is beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about the nature of language and how it is best learned which most influence agency. Having considered the variety of perspectives in the book, the reader can reflect on and evaluate which of these factors would be most influential in their own context.

On a global scale, the teaching and learning of the English language carries socio-political baggage that the teaching and learning of other languages or other subjects does not. This is related to the English language's current hegemonic position and ELT's historical trajectory which is intertwined with colonialism and other forms of political and economic dominance. In terms of schools, English is not just another subject being learned, but rather, English is the "must-have" language for globalized development, international relations and economic advancement, as well as a commodity that must, in the future, be possessed by all citizens in order to hold one's place in the world" (p. xi). Themes related to this socio-political role of English in politics, in economics, and in the academy, were present in every chapter, adding an extra layer onto the already complex path between policy and implementation, between policy-makers and teachers.

This socio-political layer can be found throughout the chapters of this volume. For example, policy decisions around the nature of EFL curriculum or creation of EMI programming in the university context are wrapped up in questions around internationalization of higher education and the inextricable role that English language has come to play for student mobility and institutional rankings. Several chapters dealt with the issue of pedagogy rooted in monolingual ideology, the "hegemonic discourse in language education" (p. 41). This ideology is imported from ESL contexts it is arguably better suited for (p. 43) and put into place in EFL contexts, where it often results in conflict with teachers' locally-developed practices and methodologies. In the context of Anglophone countries such as Australia and the US, there are the inequalities and marginalization faced by those who immigrate to or study in those countries and the fact that teachers, by policy or

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by choice, are put in a position to become advocates for those from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Finally, there are issues of whether curricular prominence given to English will lead to the marginalization of other local or global languages.

What therefore emerges as a strength of this volume is that it allows the reader to shift scales. Readers can see all thirteen distinct contexts and situations laid side-by-side and identify how macro socio-political themes related to the English language, sociocultural issues in the local context and teachers' own subjectivities are at play in all of them. Readers can zoom in and out, examining different levels of the "multifaceted amalgam" that is individual teacher agency (p. xii) and the "uneven and complex paths of adaptation, recursion, mutability and resistance" (p. xii) of policy creation to implementation.

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paddy seems to become a 'villain crop' — a major source of depletion of underground water, putting undue stress on the ecology and environment as well as causing huge drain of the state's scarce financial resources. Free electricity provided to 13.52 lakh privately owned tube-wells (by March 2017) without any accountability aggravated the depletion of underground water further.

The next three chapters (namely, Five, Six and Seven) are packed with innumerable facts and figures based upon the analysis of primary data. The primary data were gathered through multiple but representative samples consisting of 300 farmers, 50 different industries, 300 rural households and 100 urban households spread across the state's length and breadth. These chapters estimated actual amount of water used for across the state's agriculture, industrial and domestic sectors. These facts proved not only the rising demands of water across these sectors but also gave warning signals to present day excessive uses of water (flooding ways of irrigation) in Punjab agriculture and its inefficient irrigation channels/systems. Further, most of the water users did not pay adequate attention to emerging water insecurity in the state. In future also, the path of rapid urbanisation and industrialisation will certainly aggravate the water woes of the common masses in the state. The study also warned that a climate change — which has already started showing its impact — in the state will badly affect the state's agriculture sector along with increasing vulnerability of the poor masses to the severest scarcity of clean drinking water. In fact, these chapters quantified optimum and actual availability of water, and also provided definite data for all those who are interested in understanding causes and impacts of water insecurity in India.

In the eighth chapter, awareness about water scarcity across various users in Punjab was discussed. It showed that although the most of farmers were aware about the causes of depletion of groundwater (due to paddy cultivation) and its negative effects on Punjab's future agriculture as an occupation. The worrying points highlighted here are that: (i) the most of sampled farmers do not want to engage themselves or their off-springs in the agriculture, if they can access to an alternative occupation; and (ii) an overwhelming majority of farmers do not believe in the (a) rain water harvesting (89%) or (b) applying any water saving technique (78%). Similarly, most of sampled industrial units were aware of water scarcity and its judicious uses, yet most of them neither had any water harvesting and conservation technique nor installed effluent treatment plants — despite many warnings issued by the state authorities. Regarding water needs of the domestic sector, the emerging water situation becomes more aggravated as the households invariably demand 24x7 hours clean water supply, but do not want to pay any charge of tap water and sanitation.

The last two chapters of this book probably are the most incisive ones. The chapter nine, namely, 'Water Governance and Policy Response' explores the

role of institutions, governance, and policy related laws, rules and regulations in providing sufficient water to each sector. It also builds a proper environment that will lead to the optimum, sustainable and efficient use of natural resources, including water. It unraveled that under the Indian Constitution, water is primarily a state subject, but due to number of reasons such as inter-state water conflicts, international dimensions of some of India's rivers, rising water demands across sectors, over-use of underground water in some states, increased pollution of river water, etc., the Centre has been taking keen interest in water availability and related issues. At central level, a number of laws have been enacted, policy decisions were undertaken, expert committees and tribunals were appointed to resolve demand-supply gaps water requirements. Though these efforts brought out many successes (through formal and informal arrangements) in sharing river waters across competing states, helped in building consensus over water uses rights of major river basins and raised consciousness of state authorities to control river water pollution in India, yet not too much has been visible at the ground level.

Further, the study found that policy initiatives undertaken in Punjab on declining water table and polluting subsoil water were not only sporadic but also very weak. The irony of Punjab state lies in that it has neither its own agricultural policy nor irrigation policy nor water policy. In fact, state has suffered from a policy paralysis for the over last four decades on many water issues as the policies of central government often ignore the state's interests, if applied. The only worthwhile policy initiative issued was the enactment of Water Conservation Act 2009, which banned the sowing of paddy before 15<sup>th</sup> June in the state. Efforts of the Punjab Agricultural University and Punjab Government regarding water conservation techniques such as micro irrigation, laser leveling, delayed paddy plantation, direct sowing of paddy, etc. did not show appreciable results. Even, the crop diversification did not start in spite of the fact that many expert committees and organisations recommended substantial shifting of paddy to other crops. Further, the situation on the water consumption and conservation by industrial and domestic sectors in the state were very disappointing as whatever policies, technical and legal measures are available for implementations are proving just paper tigers. The significance of the last chapter lies in the summary of arguments on different aspects of emerging water insecurity in India with a special focus on her most agriculturally advanced state of Punjab. In addition to these issues, the chapter suggested many doable policy interventions for regulating different uses of water, preventing the fast depleting water table, adopting water conservation techniques and holistic ways of governance.

This book is an excellent description of water resources and emerging dangers of water insecurity in the state that are very helpful for understanding the nuances of India's emerging water insecurity and related challenges. It also proves how the precious underground water in Punjab is virtually being exported

to the rest of India in the form of surplus food grains. In fact, its tryst lies in the innumerable facts and figures of primary survey that have added a new dimension to the logical and scientific reasoning followed in the book. However, too many chapters, facts and figures of different natures, casual approach of copy editor/s at few places may irk readers in formulating a unifying narrative that sews through the chapters of the book. Further, most of the chapters are loaded with heavy information.

Nonetheless, the insights of the book are most valuable arguments for those people who are grappling with the problem of sustainable water development and interested in understanding the extent of water insecurity, its intricate linkages with other forms of security (like food security), and threats of water stress posed to the Nation in general and Punjab in particular. In nutshell, this book is a vivid account of over-exploitation of Punjab's water resources and water-use behaviour of farmers, industrial units, rural and urban households. The book must be read by every water-user, social scientist, policy maker, environmental expert, and for all those who are concerned with the emerging water insecurity in the world !!!

**Sukhwinder Singh**

# Book Review

## A Review of *Debates in Geography Education, 2nd Edition* Through Three Lenses

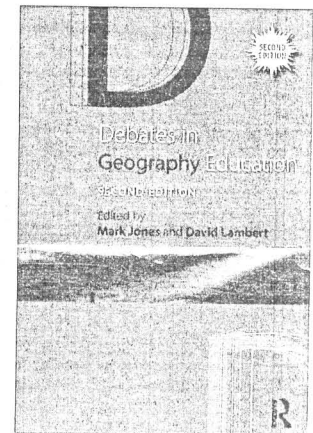
Reviewed by Sean Loomis  
University of Central Florida  
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### INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW FRAMEWORK

Edited by Mark Jones and David Lambert, *Debates in Geography Education, 2nd edition* (2018) is part of a series of books in the *Debates in Subject Teaching* series produced by Routledge, with the first edition having been printed in 2013. Like the other books in the series, the goal of this text is to get those who are subject teachers in geography education the lay of the land in current issues in geography education and allow them an inside peak at what those in ivory towers are debating about the state of education. Jones and Lambert write that “(t)he aim is to produce a collection of comparatively short, sharp[,] and rigorous chapters to further debates concerning geography’s spirit and purpose and particularly what teachers’ subject expertise means in relation to this” (Lambert and Jones 2018: 1). In the collection of these works together, the contributing authors have given those in the field of geography education the necessary tools to understand their own position in their curriculum, pedagogy, epistemology, and teaching philosophy as it relates to the realm of geography education.

When examining whether Jones and Lambert met their intended aim, I found it was necessary to ask who this is for. Who is the intended audience? From there, the value of the text can be determined.

It is important to note that the authors are all found from within the United Kingdom, so a distinctly British perspective on geography pedagogy, educational policy, and academic subject debate is found within. While conducting this review, it was necessary



to examine my own position when working through the chapters, from which I developed three distinct lenses through which to reflect on and evaluate the findings of this book. First, I examined it from the perspective of a secondary geography teacher, determining whether what was in *Debates in Geography Education, 2nd edition* would be useful for those toiling in the trenches of public schools. In particular, how helpful would this text be in planning and preparing a lesson plan? Second, as a junior researcher, I examined whether this collection of writings would be beneficial to one who is trying to understand the main issues going on in geography education today and who the most influential thinkers are. Third, as someone who is not British, I intended to see whether what is discussed in this book is useful outside of the Commonwealth and could adequately be applied to geography classrooms elsewhere. Were the themes esoterically English or more ecumenical?

The text is divided into three primary sections: policy debates, classroom debates, and subject debates. Policy debates look at how government policy shapes geography education and curriculum goals as well as the impact of state-sanctioned assessments on geography curriculum and day-to-day activities. The classroom debates examine different aspects of pedagogy, epistemology, and teaching philosophy, and this is where the bulk of the text is found. The final section is dedicated to particular subject debates that may be examined within the academic community and includes topics such as geography and the Anthropocene, how universities shape school geography education, and the identity of geography as an academic discipline.

## PART I: POLICY DEBATES

This was the shortest of the three main parts of the text, including only two chapters. The first focused on the evolution of geography curriculum within Key Stages 1, 2, and 3 in the English Geography National Curriculum, and Chapter 2 focused on the impact of General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams on the English geography classroom. As one might surmise from this brief description, it is easy to get lost in the alphabet soup of acronyms and other shorthand descriptions within English educational policy and bureaucracy. I recommend spending some time at the beginning getting familiar with the list of acronyms given in the introduction. This will save time from having to jump back and forth between the book and Google trying to figure out each sentence.

Despite what might be viewed as a narrow focus on the issues within a purely English context, these two chapters were still very informative. In particular, the first chapter gives a good account about how policy initiatives and politics can mold public school curriculum both intentionally and unintentionally. For instance, John Hopkin and Fran Martin mention how a shift to a more centralized educational policy environment in the late 20th century and especially after 2010 created a push for more traditional subjects to be taught, stating "(s)ince 2010 this tension played out in the enactment of a revised National Curriculum designed to restore high standards in maintained schools, simultaneously with the active promotion of Academies and Free Schools, whose professed advantages included freedom from the National Curriculum—in order to secure high standards" (Hopkin and Martin 2018: 21–23). In essence, a push for more centralized governmental control over the curriculum led to more standards, which in turn leads to more testing. This is a notion that any public school teacher within the United States, Turkey, China, and many other countries and contexts can relate to and is not limited to the British Isles. Social studies curriculum is often shaped by politics.

A similar vein can be followed in Chapter 2, examining how enacting the new GCSE testing has impacted geography classrooms. What is interesting here is that the GCSE exams not only include geography content but also require fieldwork to be accomplished.

*"...how policy and initiatives and politics can mold public school curriculum..."*

This is in stark contrast to what is taught in many American schools, where geography gets little to no focus. Although many school districts require that we teach United States History at three separate times during the average student's schooling (Ochoa-Becker 2007), there are only brief bits of geography peppered in. Again, this speaks to the value of examining debates in geography education from an outside perspective, as it enables us to see how our curriculum could be influenced by introducing such a change. However, before looking into these chapters seeking a perfect recipe for solutions to these issues, it should be noted that these chapters, as well as all the other chapters in this book, are designed to give a glimpse into the greater debates in how we teach geography. Their purpose is to give an overview of current trends to those interested in what is going on in geography education, not to outline policy. To this end, I found these chapters enlightening and informative and feel that other geography teachers outside of the British educational system would find merit in reading them.

## PART II: "CLASSROOM" DEBATES

The section on classroom debates involves most of what is actually done within the classroom by classroom teachers and professors. Of the three different sections, this was the most universal in appeal. That being said, the chapters ran from being mostly useful for geography teachers at the primary and secondary level (i.e., those attempting to decide whether their curriculum should be organized by regions or by themes) versus researchers and academics who study geography education as a whole (i.e., those looking at the greater epistemological underpinnings of the enacted geography curriculum and the knowledge that it values). It is important to note that even primary school teachers should at least be somewhat familiar with what university researchers are writing about in their studies, as this research often informs educational policy down the road. This notion is explored toward the end of the book in Chapter 19, "Understanding the Gap Between Schools and Universities" (Butt and Collins 2018). However, it is also important to remind university researchers and scholars in the field that their research must be able to translate to teachers in the real world to have any impact. Getting lost in clouds of thought and debates about philosophical minutia gives little benefit to teachers who have to explain where things are in the real world and why they are there. This section of the book gives a good sampling of different topics from which both the teacher and the researcher in geography education can benefit.

Among the fourteen chapters in Part II were interwoven themes that help connect major ideas within the book and illustrate some of the tension between authors both past and present. First, several authors within the book, such as Eleanor Rawling, Alex Standish, and Clare Brooks, focused on which curriculum perspective was best for students to examine geography through. Their writing was focused on the different methods from which to organize geography curricula, whether to examine through the concept of place or regional geography or by starting with personal experiences and expanding from there.

Second, authors mentioned a need for content pluralism between rote memorization and inquiry (sometimes spelled as *enquiry* in the book). This notion is implied within much of the curriculum, in particular in the criticisms of the sheer breadth and shallow depth of geography curriculums that do not provide sufficient background knowledge for students to make meaningful inquiries about information. For example, in the chapter "Physical Geography," Duncan Hawley, borrowing from Sadler and Fowler, states "before students are able to make considered arguments and decisions about complex socio-scientific issues that are well supported, qualified[,] and justified, they need to develop a content and conceptual knowledge base that is significant in terms of breadth, depth[,] and organization"

*"...teachers should at least be somewhat familiar with what university researchers are writing ... as this research often informs educational policy..."*

(Hawley 2018: 81). There is a call to find the Aristotelean golden mean of inquiry. On one side there is memorizing random facts with no inquiry whatsoever. On the other there is pure inquiry without the information needed to examine questions. Ideally, then, we want our students in the middle, to be able to examine legitimate questions of geography using primary sources but to also have the content knowledge and scaffolding to understand what questions to be asking.

Third, there were several chapters about how technology and geography meet and will affect the development of the field in years to come. I had some high hopes for these chapters, as I would like to infuse my classrooms with innovative new tools, engaging interactive, and other interesting elements that I can use to make geography come alive in the classroom. Unfortunately, these chapters did little more than simply draw attention to these fields as developing, mentioning Google Maps and how the GIS programs that exist are not necessarily designed for the classroom (Fargher 2018). There was an important piece of insight in the chapter "The Impact of Technology on Geography and Geography Teachers" by Alan Parkinson (2018), who asks, "is technology always the best tool to use?" Although we might be enticed with the allure of 3-D imaging, GIS, and other online interactive, we may be better served by simply having decent maps for students to work with. For the classroom teacher, there are four chapters in particular that stood out as essential reading for geography teachers at any level. First was the chapter "The Enquiry Approach in Geography" by Jane Ferreri. Ferreri points to a growing issue in social studies education on the overemphasis on routine and memorization, stating that textbooks often "present information without encouraging students to question or challenge and indeed the increasing use of PowerPoint presentations can tempt teachers simply to provide information as fact rather than inspire their students to ask questions and investigate for themselves" (Ferreri 2018: 119). She does a wonderful job outlining how to bring meaningful and deep questioning into everyday practice in the classroom and provides an easy-to-follow framework (Ferreri 2018) that I plan on sharing with as many fellow teachers as possible. Second, Mark Jones' chapter "Personalizing Learning in Geography" provides a powerful method for bringing geography's idiosyncratic and convoluted notions down to a place where even the most novice of scholars can access them. In particular I enjoyed his idea of how personalizing geography helps create deeper meaning for students, mentioning that "if we want students to be part of the meaning-making process then 'conversations' firstly need to involve them, but then where this occurs it also needs to be an authentic experience rather than students views, merely treated as minor footnotes in an unaltered adult text" (Jones 2018: 135, quoting from Fielding and Peito 2002). In essence, he argues that by personalizing geography education, you shift the focus from teacher-led rote memorization to a classroom that encourages inquiry. Third, Paul Weeden and Michael Simmons' chapter "Formative Assessment" (2018) is good reading for school teachers of any subject and pairs well with Mary Biddulph's chapter "Curriculum Enactment" (2018) that immediately follows. Both chapters emphasize that it is important to maintain a holistic view of a child's education rather than having a laser focus on the results of some summative assessment, with Biddulph emphasizing not only that we should not overly concern ourselves with "professional paraphernalia" but that we must also focus on a child's engagement with the material. Last, David Mitchell's chapter "Handling Controversial Issues in Geography" (2018) is a good overview of how controversy enters the geography classroom and can help those geography teachers who are attempting to create a more democratic experience in their classrooms. Mitchell not only discusses why teaching controversial issues in geography is important but also does an excellent job of orienting teachers toward a more democratic teaching philosophy by asking "what is this geography for?"

Overall, I would state that this section is the one that most geography teachers in the world would find beneficial to read. Whether they are new to the field of teaching geography or getting an update on theory and practice in geography education, the chapters in Part II give an excellent survey to teachers. The topics would also be helpful to those who

"...how to bring  
meaningful and deep  
questioning into  
everyday practice in  
the classroom..."

do research in the field, although in general each chapter only offers a brief glimpse into each area. This might not suffice for an expert in the field of geography education who may already be aware of these topic debates, but that does not seem to be the intended audience.

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### **PART III: SUBJECT DEBATES**

Of the three main sections of this book, this section is best suited for researchers in the field of geography education, although it is also educative for geography teachers to see what research in geography education is being conducted. There were six chapters in this section, focusing more on the subject of geography, how it is defined, its place in the curriculum, the difference between school geography and university geography, and how geography education is studied. I will focus on two chapters that stood out as particularly profound, or at least memorable. Part III starts with a chapter on the concept of the Anthropocene, or the era in which humans have had the most profound effect on the development of Earth's physical systems. This chapter helps to reconceptualize the notion of human–environment interaction, a notion that owes its classroom origins to the “Five Themes of Geography” found in outdated textbooks across the United States and elsewhere. According to Rawding (2018), human–environment interaction has evolved to being the primary lens through which we examine the relationship between us and the Earth. This encourages students to form a more holistic understanding of the relationship we share with the planet. The author writes that “focusing on any form of society–nature dualism, simplifies a world that is in reality far messier than such over-simplistic conceptualizations would suggest” (Rawding 2018: 246). Reorienting geography education toward a notion that humans are the most profound force of change on the planet might seem solipsistic, but Rawding points out that there is evidence of this being the case, although there are issues with how the Anthropocene is defined.

Another memorable chapter is written by Roger Firth on “Recontextualizing Geography as a School Subject,” and it stands out as being the most complex and perhaps even convoluted of the chapters. Whereas the chapters in Part II were mostly of use for classroom teachers, this one is tailor-made for the research enthusiast with a penchant for philosophy. Firth examines the different epistemological underpinnings of geography curricula (although what is examined could probably be employed to any school curriculum), with a particular emphasis on Basil Bernstein's social realism and a departure from positivist or social constructivism (Firth 2018). This chapter is memorable for two reasons. First, it was perhaps the most complicated of the whole book. Second, it demonstrates how geography education wrestles with the nature of being a social science in that it is based on subjective and sometimes arbitrary knowledge of a seemingly objective world.

*“...human–environment interaction has evolved to being the primary lens through which we examine the relationship between us and the Earth.”*

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### **CONCLUSION**

It is important that, as educators, we constantly strive toward professionalism. Essential to that endeavor is to remain up-to-date with the research and progress being made in our subject areas. That was the goal of the authors within *Debates in Geography Education*, and I would state that they have done a stellar job. I found this book to be an immense help to get a firm understanding about the major topics of discussion in my profession as well

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# In Search of Ahimsa

RAJNI BAKSHI

The cover of *Nonviolence in Modern Indian History*, a collection of essays edited by David Hardiman, shows Gandhian activist P V Rajagopal addressing a large gathering of the Ekta Parishad in 2007. This can easily lead a reader to expect that the book contains answers to one of the most urgent questions of our times: How can non-violence be an effective counter to hatred and polarisation in contemporary India?

Those seeking clear and direct answers to this question will be disappointed. Instead, this book offers glimpses of past struggles to practise nonviolence which can inform that quest for answers.

## Ahimsa as Love

First of all, how ahimsa is defined is crucial. In the first chapter of the book, an essay by Hardiman on the shifting meanings of ahimsa in Indian history, gives a brief overview of different types of violence as understood by various traditions of the subcontinent. The categories include accidental, occupational, protective and intentional violence. Of these, only the intentional type has traditionally been deemed to be *himsa* or violence.

Hardiman notes that personal practice of non-violence, by Jains for instance, has been applied formulaically rather than as an ideal and method to create a better world. Nevertheless, Gandhi's ambitious endeavour for non-violence had to contend with the claim, made among others by Lala Lajpat Rai, that ahimsa had contributed to the emasculation and downfall of India. On the contrary, Gandhi argued, the truth of ahimsa had either been ignored or perverted for over 1,500 years.

Varying interpretations of non-violence posed a problem even during the freedom struggle. Anil Nauriya's essay on "Nonviolent Action and Socialist Radicalism" describes Acharya Narendra

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Nonviolence in Modern Indian History** edited by David Hardiman, Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2017; pp ix + 259, ₹1,095.

Deva's discomfort with the many possible interpretations of what is essentially a metaphysical concept.

It is Tridip Suvrud's essay, titled "Fiery Ordeal: Conundrums of Ahimsa," that gives the reader an intimate understanding of Gandhi's definition of violence and non-violence. The fiery ordeal was a term used by Gandhi to describe the moral dilemma he faced at one juncture on whether or not to end the agony of a terminally ill calf at Sabarmati Ashram. Gandhi supported putting an end to the calf's agony as an act of love, even though he knew that public opinion would not approve of his action. But, an act of conscience and performance of duty, Gandhi was clear, cannot be made contingent on public opinion.

Suvrud, reading Gandhi in the original Gujarati, suggests that the appropriate English word for the term ahimsa is love rather than non-violence. This is why Gandhi's definition of violence was any act of causing pain to, wishing ill to, or killing a living being that was driven by anger or a selfish intent, that is, the opposite of love. That is why swaraj and ahimsa were inextricable for Gandhi; for swaraj was the act of ruling or controlling one's mind and passions.

Acknowledging that perfect control over the self and, thus, perfect ahimsa is not possible in the human frame, Gandhi's struggle was to find ways to keep ahimsa within the human grasp, that is, not to define it in a manner that makes it unrealisable. This is a crucial clue for contemporary efforts to work with non-violence: they cannot be built

upon an understanding of violence in absolutist terms.

## Ahimsa and Injustice

We live in a time when Gandhi's non-violence is commonly misrepresented as a way of keeping dominant elites in place. V Geetha's essay, "Travelling with Non-violence," dwells on the manner in which Gandhi tried to balance the claims of justice and love or compassion. Geetha significantly highlights that for Gandhi, injustice and wrongdoing were inherently violent. The central question today is this: Can there be conversion of hearts in response to what Gandhi termed the politics of "anguished love?" As Geetha writes, "sustained exchanges between the arbiters of injustice and the votaries of justice ought to constitute the struggle for justice" (pp 229–30).

Geetha, who is a dedicated and insightful scholar of Ambedkar's writings, gives a nuanced description of what she calls the "disconcerted agony" that Gandhi experienced after signing of the Poona Pact:

While he (Gandhi) had circumvented B R Ambedkar's firm commitment to justice and made him settle for a measure that left Dalits linked to the caste Hindus while granting them concessions—this is the form that compassion took in this instance—he realised that the love he sought, both for his cause and the untouchables was vulnerable to being expressed as bad faith, and in fact could be deeply flawed—this in fact was the burden of his many speeches during the years 1933–36. He expressed his anguish at the patronising tone that caste Hindus adopted; he was unhappy with the paltriness of spirit that some of them exhibited, and when in 1935 Ambedkar proclaimed his desire to not die a Hindu, he wrote in a letter to Vallabhbhai Patel that howsoever one read this decision, the fact remained that even now caste Hindus and others were more committed to win Ambedkar to their point of view, with respect to conversion, rather than fighting untouchability. He also noted that Ambedkar had every right to want to opt out of Hinduism and that his anger was entirely justified. It was the Hindus that were indebted to Dalits, he pointed out, and it would behove them to pay that debt, which in Gandhi's lexicon translated into a programme of serving and suffering. (p 232)

These details of historical record are particularly important at a time when a

far more one-dimensional, or biased, recollection of the Poona Pact is more common. At the same time there remains the danger of ahimsa being deployed as a tool in the hands of elites. Nauriya's essay counters this anxiety by highlighting that, in Acharya Narendra Deva's assessment, Gandhian non-violence can be established only by elimination of exploitation.

### Strategic Non-violent Resistance

Over the last 70-odd years there has been a global proliferation of non-violent resistance. But, how much of strategic use of non-violent resistance, in different corners of the world, actually qualifies as ahimsa?

Hardiman's essay "Nonviolent Resistance in India 1915-47" offers some clues because it is mostly a review of Western literature both studying Gandhi's endeavour in India and movements across the world since the end of colonialism. This includes, naturally, the works of Gene Sharp who argued that non-violent resistance is preferable not because it is morally right, but because it is more expedient for defeating the opponent and creating a more lasting result. Hardiman points out that Sharp's work set a pattern for work in this field which cited historical examples in a simplistic manner and tailored them to fit the claim in favour of expediency.

Hardiman argues that such theorists have been driven by their need to make a convincing case to a Western readership that non-violence is a viable method for challenging oppressive power. In order to do this, both the moral dimension and Gandhi's emphasis on constructive work are underplayed in order to make non-violence look more widely practicable.

Therefore, Hardiman gives a detailed review of *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (2011) by Erica Cehnoweth and Maria J Stephan, perhaps the most extensive study on the topic. Chenoweth and Stephan compared 323 protest campaigns across the world from 1900 to 2006, of which, about one-third were predominantly nonviolent. While only 25% of the violent movements succeeded in attaining their goal, 53% of the non-violent movements were a success. The study also

found that the frequency of non-violent movements has been increasing over time, while the success rate of violent movements has been declining. Still more significantly, the study noted that extreme repression creates a "backfire effect," which increases support for a non-violent struggle.

While this analysis is heartening for all those who oppose repressive regimes there is also a severe limitation in the statist mentality of such non-violent resistance. As Hardiman writes:

Capturing State power and transforming a society through the work of a constitutional government that is responsible to an electorate is regarded as the panacea. It celebrates a form of *coup d'état* while downplaying the fact that all too often the interest groups that gain office by such means start to misappropriate resources for themselves and govern in corrupt and repressive ways. Without ongoing resistance that builds new institutions from below, there is no genuine democracy—at least not in the sense that radical critics of constitutional democracy (such as Gandhi) have understood it. (p 84)

Above all, what matters most is the ongoing process of non-violence as a public culture rather than, what are often, short term victories over state power. In India, this has been evident in various movements, notably the Chipko Movement and the Narmada Bachao Andolan. In addition there have been lesser known successes by individual activists such as Jagannathan, whose story is told in one chapter of the book.

### Ahimsa and Tantramukti

Kurt Schock's essay titled "Gandhian Struggles for Land in India" takes on the claim that non-violent resistance tends to be a "bourgeois" method of struggle that is suitable only for extending representative democracy and a market-based economy. Schock, who is also author of a major book, *Unarmed Insurrections:*

*People Power Movements in Nondemocracies* (2005), argues that, on the contrary, non-violent resistance is both radical and revolutionary and can be used to challenge structural violence. In a narrative that traverses from the Bhoodan Movement to the land rights struggles of the Ekta Parishad in India today, Schock describes the organisational methodology.

Among the strands common to both movements Schock identifies Vinoba's principle of *tantramukti*, namely freedom from any formal structure. This implies a people's movement that is self-activating rather than dependent on formal organisations. But, this, argues Schock, may well have contributed to the demise of the Bhoodan Movement after Vinoba retired from activism in 1969. Perhaps learning from those mistakes, the Ekta Parishad has built a decentralised network of organisations that presumably enable it to retain spontaneity while having a fulcrum that holds it all together. However, while Bhoodan challenged the notion of private property, Ekta Parishad does not.

Given that land distribution is a highly charged issue across the global South, a movement like Ekta Parishad is acutely relevant. Schock writes:

Since increasing land inequality plagues India and the violent Naxalite movement is growing, Gandhian movements are crucial as they aim to promote justice while also breaking cycles of violence rather than perpetuating them. (p 228)

Published by Orient BlackSwan as part of its Gandhi Studies series, this book is a somewhat disparate collection of essays that provide a historical overview, but may leave you hungry for a more detailed understanding of how non-violence has proven to be a practicable ideal.

Rajni Bakshi ([rajnibakshi@yahoo.com](mailto:rajnibakshi@yahoo.com)) is a freelance journalist based in Mumbai.

### EPW Index

An author-title index for EPW has been prepared for the years from 1968 to 2012. The PDFs of the Index have been uploaded, year-wise, on the EPW website. Visitors can download the Index for all the years from the site. (The Index for a few years is yet to be prepared and will be uploaded when ready.)

EPW would like to acknowledge the help of the staff of the library of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, in preparing the index under a project supported by the RD Tata Trust.

Preet Bharara  
Simple and brilliant. The New Yorker

DOING  
JUSTICE

A Prosecutor's  
Thoughts on  
Crime,  
Punishment  
and the  
Rule of Law

books Preet Bharara

Doing Justice: A Prosecutor's Thoughts on Crime, Punishment and the Rule of Law | Bloomsbury | 345 pages | Rs 499

## Taking His Own Course

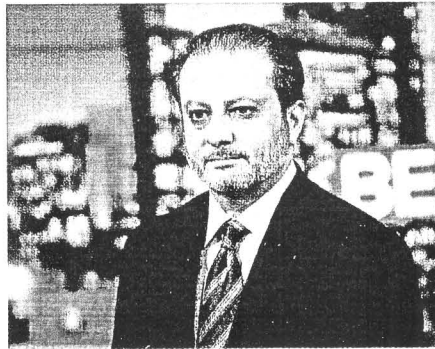
The nemesis of many influential and lawless Americans, Preet Bharara writes about his absolute fealty to justice with passionate conviction

BY SAIF MAHMOOD

NDIA-born Preet Bharara first shot into fame in 2009 when, within months of taking over as US Attorney for the New York Southern District, he decided to prosecute Raj Rajaratnam, the manager of a seven-billion-dollar hedge fund, on securities-fraud charges. In a press conference, Bharara claimed he had unearthed the biggest insider trading fraud in US history, which would serve as a “wake-up call for Wall Street”. In following years, Bharara prosecuted an impressive list of America’s powerful, till he was summarily fired by Donald Trump in 2017. He decided to wear his dismissal as a badge of honour, turn to academics and write the memoirs of his tenure as US Attorney to tell people how, for eight years, he was “doing justice”.

Bharara divides his book into four parts and, like an enthusiastic prosecutor, titles each of them on the various stages of a criminal case. Running into 323 pages, they are ‘Inquiry’, ‘Accusation’, ‘Judgment’ and ‘Punishment’. Each begins with an introduction, followed by various chapters through which runs a common thread of thought—“law is an amazing tool, but it has limits. Good people, on the other hand, don’t have limits”. This is Bharara’s dominant thesis. To justify it, he writes about the wide variety of cases he handled as a US attorney and punctuates his stories with the perils faced by his office. Bharara prides himself in always having upheld prosecutorial ethics, applauds colleagues, expounds principles of criminal jurisprudence, questions judgments and bemoans acts of vengeance against religious minorities. In a chapter curiously titled ‘Bollywood’, he explains how he was accused of deliberately going after the Indian-American community to please his ‘white masters’. His justified anger

is writ large as he details a 2013 case where an Indian diplomat was arrested by the state department for underpaying her domestic help. The arrest, he says, “caused an international incident” and, in India, “BJP...shrewdly seized upon this supposed Western insult to Indian sovereignty and caused a crisis for the Congress Party”. He laments how “an avalanche of vitriol and bile” descended on him just because he was Indian-born, even though he came to



Bharara admits to failings but lays the ground to tell us that despite these he and his colleagues always kept ‘justice’ first. His account is no exception to a degree of self-applause.

know of the case only a day before the arrest. Bharara defended his case, and perhaps because he was personally accused, defended it “loudly”.

Does Bharara ever admit to human failings? He does. But he lays the ground with elan to tell his readers that despite their human failings, he and his colleagues always kept ‘justice’ first: “We did not always get it right... We pursued cases some people thought were overreach, and we walked away from others that some were dying to see us bring. But I can’t recall a time when we didn’t

think hard about what we were doing, why we were doing it, and whether it was in the interests of justice”. The danger of some degree of self-applause is inherent in every biographical account and Bharara’s is no exception. I would have loved to read some more about the defence put forth in the cases he writes about.

Bharara’s language is conversational and his syntax pellucid. His innate compassion comes to the fore when he handles subjects like racial retaliation and his fearlessness shines when he slams the Trump administration. In some parts, his writing typifies the finesse of the always-triumphant downtown attorney we watch in American sitcoms; in others it evokes that certain sense of plainness characteristic only to the nonchalant man on New York’s streets. Bharara shifts between the two with reasonable mastery.

To point out just one ‘takeaway’ from Doing Justice, I would quote these ending sentences: “You will not find God or grace in legal concepts, in formal notions of criminal justice. Certain values and ideals are beyond justice. They include mercy, forgiveness, redemption, dignity. Also love... The law is not in the business of forgiveness or redemption. The law cannot compel us to love each other or respect each other. It cannot cancel hate or conquer evil; teach grace or extinguish passions. The law cannot achieve these things, not by itself. It takes people—brave and strong and extraordinary people”. By writing this book at a time when dissent is being crushed and definitions of justice are changing the world over, Bharara has proved beyond reasonable doubt (to use a prosecutorial expression) that his name must go in the list of such extraordinary people for having written with the courage of conviction. □

*(The author is a human rights activist and author of Beloved Delhi: A Mughal City & Her Greatest Poets)*

[ BOOKS ]

# THE ONCE AND FUTURE CONSTITUTION

By Rohit De

**A**dvancing rights through the courts in India remains a difficult task. Facing a conservative judiciary, a hostile executive and vested interests of dominant social orders, advocates have to turn to the text of the Constitution, the precedents of the Supreme Court and concepts of international law to protect and advance constitutional rights. Foreign law has legitimacy issues, judicial precedents aren't always progressive and the constitutional text is a narrow foothold.

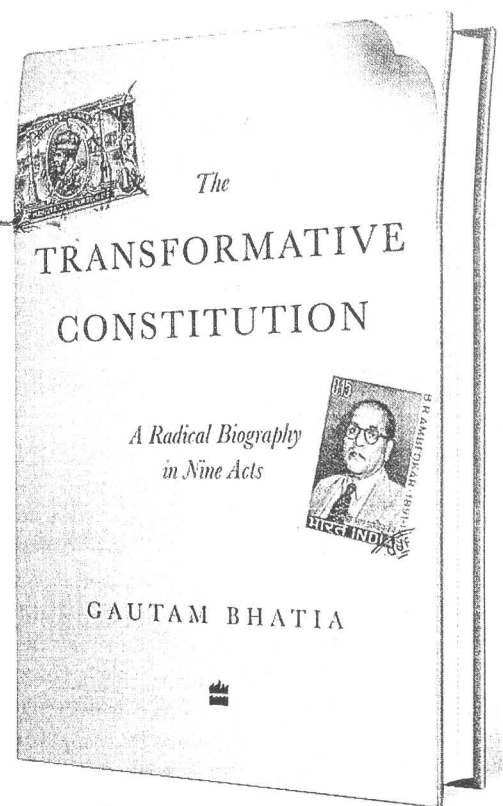
Written by men and women who were simultaneously seeking to transform India's future and manage a tumultuous present of massive migration, mass violence and poverty, the Constitution contains seemingly contradictory elements. Freedom of speech coexists with frequent internet shutdowns, the right to equality appears to permit housing discrimination against Muslims and liberty accommodates laws of sedition and preventive detention. So what is an intrepid lawyer to do?

Gautam Bhatia, along with being a Supreme Court lawyer and scholar who has played a key role in litigation on privacy, political detentions, Aadhaar and Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, is also an internationally renowned, Hugo-nominated reviewer of speculative fiction. It is

perhaps this appreciation of alternate universes that allows him to sidestep conventional strategies of incrementalism and judicial activism through public interest litigation. Instead, he advocates a revolutionary method of engaging with the Constitution—offering in this book a set of nine strategies to overcome what seem to be the limits of the Constitution. As a genre, *The Transformative Constitution* has more in common with Lenin's *What is to be Done?* than dry treatises on constitutional interpretation.

Bhatia's method builds on the recognition that the Constitution replaced the colonial logic of governance with that of popular sovereignty, public participation and limited government; and sought to reconstruct Indian society by dismantling

**Gautam Bhatia's formulation ensures that the Constitution is not 'frozen in time', nor does it give judges a blank cheque to rewrite the Constitution**



**THE TRANSFORMATIVE CONSTITUTION**  
A Radical Biography in Nine Acts  
by Gautam Bhatia  
HARPERCOLLINS  
₹699; 544 pages

hierarchies of caste, poverty and gender. He sets out his approach in two steps. Firstly, he expands the canon of constitutional interpretation keeping in mind the "injustices it sought to repudiate"—thus, Tarabai Shinde's critique of patriarchy, Motilal Nehru's crusade against arbitrary detention and B.R. Ambedkar's Mahad Satyagraha join and replace US Supreme Court decisions as tools of interpretation. Rather than rights coming from abroad or being imposed from above, Bhatia affirms a history of Indians developing and asserting their own concepts of rights to fit their circumstances.

Secondly, he asserts that the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity that underlie the Constitution cannot be read in isolation from each other. It is the inclusion of

Biography X

Law ✓

fraternity in the triumvirate of core constitutional values—replacing the more commonly cited values of dignity or ‘right to life’—that makes Bhatia’s account stand out from other liberal engagements. In his formulation, equality and liberty must be interpreted in the direction of reducing exclusion from citizenship and market. Together, this ensures that the Constitution is not “frozen in time”, bound to an “original meaning” that the framers intended and nor does it give judges a blank cheque to rewrite the Constitution by importing meanings that detract from the governing principles.

What does this mean for the ordinary citizen? For instance, if you are a Muslim woman who has been denied the right to buy an apartment by the housing society, your remedies are limited by the conventional understanding that the right to equality applies only against the State and not private parties, and the Supreme Court ruling in the Zoroastrian Co-operative Housing Society case allows private associations to contract to preserve their “common bonds”. Bhatia offers a way out through an invigorated reading of Article 15(2) which prevents discrimination with regard to “access to shops etc.”, arguing that it reaches to all private economic market transactions, drawing on debates in the Constituent Assembly and the history of a hundred-year-long struggle by the Dalits against spatial and economic exclusion. Freedom in India thus meant not just freedom from the State above, but also a horizontal independence from exclusionary authorities.

Or if you are a Hindu wife who wants to separate from her husband, you can be compelled to return to him under “restitution of conjugal rights” in the Hindu Marriage Act. The Supreme Court

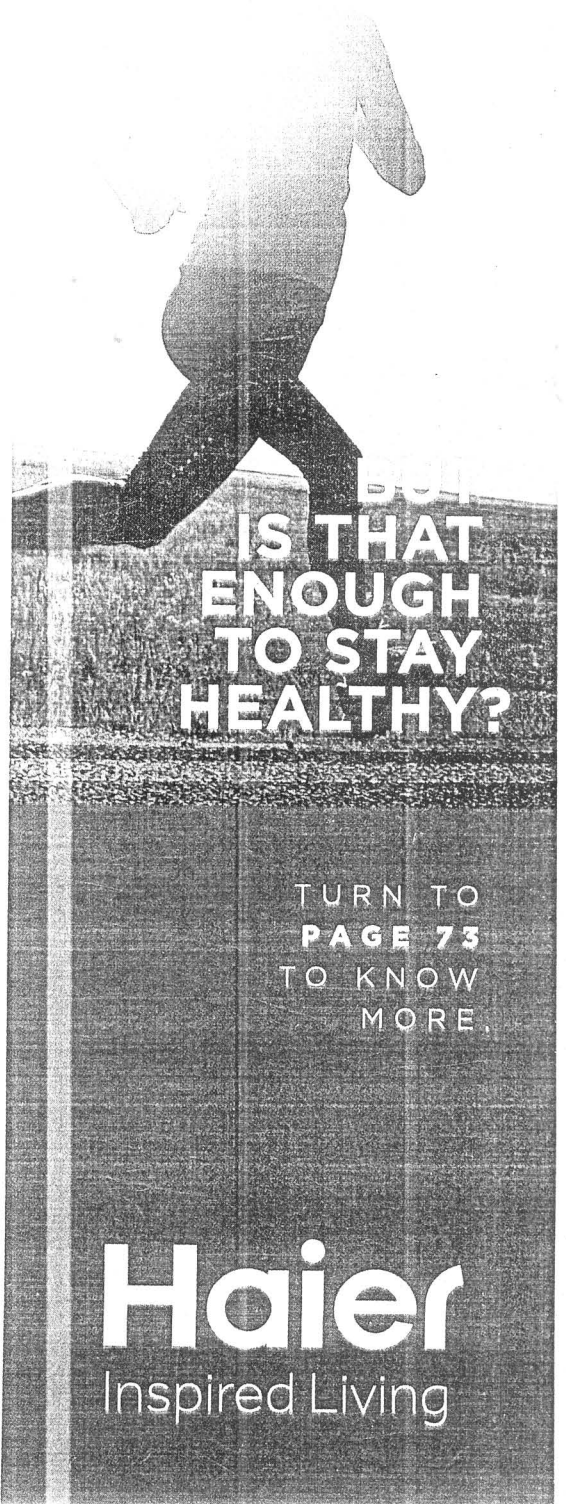
has upheld the constitutionality of restitution arguing that the “right is inherent in marriage itself” and is needed to preserve it and the Indian Penal Code does not recognise marital rape. Bhatia charts a strategy drawing upon the long history of Indian women bringing the language of rights into the “private sphere” of the family and the household—beginning with the 19th century child bride Rukhmbai’s refusal to join her husband, to a minor legal victory in the Andhra Pradesh High Court, where the Telugu actress Saritha was able to successfully argue that “restitution of conjugal rights” violates personal privacy, bodily integrity and dignity—thus, making a compelling case for striking down both restitution and the marital rape exception drawing on the long history of Indian women critiquing family relations using the language of public law and rights.

Despite throwing out both precedence and protocol, Bhatia is neither a revolutionary nor an apostate, what he offers is a set of interpretive tools and techniques to renew faith in the transformative vision of the Constitution. Thus, 1950 is the centre of the narrative and is a surprising limit to the canon of historical events and voices that he draws upon. However, as citizens read and build upon his strategies, one can imagine the addition of Namdeo Dhasal’s poetry, the women’s movements agitation for rape law reform or the Narmada Bachao Aandolan’s campaign for the right against displacement forming other roadmaps to achieve the promise of equality, liberty and fraternity. ■

*Rohit De teaches history at Yale University. He is the author of A People’s Constitution: The Everyday Life of Law in the Indian Republic*

RAIN  
OR SUN,

NOTHING  
STOPS YOUR  
MORNING  
RUN.



IS THAT  
ENOUGH  
TO STAY  
HEALTHY?

TURN TO  
PAGE 73  
TO KNOW  
MORE.

**Haier**  
Inspired Living

5 11 02

Nanak Singh translated by Navdeep Suri

(Khooni Vaisakhi | Harper Perennial | 128 pages | Rs 399)

## Sing The Wrath Of Punjab

A great narrative poem of a Jallianwala Bagh massacre survivor, and lost for long, is finally translated. It retains the cadences of this historical document.

BY NAVTEJ SARNA

IT'S a dramatic story by any standard. Nanak Singh, a virtually unlettered ("fourth grade pass or fifth grade fail") Punjabi youth with a penchant for poetry lands up at Jallianwala Bagh with two friends on Vaisakhi day in 1919. While his two friends perish in the relentless firing by British troops under Brigadier-General Dyer, he somehow survives and a year later produces a pamphlet with a long poem titled *Khooni Vaisakhi*, recounting not just the horrors of the massacre but its entire historical and political context. The British authorities ban it, confiscating and destroying almost all copies. Nanak Singh goes on to write many more books and attains fame and recognition as the foremost Punjabi novelist. *Khooni Vaisakhi* is all but forgotten.

But fate intervenes. A Punjabi academic, K.S. Gupta, finds a copy of the poem in a gunnysack of papers of his bibliophile grandfather and writes a literary paper on it. This comes to the attention of Nanak Singh's son, Kulwant Singh, by now a leading Punjabi publisher, who loses no time in obtaining a copy. Another copy arrives courtesy an intervention by Giani Zail Singh, then Union home minister and a Nanak Singh fan. That is how the poem was republished in Punjabi in the early '80s, six decades after it had first been published, banned and consigned to oblivion.

Nearly four decades were to pass before Navdeep Suri, Nanak Singh's grandson and a senior Indian diplomat, having translated two of his grandfather's novels, took up the daunting task of translating the epic poem, but not before he had launched another successful search, this time for the elusive original title page. To give heft to his book, Suri has added three essays. One, by H.S.

Bhatia, a Punjabi scholar, contextualises Nanak Singh's oeuvre and analyses the poetry of protest in Punjabi literature. The second, by Suri himself, affectionately recalls Nanak Singh the man—a wonderful portrait of an unassuming writer who penned around 30 novels, several poems and plays and greatly influenced generations of Punjabi writers. Suri also puts the poem in correct historical context bringing out the ravages of a harsh colonial administration in Punjab under Michael O'Dwyer, the huge contribution of the province to the Great War, the Rowlatt controversy, Gandhi and the beginning of Satyagraha as well as the excesses of the martial law that followed. Suri's masterstroke, however, is his idea of getting Justin Rowlatt, the grandson of Sydney Rowlatt, chairman of the committee whose report led to the infamous Rowlatt Act, to contribute an essay. In a creditable gesture, the former Delhi-based *BBC* South Asia correspondent presents an honest assessment of his grandfather's role in the historical inequity. These penumbral stories combine to make this slim and elegant volume a well-rounded, powerful package.



Suri's essay puts the poem in its context—the ravages of a harsh colonial rule in Punjab, the Great War, the Rowlatt controversy, Gandhi's Satyagraha and the excesses of martial law.

The attendant drama, however, need not overshadow the poem itself. Written in traditional style, where the poet begins with an invocation to Guru Gobind Singh to give him strength to finish the tale, its ringing cadences and rhymes bring to mind the ballads of Shah Mohammed wherein he described the Anglo-Sikh wars. At other times, when the poet talks of the grieving relatives of the victims of the massacre, the poem becomes a dirge. Its literary merit aside, the poem, written by an eye-witness within a year of the event is a historical record which should help put into perspective several events—the emotions of the population, the build-up to Vaisakhi, the killings on April 10 in Amritsar, the Hindu-Muslim unity on Ram Navami, the massacre itself and the frightful aftermath of cremating and burying hundreds. Nanak Singh's courage, even at a time when no dissent was being brooked, is evident in his unsparing judgement of Dyer:

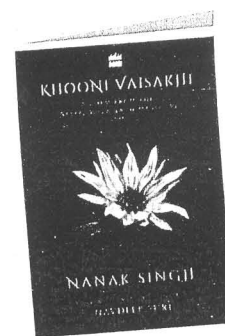
*You tyrant! Until the end of time you'll be called*

*The Murderer that you are, O Dyer.*

*Our Lord will punish you for your crimes*

*Watch how you get destroyed, O Dyer.*

Navdeep Suri (he has been a valued colleague in the foreign service and friend for over three decades) has succeeded in producing a very commendable translation. Good poetry is hard to write in the first place; to translate it well is even harder. In verse particularly, as the translator observes, "the relationship between form and content is so close that to select one at the expense of the other would be inexcusable". Suri has mercifully resisted the temptation of resorting to free verse and has instead retained the memorable rhymes, the tempo and the beat of the original. For this alone, he deserves full marks. □

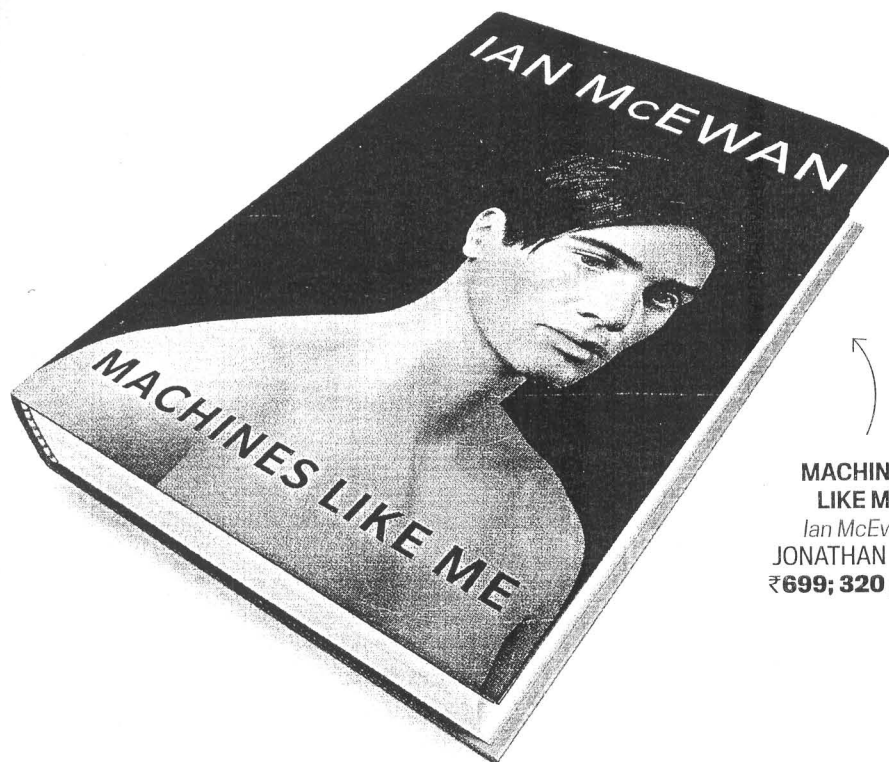


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## KNOW HIM FROM ADAM

Ian McEwan pits man against machine in a novel that examines the robot's genesis



**MACHINES  
LIKE ME**  
Ian McEwan  
JONATHAN CAPE  
₹699; 320 pages

Self-driving cars co-exist with the Beatles. Margaret Thatcher is usurped by a candidate keen on Britain withdrawing from the European Union. When her friend does not press charges after being raped, Miranda pretends to be the victim. Narrative time, McEwan stresses in perhaps too much detail, is now.

The plot is ripe for Big Issues, and McEwan teases them out gradually. When you think 'isn't a life-like robot among us a question of technology, rather than science or religion?', Chapter 2 speaks of the development of algorithms. When you think, 'isn't a life-like robot among us a question of genetics?', Chapter 3 speaks of the history of germs and neuroscience.

Small Things are framed in relation to Big Issues by way of an organising principle attributed to Turing: the moment we can't tell the difference in behaviour between machine and person, we must confer humanity on the machine. The stage is set for 'a disputed claim to consciousness' and 'machine sadness'. Surprisingly, McEwan gives us several events, any of which could be a dramatic turning point. When Adam and Miranda sleep with each other without informing the narrator, when Adam commits his first act of physical violence, when fellow robots commit suicide.

Things don't turn out well for man or machine in the end, but I can't shake off the strangely liberating feeling that it's a win for man. What perhaps escapes Adam is the 'unwholesome nourishment' one derives from capricious children, ailing but forgiving fathers, and talking about things before doing them. ■

—Suryapratim Roy

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Readers familiar with Ian McEwan would have two expectations from his novels: an event that irreversibly changes everything and a protagonist who's a professional, but has no say in the event. The ordered, rational mind of a surgeon is dramatically affected by a plane crash and a break-in (*Saturday*), a climate scientist's by an encounter with a polar bear (*Solar*). In his other novels, the dramatic event is more human: A child witnessing something she shouldn't have (*Atonement*), the death of parents (*The Cement Garden*). Big Issues and Small Things are what make a McEwan novel.

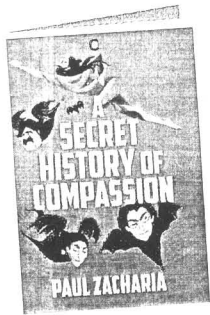
Having no say in how things come to pass is rehabilitated through a narrative voice. In *Sweet Tooth*, the only recourse available to a manipulated writer is to rewrite the narrative of the spy who tricked him. In his last novel, *Nutshell*, a foetus comes to terms with adultery.

In our precarious but compulsive relationship with artificial intelligence, the human conditioning of narrative voice may be our best asset for when the machines take over. This is what McEwan suggests in *Machines Like Me*. Adam, a life-like robot, is purchased by the narrator, an anthropologist with an interest in electronics and in love with his intelligent neighbour, Miranda. It is 1982. Alan Turing hasn't committed suicide; he is the reclusive oracle who makes technological advances possible.



AUTHOR IAN  
McEWAN  
SUGGESTS THE  
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TAKE OVER





## books Paul Zacharia

Secret History Of Compassion | Context/Westland | 431 pages | Rs 699

# Book For All Chiroptophobics

Transgression leads to transcendence in this genre-bending novel, as shape-shifting ideologies are left for universal humanism by characters who morph into bats

BY C.P. SURENDRAN

**A** *Secret History of Compassion* is about a popular novelist, Spider, who has been commissioned by the Communist Party to write an essay on the mutually exclusive existence of a human quality like mercy, and capitalism. Spider's project gradually turns out to be a collaborative one involving a professional executioner, Jesus Pillai, Spider's dog and his philosopher wife, Rosi. In the course of the enterprise, the characters become bats, fly around, and voyeurism is justified as a witnessing method to miracles.

Paul Zacharia is a leading Malayalam writer and public intellectual. Some of his fiction are outstanding in their psychoanalytic astuteness and structural strengths. He is not easily swayed by conventions, and has very often courted controversies. *A Secret History* is his foray into Anglophone fiction. It is likely to have a perplexing effect on the reader.

The seeming chaos—anything can happen at any point—and the sprawling canvas of the novel (the sky is the limit) are held in place by the slow formation of the essay, completed towards the end of the novel. Spider writes the essay in a state of receptivity, and shows his growth as a being evolving from realm of the demotic imagination to the experience of life itself, which one takes for granted and which is beyond profit or power-oriented systems like capitalism or Communism or, as it turns out, gender rights. It is about love, youthfulness, and songs.

That is the moral of this seemingly immoral story. Immoral in the sense that Zacharia's fictive world aspires to go against temporal ethic—the time-

bound ideas of political systems, for instance—into a more lasting universe of compassion. Transgressions pave way to transcendence, an insanely fraught journey in an insanely normal world. Which is why the characters fly around—for the eye-view from on high.

In a *New Yorker* article (March 18, 2019), critic Leo Robson quotes (till recently) little-known writer John Williams (whose finest hour, decades after his death in 1994, arrived in the past few years; Williams's novel *Stoner* came out in 1965, when Saul Bellow ruled the literary novel with *Herzog*; *Sunday Times* described *Stoner*, during its recent re-issue, as the 'the greatest novel you have never read') from his lecture notes: contemporary writing

“encourages us to be merely ourselves, to think or feel merely as we have always done”.

Zacharia's attempt is to differ. The passage of his characters is through a tunnel of nihilism, dug through and under decaying institutions and notional values, towards that glimmer of light lit by, ah well, by the torch of universal brotherhood/sisterhood. The protagonist and his retinue are unbuttoned characters, physically and spiritually. Naturally, in this state, you are open to bats, butterflies, squirrels and erotica. One must add that no animal (except fish that was fried by Rosi and consumed by Spider) or bird was harmed in the making of the novel. Everything in nature speaks of god, who in this novel is a young woman.

The anything-can-happen spirit of the novel could prove to be a little wearisome as the story makes its fanciful progress. Especially to the Indian sensibility largely attuned to tepid family sagas and the Indian-immigrant-abroad-plots. But even to those who are open to new ideas, Zacharia's novel is likely to offer challenges. For instance, the characters suffer from an inability to feel existential pain. It is as if they have an entirely different neural network. Their anxieties, little as they are, often come across as fodder for the author's amusements. Indeed, characters seemingly relate to themselves as characters and, in places, caricatures. If this is an intended

effect, then what you have in your hands is an anti-novel of sorts.

I was reminded of Mikhail Bulgakov's chaotic and brilliantly brittle *The Master and Margarita*, to which *A Secret History* bears resemblance. “Just then the sultry air coagulated and wove itself into the shape of a man—a transparent man of the strangest



Spider shows his growth as a being evolving from the realm of demotic imagination to the experience of life itself, beyond systems like capitalism or Communism.

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## ON THE RACKS



Illustration by MANJUL

appearance. On his small head was a jockey-cap and he wore a short check bum-freezer made of air. The man was seven feet tall but narrow in the shoulders, incredibly thin and with a face made for derision". This is the Devil making his first appearance to Mikhail Alexandrovich Berlioz, a literary editor, in a warm spring day in Moscow in the opening pages of *The Master and Margarita*, a kind of magical realist critique of the Stalinist Russia. The '30s novel is complex, and replete with inexplicable characters. Margarita, the heroine, can fly. A demonic cat (Behemoth) can walk on two legs and spout philosophy. And other

The humour implicit in a novel like this laughs the laughter endemic to Kerala: the don't-bullshit-me-I'm-too-smart kind. It doesn't translate well in other languages.

weirdities materialise throughout its course. But the ordeal of their world comes through. To Spider, Jesus Pillai or Rosi, life, perhaps because they came to their wings too easily, is a lark.

The humour implicit in a novel of this kind tends to laugh the laughter endemic to Kerala: the don't-bullshit-me-I'm-too-smart kind. It does not translate too well in other languages, including English. Still, the texture of Zacharia's English must add to the diversity of anglophone literature published in this country. What he is doing, I suspect, is actually transplanting a sensibility; the language is just a means. I found the argot a little clumsy though. Adverbs abound: suddenly, humbly, determinedly, excitedly.

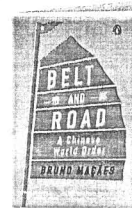
Nevertheless, this novel is a much needed point of departure for English fiction in India. It is a dare. It would be interesting to see it in terms of prize lists and nominations usually dominated by straitlaced angels of all persuasions—the certified worth of the offering of a tittering devil. □



Vinay Kamath

Titan: Inside India's Most Successful Consumer Brand | Hachette

Titan is, perhaps, the first truly Indian aspirational brand to hit the post-liberalisation generation 30 years ago. Suddenly those in new areas like software, telecom, TV had a lot of money left at the end of the month. It wasn't exactly a Rolex or a Tag Heuer, but Titan was a giant leap over HMT. Business writer Vinay Kamath tells the fascinating Titan story with verve and wit.



Bruno Macaes

Belt and Road | Penguin

With infrastructure development and investments in almost 70 countries, China's Belt and Road Initiative is the largest geopolitical project of our time. The economic powerhouse's ambitions present threats as well as opportunities for other nations. Beijing-based Macaes engagingly explores the strategy's achievements, sites of conflict and impact on global economic development.



Zorba Laloo, Joe & Dan Rea-Dickins

Meghalaya Rivers | Penguin

One of the wettest regions on earth, Meghalaya has captured the imagination and itineraries of adventure enthusiasts. This lavishly illustrated kayaking guide has comprehensive information on the state's rivers, paddling routes and difficulty levels. For the less intrepid, there are engaging personal accounts, folk tales, travel tips and an overview of Meghalaya's natural and cultural heritage.

# Ravinder Singh's latest book can help you win a holiday in Prague



**B**estselling author Ravinder Singh is back with a hilarious yet moving story of friendship and adventure – a book that's completely different from all his other novels. It is the story of a once-in-a-lifetime road trip!

In this latest offering, the much-loved characters from his first two books, Ravin, MP, Happy and Ram, college friends who are now married, realise that they never got to go on a bachelor party before their weddings. So they decide to go on an all-boys' Euro trip – a combined bachelor party of sorts, making for one hell of a reunion!

Ravinder, a social media star with innumerable millennial fans, is known for unique ways of promoting his books. This time, his publisher HarperCollins are offering Ravinder's fans something very special – a chance to win free tickets for a special trip to Prague, when they pre-order a copy of *The Belated Bachelor Party* from Flipkart and Amazon India.



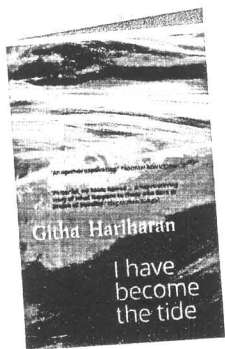
The book will be available in stores on May 27, 2019, published by HarperCollins India

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## books Githa Hariharan

I Have Become the Tide | Simon and Schuster | 323 pages | Rs 499

# Sedate Ripple On Walden Pond

Stories spanning centuries and issues that burn lives as in a wildfire—for all that Hariharan's rasping honesty is softened and at the service of cardboard characters

BY SUNIL MEHRA

**T**HIS is a writer who writes with a certain acuity, insight, blazing honesty, disconcerting directness, as anyone who has read her last work *Almost Home* will testify. That was a lacerating indictment of the injustice being perpetrated in places like Palestine and Algeria, in which the whole world is complicit.

It's that raw, in-your-face, speaking truth to power quality that one misses in this book that takes the more lyric path of allegory, laden metaphor and symbolism, to comment on recent happenings that have brought into question the very moral core of this country: the Vemula suicide, the Kalburgi murder, the orchestrated right wing "outrage", "hurt sentiment" over alternative readings/ versions of mythological texts—think Wendy Donniger, A.K. Ramanujan. What one expected from the writer was a sledgehammer blow; what one gets on the other hand are soft focus, diffused lens images of a Walden ravaged. Even the angst, the pain of the principle protagonists has the mimetic quality of the stylised Kalakshetra gesture.

Three stories, separated by a few centuries, run concurrently through the book and, in a sense, mirror each other. The moral: the more things change the more they are (frighteningly) the same.

Chikka, Puttanna, Rangayya, Mahadevi, Kannappa aka Kannadeva, the Benevolent Elder Brother constitute the star cast of the first tale: subalterns, castaways, renegades, refugees all, fleeing death, discrimination, oppression, seeking to create and inhabit their own Eden. Young Chandra (Chikka/Mahadevi's little girl) is the first tragic casualty of this quest for a more egalitarian alt universe. Another violent

upheaval claims the rest. Except for Kannappa, Chikka and Mahadevi's son, who's to become the mystic saint whose poetry and the alternative reading of its sub-text by a professor centuries later provokes a 'bhakt' to the kind of murderous rage that leads him to kill the professor. The cataclysm that consumes Chikka, his family and his fellow travellers is horrific but leaves one unmoved. Characters perish here. Not people. Because they remain cardboard and paste. They never come alive as



GETTY IMAGES

The hapless academic felled by an assassin seeking to avenge a perceived slight to his religious sentiment is a trope that sounds depressingly familiar.

flesh and blood humans.

The second concurrent story that references present times is sincerely told but again not informed by passion that elevates and takes it above the level of mere 'telling'. The three Dalit friends: Satya the medical student driven to suicide by the malefic, sadistic faculty member Mr Sharma; Asha, who's training to be a nurse at a college where she faces subtle but cruel discrimination; Ravi the BSc student who is fast evolv-

ing into a political animal, acquiring awareness about the political and socio-economic underpinnings of caste/class. These are characters with explosive potential. In Hariharan's hands, though, they remain sadly under-explored and mostly unrealised. This is not about their innards. This is more about The Outsider looking in.

It's all there: writerly craft, structure, the visual haikus. What's missing is the soul that truly breathes life in them. The only characters who come to life—Professor Krishna, the academic singled out for assassination, his wife Shanta, the quiet love between them, their relationship with their grandchild Chitthu, is tenderly delineated.

The hapless, unsuspecting academic, viciously trolled, felled by an assassin seeking to avenge perceived slight to religious sentiment by his foray into an ancient Kannadeva text is a trope that sounds depressingly, disgustingly familiar. So does Srikumar, uniformed, illiterate, lethal, lumpen, mere puppet in the hands of his shadowy masters—a variation on the theme of the Swami's, Sadhvi's, Hindutva goons, crazed gau-rakshaks that proliferate today across the Indian political firmament.

Krishna resonates: the Everyman who loves his wife, filter coffee, grandson, Subbalakshmi, birds, books, research, work (not necessarily in that order) is killed. Suddenly. At just-another-day-at-work. By someone whose "sentiments were hurt". So violence/murder, replaces reason/ debate. Krishna, that afternoon in the university parking lot, is looking up at a tree, looking for an elusive barbet. What he gets instead is a bullet to his forehead.

Not unlike the reader. Given the grand sweep of the theme you go in expecting the crashing sound and fury of Beethoven's Ninth. What you get instead is the thin strings of a duet. □

Indian Express, 4/5/17; Pg-21

# Your friendly neighbourhood sportsman

## How Paddy Upton became the calm centre holding together the Indian cricket team

SANDEEP DWIVEDI

HOW DID Indian cricket react after the abrupt resignation of Greg Chappell, the elegant Aussie batsman and the famously opinionated coach with a king-sized ego who failed? They went to Gary Kirsten, the reticent South African with an ugly batting style and no coaching experience. After Chappell's restless radicalism — in the late Peter Roebuck's words — Indian cricket wanted peace, a gush of cold water on their burnt fingers.

Sachin Tendulkar, in his first meeting with the new coach, had made a very humane request: "Gary, I want you to be my friend." Still recovering from the insecurity epidemic of the Chappell era, the Indian dressing room longed for a warm hug.

Kirsten knew that, he was prepared. He brought along with him his affable friend Paddy Upton, whose detailed CV can easily pass off as a short story. A fitness trainer with a PhD in sports science, a lifelong student of philosophy and spirituality, leadership coach, mind guru, passionate surfer; while a social worker, Upton was almost stabbed while reforming Cape Town's street kids and backpacked without shoes for six months while discovering Southeast Asia by himself. By the time he left India, after almost three years, he would also be a World Cup winner. He would find mention in the credits that rolled after that magical April 2, 2011 at Wankhede: Innovative thinking — Paddy Upton.

At first glance, with his taut frame and yogic gaze (see cover), Upton could easily pass off as one those Indophiles who seek salvation in Rishikesh or don maroon Osho gowns at Koregaon Park, Pune. But his looks are deceptive. Very early in *The Barefoot*

*Coach*, Upton writes of himself and Kirsten. "A hillybilly from Cape Town (Gary) and a barefoot surfer from Houtbay (me). We had our work cut out for us!" Explaining the title of the book to *The Indian Express*, he says, "Barefoot means being down to earth and also, the book is an honest, honest commentary on lessons in life taken from cricket."

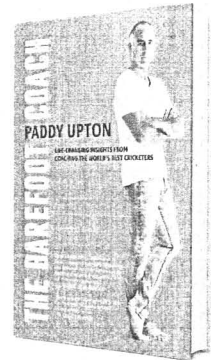
It certainly was. International coaches with no top-grade playing experience have always struggled to explain their role or quantify their value addition to teams. If you were the team's strategic leader coach — one of Upton's designations with the Indian team — your Key Result Area was always disputed territory. John Buchanan, despite his success as Australia coach, was constantly reminded of his 34 first class games, or rather his zero international matches. For some in the English press, he was the "whacky professor". Shane Warne kept it shorter — he preferred "d" "khead".

Indian cricketers are more discreet. Extra-sensitive to criticism and even advice from non-cricketers, they have a favourite put-down: "Kitna Test khela hai?" Upton, with a grand total of two first class games, would have heard but probably not understood it. While on the job, he needed to win the respect of the galacticos. As coach, he's more Buchanan, less Warne. He propagates the holistic growth of cricketers, talking more about Malcolm Gladwell than Malcolm Marshall.

He writes that he knocked on every possible door to get better results for the teams he coached — India, South Africa, Rajasthan Royals and several other T20 franchise teams. He talked to neurophysiologists, psychology professors, historians, mythology experts, corporate heads, Holocaust survivors, world circumnavigators and every-

day oddballs to understand the complex minds of elite cricketers. Going by the ideas pitched in the book, Upton clearly has a thing for self-help books: *Winning!*, *Good to Great*, *Start with Why*, *Strength Finders*, *Discover your Strength...* Upton's library shelves have lots of strength. Plato and Socrates, too, get walk-on parts in the 377-page hardback. And what's a motivational mentor without a laboured acronym? So he coined T.E.A.M: T stands for Team and E for Excellent Entertainers. While Buchanan often quoted Sun Tzu in team meetings, Upton too leaned on war references. He related India's military history to cricket results:

Fact: Modern India has never been an ag-



THE BAREFOOT COACH

PADDY UPTON

Westland

377 pages

₹ 799

gressor in a war. It has never been the first to strike.

Inference: India rarely takes the lead in a series.

Fact: As in 1971, once attacked, India excels at fighting back.

Inference: Indian cricketers play well with their backs to the wall.

Fact: Indira Gandhi handed almost all military gains to Pakistan.

Inference: India is known to hand back the advantage on the cricket field.

Like Buchanan, Upton too juggled apples and oranges, or grenades and cricket balls.

Over-stretched correlations, detailed feedback forms, long inspirational talks and "know the inner you" exercises were important props in Upton's office bag. Players from the Kirsten era, the kind who in their spare time don't do crosswords or read, would often say that Upton, at times, got boring. Ask the coach if his players saw Buchanan in him and he says, "No one has told me that, they might be speaking behind my back."

MS Dhoni wasn't one of the back-biters. In the book, Upton recalls a meeting day. "MS Dhoni, who was captain of the one-day side, came to me, put his arm around my shoulder and said, 'Upton, don't feel that you always have to say something.' It was subtly put, but it hit me straight in the ego." It's these small nuggets that light up the book. While he might have put off the team's hillybills, Upton had remarkable success with Rahul Dravid and Gautam Gambhir — India's thinking and over-thinking cricketers.

Upton says Gambhir was "riddled with insecurities, doubts and vulnerabilities... the most negative person I'd ever worked

with." Neat tweet for this poll season, but the coach follows up with, "He was undoubtedly one of the best and most determined and successful players." Upton asked Gambhir to make his peace with his frustrations. "Once those feelings were acknowledged we'd say, 'Okay, so what do you need to do to get even better?'"

A classic backroom boy, Upton was the glue that bonded the team. The Class of 2011 had bonhomie that was missing in the 2007 World Cup batch, which had Chappell as the strict headmaster. Kirsten remained the man in charge but Upton was the first responder, the firefighter who reacted much before the flames blazed. Upton had Kirsten's back, was also his ears and eyes and even played his agony aunt.

After one depressing loss, Kirsten, in a rare show of emotion, snapped. The South Africans had an unwritten rule: never sermonise players in the dressing room, especially after a loss. Kirsten had enough, he wanted to crack the whip. Upton intervened: "This is something you honestly believe the team needs to hear, or is this something you're wanting to get off your chest?"

Kirsten agreed and said it was about him. "OK, say it to me (Upton told Gary) and he (Gary) vented out," writes the coach. Two men outside the Indian dressing room in an animated conversation — one letting it go and the other encouraging him — must have been a funny sight. But the comic situation avoided a tragedy. A potential crisis, possibly a Chappell-Ganguly kind of episode, got nipped in the bud.

Upton's looks are deceptive. Often, his role was overlooked. The 'Barefoot Coach' silently navigated the dressing room. He rarely made a sound but he made his presence felt.

# परिवर्तन की गूंज है जोहड़ी

सैयद परवेज

परख

**जो**हड़ी कहानी-संग्रह दलित दर्शन को प्रतिबिंबित व चिह्नित करती है। कहानियों में डॉ. अंबेडकर चिंतन और उनकी 22 प्रतिज्ञाओं का मिश्रण बखूबी किया गया है। कहानियों के पात्रों में दलित चेतना का स्वरूप स्पष्टतः झलकता है। संग्रह में संकलित पंद्रह कहानियां परंपरावादियों के खिलाफ अपनी आवाज को बुलंद करती हैं, जहां परिवर्तन की गूंज को स्पष्टतः महसूस किया जा सकता है। दिहाड़ी कहानी में दलित लड़की अपनी अस्मिता की रक्षा करना जानती है। यह कहानी मुंशी प्रेमचंद की कहानी घासवाली में उक्त दलित महिला से मेल खाती है, जो अपने आत्मसम्मान की रक्षा के साथ गरीबी से जूझती है, लेकिन अपनी अस्मिता से समझौता नहीं करती, बल्कि चैनसिंह जैसे वर्चस्ववादी को भी सही राह दिखाती है। सवर्ण अगर यह सोचे कि दलित महिला है, जो मजदूरी करती है, तब वह उसकी अस्मिता से खिलवाड़ कर सकता है, यह सोचना उनकी भूल है। दलित महिला अपनी अस्मिता और स्वाभिमान की रक्षा करना अच्छी तरह जानती है। इस संग्रह की कहानियों में एक और भी बात विशेष तौर पर प्रस्फुट हुई है कि भंगी दलित जाति से अन्य दलित जातियां भी भेदभाव व्यवहार करते हैं।

‘वर्दी’ कहानी में कथाकार कहती है कि स्कूल से आते वक्त नेहा को चमारों के मोहल्ले से गुजरना होता था। चमार जाति एक दलित जाति है, उनके साथ भी

परंपरावादियों द्वारा शोषण और अमानवीय कृत होते रहे हैं। दूसरी तरफ भंगी समुदाय को सवर्ण तो नीचा मानता है, लेकिन उनके प्रति दलित समाज की अन्य जातियों की दृष्टि भी हेय ही है।

एक बात मजबूती के साथ प्रखर होती है कि हिंदू वर्ण-व्यवस्था में वर्णवादी ऊंच-नीच का नशा दलित जातियों में भी जड़ें जमाए हुए हैं, अंतर सिर्फ इतना है कि वर्ण-व्यवस्था ने सभी दलितों को ही अस्पृश्य करार दिया है। कथाकार ने बड़े ही मार्मिक और रोचक ढंग से दलित समाज के अंदर शराब पीकर महिलाओं को मारने-पीटने जैसी सामाजिक बुराइयों को बता दिया है।

कहानी में प्रयुक्त हरियाणवी संवादों में पात्रों को वहां की पृष्ठभूमि को जीवंत रूप में प्रस्तुत किया है। वर्दी कहानी में नेहा अपने पिता से कहती है—“मैं यह वर्दी नहीं पहनूंगी। चूल्हे में डाल दो इसे। इस वर्दी की वजह से मुझे सारी लड़कियां चिढ़ाती हैं।” कहती हैं—“ये देखो चूहड़े की आ गई स्कूल गंदा करने के लिए, अच्छा है, इस बहाने स्कूल की सफाई हो जाएगी।” नलके वाली ब्राह्मणी नेहा भी नीले रंग की वर्दी पहने देखकर उसे भगा देती है। कहती है—“भाग यहां से चूहड़े की, म्हारे नलके को छूएगी, म्हारा नलका खारा पाणी देण लग जाएगा, थ्यारी तो परछाई भी मड़ी है।

हिंदू धर्मशास्त्र ने दलितों के स्पर्श, छया और वाणी को अस्पृश्य माना है। अस्पृश्य के स्पर्श से अन्न, पानी और



मनुष्य अपवित्र होता है। मनुष्य ही नहीं ईश्वर भी अपवित्र हो जाता है। सवर्णों द्वारा अस्मितावादी लेखकों पर अतिशयोक्ति का आरोप भी मढ़ा जाता है कि यह बात को बढ़ा-चढ़ाकर प्रस्तुत करते हैं। लेकिन क्या आज भी तथाकथित लोग प्रत्यक्ष और अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से दलितों के साथ भेदभाव नहीं हो रहा है? यह एक बड़ा प्रश्न उन लोगों पर है जो अस्मितावादी लेखकों के आत्मानुभव को अतिशयोक्ति पूर्ण मानते हैं। डॉ. अंबेडकर ने अपने बचपन के कटु अनुभव व्यक्त करते हुए लिखा है कि स्कूल में उन्हें अस्पृश्यता यानी अछूत होने का सामना करना पड़ा। सवर्ण बच्चों से अलग पीने के पानी की व्यवस्था थी। उन्हें सवर्ण बच्चों से अलग बैठाया जाता था। स्कूल में कोई सवर्ण उनके साथ खेलता तक नहीं था।

जोहड़ी कहानी ईंट के भट्ठों के आसपास के गांव का जीवंत परिवेश को दिखाया है। सन की खेती और उसके बाद उसमें से सन निकालने की जटिल प्रक्रियाओं से रू-ब-रू कर दिया है। वहां कहानी की पात्र बेतरी जमींदारों के आतंक और उनके वर्चस्ववादी प्रवृत्ति के खिलाफ उसका प्रतिरोध है। बेतरी का तमाचा जब जमींदार गाल पर पड़ना सवर्णों के वर्चस्ववादी प्रवृत्ति को तोड़ता है। जहां दलित महिला की अस्मिता-मूलक दलित चेतना प्रस्फुट होती है।

भारतीय संविधान में जहां अस्पृश्यता को कानूनी रूप से समाप्त कर दिया गया है। बाबा साहेब डॉ. भीमराव अंबेडकर

जीवन के अंतिम सांसों तक इसके उन्मूलन के लिए लड़ते रहे. दशकों बाद भी दलितों के साथ वही अलग पानी पीने की व्यवस्था वाली बात दिख रही है. दूसरी तरफ परंपरावादियों का वर्चस्व दिनोदिन बढ़ता ही जा रहा है. दूसरी तरफ परिवर्तनवादी ने अपने संघर्षों को मजबूत भी किया है.

वर्दी कहानी में कथाकार ने पीने के पानी से लेकर वर्दी के अलग रंग के मसले को उठाया है.

दलित बच्चों को दी गई स्कूलों में नीले रंग की वर्दी थी, लेकिन उसी रंग की वर्दी को सवर्ण पहनते नहीं थे, परंतु दलित बच्चों द्वारा नीले रंग की वर्दी पहनकर स्कूल में आते तब उन्हें दूर से ही पहचान लिया जाता था. वर्तमान परिदृश्य में जहां यूनिसेक्स कपड़ों के प्रचलन की बात हो रही है, वहीं दूसरी ओर स्कूली यूनिफॉर्म से जहां विद्यार्थियों के समतामूलक विकास के कॉन्सेप्ट को परंपरावादियों द्वारा सरेआम धज्जियां उड़ाई गई हैं. नीला रंग समतामूलक तथा भेदभाव रहित का द्योतक है. यह रंग सभी को आश्रय और अपने में समाहित करने की दृढ़ शक्ति तथा समार्थ्य रखता है. यह दलित चेतना का प्रतीक है.

‘वर्दी’ कहानी में ही नेहा के पिता रामसरूप जलती हुई चिता के पास पड़े सफेद कपड़े को इसलिए उठा लाया है ताकि वह उससे अपनी बेटे के लिए स्कूल की सफेद वर्दी सिलवा सके. लेकिन वह उस कपड़े को उठाना तो नहीं चाहता था, पर महाजन के कर्ज तले वह इतना दबा हुआ था कि दुकान से कपड़ा खरीदना उसकी सीमा से परे था.

यह कहानी मराठी कथाकार अण्णा भाउ साठे की कहानी ‘श्मशान का सोना’ की याद दिलाती है, जहां कहानी का नायक भीमा बेरोजगारी और भुखमरी से बचने के लिए श्मशान में मशान खोदने और शवों की राख को इकट्ठा कर छलनी से छानने लगा. उसे रोज राख में से कुछ

न कुछ सोने के कण या बाली, अंगूठी, नथ, पुलती आदि मिल जाती. ‘वर्दी’ और ‘श्मशान का सोना’ इन दोनों कहानियों में उन्होंने अपने स्वाभिमान से हटकर वर्तमान जरूरत पर ध्यान दिया. प्रश्न उत्पन्न होता है कि स्वाभिमान क्या है? भूख से बेहाल व्यक्ति की मुख्य जरूरत है रोटी. चाहे वह बासी ही क्यों न हो? चाहे वह सूखी ही क्यों न हो? व्यक्ति को भूख लगेगी तो उसे वह खाएगा. जब प्यास लगती है तो व्यक्ति नाली का गंदा पानी भी छान कर पी लेता है.

यह बात कोई एक जाति विशेष की नहीं है. यह हर उस इनसान पर लागू है, जिसे उस वक्त इसकी जरूरत है. सवर्णों को यदि अस्पृश्य घोषित कर दिया जाता. उन्हें जमीन से बेदखल कर दिया जाता. तब क्या वे जिंदा रहने के लिए जूठे भोजन न खाते? कफन के कपड़े न पहनते? यही तो उनके जीवन पर सैकड़ों वर्षों तक थोपा गया. तब स्वाभिमान से बड़ी चीज बन जाती है जरूरत.

‘स्पीड ब्रेकर’ स्वाधीन भारत में नागरिक स्वतंत्रता के विचार को प्रेरित करने वाली कहानी है. इसमें यह स्पष्ट होता है कि ब्राह्मणवादी शक्तियां दलितों को किसी प्रकार आगे बढ़ने नहीं देना चाहती हैं. इसमें सुनेरी एक सफाईकर्मी है, जिसे कॉलेज के प्राध्यापकों के लिए चाय बनाने की ड्यूटी दी जानी थी, लेकिन उसकी जाति से सवर्णों को उसके हाथ ही चाय पीना कबूल नहीं. स्पीड ब्रेकर के माध्यम से कथाकार ने स्पष्ट किया है कि दलितों के उत्थान में वर्णवादी व्यवस्था उन्हें ऊपर ही नहीं आने देना चाहता. उनके उत्थान में ब्रेक लगा देता है. सही मायने में वह दलितों को इनसान की श्रेणी में रखते ही नहीं. लेकिन कहानी में दलित प्राध्यापक अपने वर्ग के साथ मजबूती के साथ खड़ी है. स्पीड ब्रेकर वाली वर्णव्यवस्था की दीवार को तोड़ देना चाहती है. इसे भीमा-कोरेगांव

अस्मितामूलक युद्ध के तौर पर भी देखना चाहिए. सवर्णवादी मानसिकता भीमा-कोरेगांव युद्ध को देशद्रोही घोषित करते हैं. कहते हैं कि यह तो अंग्रेजों की विजय थी, इसे मनाना देशद्रोह है. उनसे प्रश्न है आखिर इसे देशद्रोह क्यों मानना चाहिए? जिस वर्णवादी व्यवस्था ने सदियों तक दलितों पर अमानवीय कुकृत्य किए, क्या वे देशद्रोही नहीं थे? दूसरी तरफ देशभक्त आखिर किसे कहा जाए? जब इनसान को इनसान ही न समझा जाए. तब राष्ट्र से बड़ी होती है अस्मिता. दलितों की अस्मिता के साथ स्वतंत्र भारत में भी आए दिन खिलवाड़ किया जा रहा है.

‘हार गई जिंदगी’ आत्मकथ्य शैली में रोशनी नामक पात्र ने वर्चस्ववादी समाज का वह रूप दिखाया है जो सिर्फ दलितों की हां सुनना चाहता है, उसे दलितों की न बर्दाश्त बिलकुल नहीं. जोहड़ी एक कच्चा तालाब है जिसके एक तरफ जमींदारों, जाटों और ब्राह्मणों के घर थे तो दूसरी ओर सड़क के किनारे वाल्मीकि बस्ती जिसमें सहंसी जाति, धोबी और नाइयों के भी घर थे जो मिलकर रहते थे. यह कहानी इस तरफ भी इंगित करती है कि अन्य पिछड़ी जातियां ‘बहुजन’ को स्वीकार करती हैं, उसकी व्यापकता को समझती भी हैं.

दलितों और पिछड़ों में शिक्षा के प्रति चेतना जागृत होना और उनका विकास सवर्णों को बर्दाश्त नहीं हो पा रहा है. जरा-सा विरोध करने पर ही पूरी बस्ती को आग लगा दिया जाता है. सुमन जो आई.ए.एस. बनना चाहती थी. दबंगों द्वारा पेट्रोल डालकर उसकी बस्ती में आग लगा दी जाती है. सुमन एक विकलांग लड़की थी उसके दादा उसकी इस कमी को शिक्षा और कलम की ताकत से पूरा करना चाहते थे. लेकिन बस्ती में दबंगों द्वारा लगाई गई आग में सुमन के दादा स्वयं को और उसको बचा नहीं पाए. एक उम्मीद भरी लड़की की जिंदगी का हार जाना. जो

## शंभु शरण मंडल की गज़ल

वो जब तकरीर करता है कोई अवतार लगता है  
मगर झूठा मुझे उसका यही किरदार लगता है  
दिखाई जो नहीं देता हकीकत में कहीं यारों  
नुमाइश में उसीके आजकल अखबार लगता है  
गरजते तो दिखाई दे रहे बादल यहां कितने  
बरसने का नहीं उनका मगर आसार लगता है  
बड़ी सहमी हुई सी आजकल है आबरू अपनी  
उसे ही लूटने को हर कोई तैयार लगता है  
जो बनता या बिगड़ता है नफ़ा नुकसान के दम पर  
उसे रिश्ता कोई कह ले मगर व्यापार लगता है  
अदालत की नजर में शख्स वो मुजरिम तो है लेकिन  
सियासत में वही सबका अभी सरदार लगता है  
जो करता है वतन के ख़ाब से खिलवाड़ यूं हर दिन  
दिमागी तौर पर वह आदमी बीमार लगता है  
अब इतना बोलबाला है फरेबी का यहां लोगो  
कि जो ईमानवाला है वही गद्दार लगता है

□

संपर्क : अनुभाग अधिकारी, सीएसआईआर, केंद्रीय खनन एवं  
ईंधन अनुसंधान संस्थान, बरवा रोड, धनबाद-826015

## जहीर कुटेशी की गज़ल

घायल किए गए कभी, मारे गए कभी  
अभियुक्त के समान पुकारे गए कभी  
उसकी कमीज मुझसे अधिक क्यों सफ़ेद है  
कुछ लोग इसलिए भी नकारे गए कभी  
जिसको बहुत पसंद किया, वो न मिल सकी  
उस तक भी कल्पना के सहारे गए कभी  
सत्ता का या विपक्ष का करते हुए विरोध  
आकाश तक सभाओं में नारे गए कभी  
जो लोग मछलियों को फंसाने में थे निपुण  
नदिया, समुद्र, झील के द्वारे गए कभी  
उपदेश दे रहे थे जो काम और क्रोध पर,  
भक्तों के उन तलक भी इशारे गए कभी.  
सड़के बुहारते मिले वो 'कैमरों' के बीच,  
जिनसे स्वयं के मन न बुहारे गए कभी.

□

संपर्क : 108, त्रिलोचन टावर, संगम सिनेमा के सामने, गुरुबक्श की  
तलैया, पो.ऑ. जीपीओ, भोपाल-462001 (म.प्र.)

पाठकों को विचलित तो करता है, लेकिन परिवर्तन की गूँज को  
जन्म दे देती है, उसकी आवाजें सवाल करती हैं, पूछती हैं और  
दलित समाज को प्रेरणा देती हैं.

वर्दी कहानी में रामसरूप उस चिता वाले सफेद कपड़े को  
उठाना तो नहीं चाहता था, लेकिन उसने इसलिए उठाया ताकि  
उसकी बेटी वर्दी पहनकर स्कूल जा सके. रामसरूप की पत्नी  
सुनहरी कहती है—“मैं इसकी वर्दी नहीं सिलवाऊंगी. श्मशान  
घाट से लाया गया कपड़ा अपनी बेटी को. अगर वो स्कूल जाए  
या न जाए.” मुझे नहीं भेजना स्कूल. वह आगे कहती है—“अगर  
नेहा को कुछ हो गया तो मैं अपने आप को और तुम्हें कभी माफ  
नहीं करूंगी.”

प्रत्युत्तर में रामसरूप कहता है—“देखो, मैंने यह सफेद चादर  
और कुर्ता ऐसे ही कपड़े से सिलवा रखा है. मुझे तो आज तक  
कुछ नहीं हुआ. फिर मेरी बेटी को कैसे कुछ हो सकता है. यहां  
पर डॉ. अंबेडकर की एक बात शिक्षित बनो को रामसरूप ने  
अपने जीवन में दृढ़तापूर्वक ढाल लिया है. उसे खंड-पाखंड,  
अंधविश्वास, पुनर्जन्म, भगवान, धार्मिक पुस्तकों और आत्मा-परमात्मा  
का खौफ नहीं है. वह तो सिर्फ परिवर्तन की गूँज को महसूस  
कर रहा है, जो उसे सदियों की दासता से मुक्ति दिलाएगी. दूसरी  
तरफ एक बात उठनी लाजिमी है कि बगैर सफेद वर्दी के क्या  
नीले वर्दी में नेहा आगे नहीं पढ़ सकती थी? क्या सफेद वर्दी ही  
उसे आगे बढ़ने में सहायक हुई? क्या नेहा अपनी जात को सफेद  
वर्दी में छिपाना चाहती थी? लेकिन वास्तविकता यह है कि  
सफेदपोश वर्दी का समाज में व्यापक वर्चस्व हावी है. बाबा साहेब  
डॉ. अंबेडकर का सूत्र शिक्षित बनो, संघर्ष करो और संगठित रहो,  
ही उस वर्चस्व का अंत कर सकता है.

इस व्यवस्था से लड़ने के लिए नेहा को उसके सक्षम बनाना  
रामसरूप और नेहा की पहली जरूरत थी. दलित जीवन के कड़वे  
यथार्थ को उसी बेखौफ आत्मकथ्य शैली में गढ़ा गया है.  
परंपरावादी साहित्य की तुलना में परिवर्तनवादी साहित्य की गूँज  
इसमें तीव्र है. प्रूफ में व्याप्त व भाषा शैली में कुछ गलतियां हैं.  
बहुत जगह अनावश्यक शब्दों व संवादों का प्रयोग भी दिखता है,  
जिसके बगैर भी संग्रह की कहानियां बेजोड़ हैं.

□

पुस्तक : जोहड़ी (कहानी-संग्रह)

लेखिका : कौशल पंवार

प्रकाशक : हिंदी राष्ट्रीय पुस्तक न्यास, नई दिल्ली-110070

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दैनिक जागरण, 27 मई 2019, पेज 111

पुस्तक यंत्र

# सिरहाने रखी जाने लायक किताब



समीक्ष्य कृति-  
अख्तरी  
सोज और साज का  
अफसाना  
संपादन- यतीन्द्र  
मिश्र  
प्रकाशन- वाणी  
प्रकाशन,  
दरियागंज, नई  
दिल्ली- 110002  
मूल्य- रु. 395

कुछ पुस्तकें हमें विज्ञ बनाती हैं, कुछ अनभिज्ञ। केवल कुछ पुस्तकें ऐसी होती हैं, जो हमें रसज्ञ बनाने में भूमिका अदा करती हैं। वाणी प्रकाशन से आई यतीन्द्र मिश्र की पुस्तक 'अख्तरी: सोज और साज का अफसाना' ऐसी ही पुस्तक है। यतीन्द्र मिश्र लंबे समय से इस कठिन अभियान में लगे हुए हैं कि समाज में संगीत सुनने की सुरुचि व संस्कृति विकसित करें। बेगम अख्तर की गायकी का जादू वही जान सकता है, जिसने उन्हें ध्यान से, धुन से और लगाव से सुना है। 'अख्तरी' की खासियत यही है कि एक तरफ यह किताब उनका किरदार बताती है, तो दूसरी तरफ उनकी जिंदगी का फसाना।

बेगम अख्तर की अपनी जिंदगी कोई कम तूफानी नहीं थी। उसमें चढ़ाव थे, तो उतार भी थे, गर्द था तो गुबार भी था, छलावा था तो प्यार भी था। यतीन्द्र ने अपने लेख 'अख्तरीनामा' में तफसील से ये सब जलजले और सिलसिले बयां किए हैं। शिवानी, सलीम क़िदवई, रख्शान्दा जलील, प्रवीण झा, अनीश प्रधान, नरेन्द्र सैनी सबने अपने तरीके से बेगम अख्तर की अदा और अदायगी से परदा उठाया है, मगर तिलिस्म बना ही रहता है। इतने लोगों की यादों में बेगम अख्तर का जादू बसा हुआ है कि कुछ बातें बार-बार आ गई हैं। जाहिर सी बात कि फनकार एक और तलबगार बहुत हैं। शिवानी ने ग्वालियर, किराना और जयपुर घरानों के संगीत की बारीकियां बयान करते हुए बेगम अख्तर की आवाज का विश्लेषण किया है। उनके बेशुमार

दीवाने और मुरीद थे। यहां तक कि खुद लता मंगेशकर ने कुबूल किया है कि वे बेहजाद लखनवी की गजल 'दीवाना बनाना है, तो दीवाना बना दे' की जबरदस्त मुरीद थीं। उन्होंने रेडियो पर इसकी फरमाइश भेजी थी। यतीन्द्र ने बड़ी खूबसूरती से इन सबकी यादें उसी गर्मी के साथ पाठकों तक पहुंचाई हैं-शान्ती हीशनन्द, रीता गांगुली, शुभा मुद्गल, कौमुदी मुंशी और नरहरि पटेल, यहां तक कि बिस्मिल्ला खां साहब कह उठते हैं- 'अहा यही तो सितम है तेरी आवाज का।' अकार की तान में 'अ' करने में बेगम का गला थोड़ा फट जाता था। यही उनकी खूबी थी।

जिंदादिल बेगम अख्तर की निजी जिंदगी पेचीदा थी। पति इश्तियाक अहमद अब्बासी अपने घर में गाना-बजाना कम पसंद करते थे इसीलिए लखनऊ से बाहर की बैठकों में बेगम मन से जातीं। मोहन नाडकर्णी के मुताबिक, 'अंत तक भी उनकी गायकी से फूटता चंचल उछाह बेगम की लोकप्रियता को बढ़ाने में समान रूप से जिम्मेदार रहा।' वे खुद फैसले लेतीं कि उन्हें

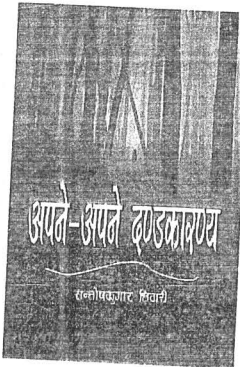
फैज गाना है या गालिब। यतीन्द्र मिश्र ने अपने आलेख में बड़े फलक पर बेगम अख्तर का जिंदगीनामा पेश किया है। किताब बंद करने से पहले निहायत खूबसूरत लिखावट में अजीज शायर सुदर्शन फाकिर की वह बलासिक गजल दी हुई है, जिसे सुनते ही बेगम अख्तर ने तय कर लिया था कि वे इसे स्वर देंगी- 'कुछ तो दुनिया की इनायात ने दिल तोड़ दिया।'

'अख्तरी' पुस्तक की निर्मिति और प्रस्तुति अलग ढंग से आकर्षक है। पहली नजर में किताब की जिल्द किसी फिल्म की तस्वीर लगती है लेकिन किताब में दी गई दीगर दिलकश तस्वीरें यतीन्द्र मिश्र के निजी संग्रह की धरोहर हैं। हर लिहाज से यह सिरहाने रखी जाने लायक किताब है।

मंगला कालिदा

पुस्तक यंत्र

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संग्रह।





## किताबघर

‘काली औरत का ख्वाब’ एक अभिनव प्रयोग है। शायर और फिल्म गीतकार इरशाद कामिल ने फिल्मों के लिए लिखे जाने वाले गीतों के बनने की कहानी को इस किताब का विषय बनाया है। उनके अनुसार- ‘हर कहानी में एक गीत होता है और हर गीत में एक कहानी छिपी होती है।’ उसे ही अपने अनुभवों से सींचते हुए और फिल्मों की कहानी में मौजूद गीतों के पीछे के किस्सों को दुनिया से साझा करने के जतन में ‘काली औरत का ख्वाब’ का सृजन हुआ है। खुद शायर के कहे मुताबिक, ‘एक गीतकार लड़का बस, सड़कों की धूल फांकता गाने लिखने लगा और कहानियां बनने लगीं।’



पताकि मिश्र

इस लिहाज से यह संकलन इस मामले में मानीखेज है कि बहुतेरे गीतों का कच्चा-पक्का ड्राफ्ट भी यहां पढ़ने के लिहाज से उपलब्ध है, जो निश्चित ही फिल्म गीतों की परंपरा के अध्ययन तथा विमर्श के लिए एक नया तरीका हमें सुलभ कराता है। आज भी जब हम पुराने सदाबहार गीतों के बहाने गुजरे दौर के महत्वपूर्ण गीतकारों की बदिशों की बात करते हैं, तो जानकर आश्चर्य करते

# हर गीत की एक कहानी होती है

हैं कि फलां गीत में मजरूह सुलतानपुरी ने कैसे बदलाव किया था या कि साहिर ने रिकॉर्डिंग के समय शब्दों के वजन के हिसाब से तुक रचते हुए कोई दूसरा शब्द मौके पर बदल दिया। इस तरह फिल्म गीतों की कहानियों से संबंधित जो लम्हे हमें हासिल हैं, उसके अनुसार हम हिंदी फिल्म गीतों के पाठ और उसकी संरचना पर कोई बात करते हैं। इरशाद कामिल इस मामले में दो कदम आगे बढ़कर इस किताब की पेशकश के साथ पाठकों और सिनेमा रसिकों से एक भावपूर्ण रिश्ता कायम कर लेते हैं।

पंद्रह छोटे-बड़े संस्मरणों में विभक्त यह किताब उनके संघर्ष की दास्तान भी साथ-साथ कहती चलती है। इसकी संरचना इस तरह से की गई है कि एक स्तर पर हम फिल्मों में पैर जमाने के लिए संघर्षशील शायर इरशाद को देखते हैं, तो दूसरे ही क्षण कैनवास बदलता है और हम एक नए फ्रेम में उस मशहूर गीतकार इरशाद कामिल से रूबरू होते हैं, जिसके लिए संघर्ष का अर्थ अब बदल गया है। यहां संघर्ष एक अदद सार्थक गीत को पाने का है, जिसकी सबसे बड़ी शर्त हर एक की जुबान पर इसका आ जाना और व्यावसायिक सफलता है। एक तरफ काम पाने की जद्दोजहद, तो दूसरी तरफ कुछ बेहतर रच पाने की चुनौती, तीसरी ओर एक भावुक कवि मन का आत्मचिंतन, जो वह लिख रहा है दरअसल किसके लिए है? और ऐसा क्यों है?

इरशाद अपने जीवन संघर्ष के इंद्रराज बखूबी दर्ज करते हैं।

काली औरत का ख्वाब  
इरशाद कामिल  
स्टोरीज/सांग्स  
प्रथम संस्करण, 2019  
वाणी प्रकाशन, नई दिल्ली  
मूल्य: 425 रुपये



लगता है कि वह उनकी ही नहीं हर एक संघर्षशील युवा गीतकार की अनसुनी आवाज है, जिसके लिए अवसर का एक दरवाजा खुलना बाकी है। उनका इम्तियाज अली से मिलने का प्रसंग भी बहुत फिल्मी और रोचक है। इसी तरह ‘खोया-खोया’ गीत के बीच में आने वाली इरशाद की पोएट्री की बात का जिक्र भी सिनेमा इंडस्ट्री से एक शायर के तालमेल बिठाने का प्रसंग बयां करता है। हिंदी फिल्म गीतों में पंजाबी लहजा के पुनर्वास की बात हो, किसी मशहूर संगीत-निर्देशक की धुन पर अपने शब्दों को रचने का मामला हो, हरवक्त अपने शायर को जिंदा बचाए रखने का संघर्ष हो- यह किताब बहुत इत्मिान से इन सवालों का जवाब देती है। एक जगह इरशाद कहते हैं, ‘व्यावसायिक सृजनात्मक लेखक का शायद यही मजा है कि हर नई सुबह का

सूरज एक नए संघर्ष का ऐलान करता है।’ इस वक्तव्य की रोशनी में उनके गीतकार किरदार को बहुत आसानी से विश्लेषित किया जा सकता है। गीतों के बनने की प्रक्रिया के बहाने उनके तमाम मशहूर गानों की कहानी को पढ़ना, एक साहित्यिक की डायरी को पढ़ने का सुख देता है। फिर वह ‘कैसे बताएं/क्यों तुझको चाहें’, ‘ये इश्क हाथ/बैठे बिठाए’, ‘मौजां ही मौजां’, ‘ओ यारा रब्ब रुस्स जाने दे’, ‘मन सात समंदर डोल गया’ जैसे ढेरों गीतों के पाठ, उनकी बनावट, संरचना, उससे उठने वाली ध्वनियों के विन्यास और बाकायदा एक सुरीले गीत में बदलने की जादूगरी, सभी कुछ पर रोशनी पड़ती है।

पूरी किताब में इरशाद कामिल की हस्तलिपि में गीतों के ड्राफ्ट को देखना मनोहारी है। वह इस बात की ओर इशारा भी है कि एक कवि मन कैसे किसी बिंब या रूपक पर अटककर बार-बार उसी वाक्य की परिक्रमा में उलझता है। एक गीत को मुकम्मल तौर पर देखने और उसे बरतने का सलीका सिखाती हुई ‘काली औरत का ख्वाब’ में गीतों के अफसानों में उसके शायर को ढूँढकर पढ़ा और समझा जा सकता है। उन गीतों की अर्थ-छायाओं में पूरी फिल्म की कहानी पटकथा की तरह मौजूद है, जिसमें किस्सों और गीतों की यह रहगुजर पढ़ी जाने लायक है। किताब का शीर्षक भी साभिप्राय है। यह काली औरत दरअसल फिल्मफेयर की वह ट्रॉफी है, जो कोई भी फिल्मी हस्ती अपने करियर में ढेरों बार हासिल करना चाहती है। इरशाद कामिल यह ट्रॉफी बार-बार पाएं, उनके बेहतर गीत यही सिफारिश करते हैं।

आप भी कुछ कहना चाहते हैं...  
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दैनिक जागरण ; 19 मई 2019 , पेज 02 (संक्र)

# Coaching and collaborating

Books

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### Mathematics Coaching & Collaboration in a PLC at Work™

Timothy D. Kanold, Mona Toncheff, Matthew R. Lawson, Bill Barnes, Jessica Kanold-McIntyre, and Sarah Schuhl, 2018. 117 pp., \$29.95 paper. ISBN 978-1-943874-34-7. Stock no. 15698. A joint publication of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and Solution Tree Press; <http://www.nctm.org>

A Professional Learning Community (PLC) refers to ongoing teams of mathematics teachers at any grade level who work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning. A successful PLC requires teachers to open their minds, their classrooms, and their assessment results to peer scrutiny for the good of all.

Ideal teams must have strong, knowledgeable, nonjudgmental leadership. This guide specifically addresses such math team leaders or coaches. Emphasizing trust, transparency, communication, honest reflection, research-based action, and careful monitoring of results, this systematic guide promises great strides in student learning to those dedicated to making it work. It includes many printable rubrics and checklists, plus vignettes from the authors as they worked through the process in their own schools.

The book is one of four in NCTM's Every Child Can Learn Mathematics series. Although valuable as a stand-alone resource, it might offer even more cohesiveness to the reader of

the series as a whole.—Debbie Char, *St. Louis Community College, St. Louis, Missouri.*

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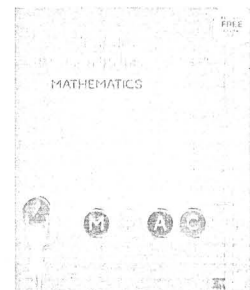
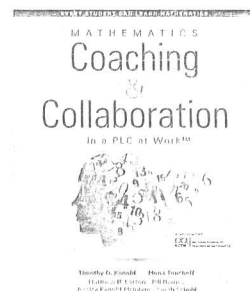
### Visible Learning for Mathematics: What Works Best to Optimize Student Learning, Grades K–12

John Hattie, Couglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey with Linda M. Gojak, Sara Delano Moore, and William Mellman, 2017. Foreword by Diane J. Briars. 304 pp., \$36.95 paper. ISBN 978-1-5063-6294-6. Corwin; <http://www.corwin.com>

The authors of this book build on Dr. John Hattie's work of identifying the effect size of teaching practices on student learning. Using the data, the authors focus on how teachers can integrate practices with a large effect size into their classrooms. Although the book begins with a novice-friendly explanation of effect size, the heart of the book lies in its discussion of surface learning, deep learning, and transfer learning, with an emphasis on the most effective practices to promote these types of learning. Further, the authors continually emphasize that these types of learning should not be used sequentially but rather spiraled around one another to promote student learning.

The material that the book covers is dense, with a lot to digest. To assist, the authors include a series of online videos that can be accessed with the text; they provide summaries of key ideas, classroom examples, and interviews with practicing teachers.

I recommend this book to teachers, department leaders, and curriculum coordinators interested in integrating highly effective practices into the classroom to improve teaching and learning. Additionally, taken in manageable pieces with support from the online videos, this book would be a valuable resource to pre-service teachers as they begin their professional career.—Matthew Chedister, *University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.*



# Redesigning hopscotch

Dice box	Original hopscotch redesign (as described)	Dice box	Hopscotch redesign (for kindergarten/first grade)
S T A R T		S T A R T	
	<p>Add numerals and/or dots to the circle as a guide for students who need to work on one-to-one correspondence and symbol recognition. This could look similar to dot plates that are used for subitizing. Children count aloud as they jump.</p> <p>Create a box near the start line for classroom management purposes, so that children roll the die in the box.</p>		<p>Children roll the die and write the numbers to create expressions that equal ? (or any specified number for fact families). If a child must roll three or more times, the child continues adding to the original problem (i.e., <math>3 + 2 + 5 = 10</math>). If a child "goes over" ten, he or she identifies exactly how many hops are needed to get to ten. Reinforce the idea of counting on.</p> <p>Create two game plots to make a relay. Be sure to reinforce how you would like students to throw the die.</p>

**Adaptations of well-known outdoor games, such as hopscotch, provide physical opportunities to interact with and reinforce mathematics through play.** Mr. Gardner's class redesigns hopscotch (see the **online more4U** for a full-page illustration of the layout). Each child rolls a die, predicts the final circle they will land in, and hops while all children count chorally. For instance,

- Allie rolls a 5.
- She says, "I think I will land on that circle."  
*[Pointing to the fifth circle]*
- Gardner replies, "You hop while I point to each dot on the die. We will all count together while you hop."
- Gardner reinforces the result, "You made a great prediction. We ended our counting on five, and you ended on the fifth circle!"

Gardner assesses subitizing, prediction, counting strategies, and such counting skills as one-to-one correspondence and cardinality. To accommodate multiple student understandings, Gardner creates multiple paths: circles with dots (emphasizing what is seen on the die with the

circles) and/or circles with numerals (emphasizing symbol recognition).

## Extending the

### Grades 1–2

Reinforce addition and prediction by incorporating "counting-on." As pairs, each partner rolls a die. The first child predicts and then jumps. The second child must predict and jump from where the first child ended. Use chalk to record symbols, numerals, and the result of the sum.

### Grades 3–5

Draw hopscotch circles like the buttons on a basic calculator. Children take turns hopping out possible expressions that equal the rolled number, practicing basic facts and operation fluency.

Ryan Higgins is an associate professor of early childhood and elementary education at Coker College in Hartsville, South Carolina. She is interested in assessment in mathematics at all age levels and in teaching math with creative approaches. John Byrd is in his first full year as a second-grade teacher at North Hartsville Elementary School in Hartsville. Edited by Theodore Chao, [chao.160@osu.edu](mailto:chao.160@osu.edu), an assistant professor of mathematics education at The Ohio State University in Columbus; and Imani Goffney, [igoffney@umd.edu](mailto:igoffney@umd.edu), who conducts research at the University of Maryland–College Park, where she is an assistant professor in mathematics education.



Go to <http://www.nctm.org/tcm> to find full-size templates of the Hopscotch game and photographs depicting extensions for early elementary school. Access to this online material is a members-only benefit.

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# The Deccan chronicles

A racy, highly readable narrative of 300 years of Deccan political history from the 13th century to the 17th century. BY VIKHAR AHMED SAYEED

IT would not be wrong to state that the pedagogy of history in India is skewed towards the study of north India. This extends across various levels of education in the country, from school to graduate education across universities in India. With fewer scholars opting to study peninsular India, this lack of attention percolates down to research students, who are compelled to focus on north India as there are fewer professors who can possibly supervise their research. This excessive focus on the rule of Delhi has resulted in the neglect of other parts of the country in history writing.

The fact that few invasions took place from the south to the north through history, whereas the lure of the Deccan spurred north Indian rulers to invade and eventually conquer it, is also perhaps another reason that the region of the Deccan has been marginalised in history writing. With the rise of linguistic nationalisms in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, regional nationalism (such as that of Shivaji [1630-

1680]) has been studied but is restricted by language and modern geography, while the Deccan as a region has itself not been extensively researched.

The Deccan plateau is that broad mass of land that lies south of the Vindhya mountains and tapers as it gets flanked by the Western and Eastern Ghats of peninsular India. Linguistically, for historians of the medieval Deccan, the centre of this region is located at the crossroads of three languages: Kannada, Marathi and Telugu. The broader Deccan region branches out from this point. Although it was the cradle of

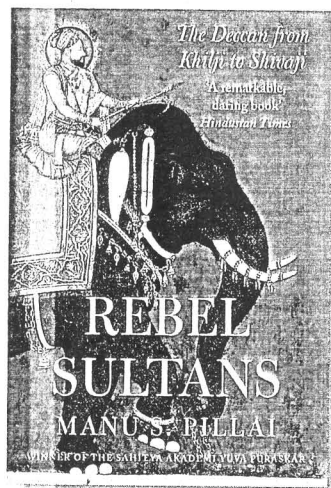
historically rich dynasties that played crucial roles at important junctures in Indian history, the Deccan itself remains understudied.

Thus the Bahmani sultanate and its legate kingdoms (of Ahmednagar, Berar, Bijapur, Bidar and Golconda), which persisted in various forms for more than 350 years in the Deccan since Alauddin Bahman Shah (r. 1347-1358) founded the Bahmani sultanate in 1347, were consigned to the margins in the larger histories of medieval India, eclipsed as they were by the Delhi Sultanates and the Mughals. In their heyday, the geographical realm of the Bahmani Sultans and their successors

extended across vast swathes of central and peninsular India, touching both the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. However, the absence of a comprehensive history of this epoch remained a lacuna until the publication of the book under review. For that, the author's role must be acknowledged.

Manu S. Pillai's ambitions are modest. He sets out to tell an easily accessible political history—relying mainly on secondary sources in English—of around 300 years of the Deccan, from the end of the thirteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century. This period is conveniently signposted by two invasions from north Indian rulers. The first one was led by Alauddin Khilji (r. 1296-1316), the only significant ruler of the short-lived Khilji dynasty, who, in 1296, came down all the way to Devagiri in modern Maharashtra, forging tenuous links between the Deccan and Delhi that were further strengthened by Muhammad ibn Tughluq (r. 1325-51) a few decades later.

The second action, which flags the end of the book, was personally led by the great Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707), who conquered the remaining independent sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda in 1686 and 1687 respectively, ending the rule of the Deccan Sultans. While this would be the apogee of the Mughal Empire in terms of the geographical area it controlled and the peoples it ruled, Aurangzeb's obsession



## Rebel Sultans

**The Deccan from Khilji to Shivaji**

By Manu S. Pillai  
Juggernaut Books,  
2018

Pages: xvi + 308

Price: Rs.599

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with the Deccan would lead to the subsequent unravelling of the imperial control of the Mughals, resulting in the eventual downfall of the Mughal Empire

The book has seven chapters which look at the major players in the Sultanate era chronologically, with some overlapping of time periods between chapters. Pillai begins his book with a vignette from the Battle of Raichur (1520) when the forces of Ismail Adil Shah of Bijapur (r. 1511-34) clashed with the greatest of the Vijayanagara kings, Krishnadeva (r. 1509-1529) (commonly referred to as Krishnadevaraya).

By this time, the Bahmani Empire was well on its way to dismemberment at the hands of the "Rebel Sultans". Adil Shah was continuing the tradition of the Bahmanis who constantly contested the region known as the "Raichur Doab", the fertile tract of land between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers that worked as a fluid boundary between the two great empires. After an easy victory over the Bijapur army, Krishnadeva heaped further humiliation on the defeated Sultan of Bijapur by ordering him to kiss his foot as part of the terms of defeat.

Beginning with this evocative episode, Pillai's racy narrative takes the reader back to the ferocity of the Delhi Sultans who, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, expanded their dominions explosively, establishing control over almost all of India, leaving their footprint even in Madurai in the deep south. This was to

be short-lived, though, as (Muhammad ibn) Tughluq's control over Delhi weakened and two empires emerged from the dust—the Bahmani sultanate with its capital in Gulbarga (and later, Bidar) and Vijayanagara with its capital, Hampi, on the banks of the Tungabhadra river.

There are fifteen kings (some only in name) who followed Alauddin Bahman Shah's reign. The capital was shifted from Gulbarga to Bidar in the fifteenth century, and powerful rulers such as Feroz Shah (r. 1397-1422) and Ahmad Shah (r. 1422-1436) established their reign and ruled from the "Turquoise Throne", the Bahmani seat.

Pillai also discusses the prime ministership of Mahmud Gawan (1411-1481), who became the most important man in the kingdom. After Gawan's death, the local governors of the Bahmanis began to assert their independence. The Bahmani line continued for the next 50 years, getting increasingly titular until the dynasty was snuffed out in 1538. Across the Raichur Doab, their southern neighbours remained relatively stable, although separate dynasties reigned from Hampi, with each change precipitated by courtly intrigues that Pillai narrates interestingly. Adopting the Persianised style of the prevalent political ethos, the Vijayanagara rulers modelled themselves as "Hindu Sultans".

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book is the one on the five mutinous Bahmani governors who cleaved out

chunks of the weakening empire and their brief alliance to defeat Vijayanagara during the Battle of Talikota (1565). Pillai describes in some detail the differences between the "Westerners" (that is, the courtiers who came from Persia and other realms overseas) and the "Deccanis" (an assorted bunch that included local converts and descendants of the initial cohorts of soldiers who had come down with the armies of the Delhi Sultanates) which led to the end of the Bahmani Empire and the emergence of the five separate sultanates.

In Vijayanagara, after the passing of Krishnadevaraya, it was his son-in-law, Ramaraya (1485-1565), who eventually became the regent. It was Ramaraya's hubris which encouraged an alliance between the squabbling Deccan Sultans, who prevailed over the Vijayanagara army at the Battle of Talikota, vanquishing the glory of that empire. Pillai is at pains to dispel the popular understanding of the battle as a civilisational clash between Hinduism and Islam.

In subsequent chapters, Pillai looks at the later histories of the sultanates after the Battle of Talikota. The alliance forged between the sultans did not last beyond 1565, as the sultans went back to their interneccine rivalries. Of the five sultanates, Pillai narrates at length the fate of Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda as these would remain politically significant. In this story, characters such as Ibrahim Adil Shah II (r. 1580-1627) of Bijapur who

venerated the Hindu goddess Saraswati, Malik Ambar (1548-1626) who was a slave-turned-regent of Ahmednagar, Chand Bibi (1550-1599) who played important roles in Bijapur and Ahmednagar, and Madanna, the Brahmin minister of Golconda, make colourful appearances. Pillai concludes by briefly discussing the rise of the Marathas as a political force in the Deccan.

The most accomplished living historian of medieval Deccan is Richard Eaton (of the University of Arizona), whose work Pillai has extensively relied upon. The tedious methodology of historical research and the academic system has ensured that someone like Eaton is not well known outside the confines of history departments of universities and beyond the aficionados of medieval Deccan history. The advantage of writing broad histories for a popular audience becomes evident when authors such as Pillai take advantage of the immense freedom that the genre allows them, unconstrained by academic methodology.

Thus, Pillai shuffles between a variety of sources, not interrogating them in the manner of an academic historian. His book also does not break any fresh ground as far as academic scholarship is concerned and no pioneering insight is offered. But in Pillai's defence, it is clear that he does not even attempt to do this. His mandate is limited—he sets out to tell the story of the Deccan from the invasion of Alauddin Khilji to the rise of Shivaji, and this he does well. □

# The Modi years

The book is a comprehensive audit of the Narendra Modi regime's five-year tenure and reveals an all-round failure that is unprecedented in scope and extent. BY V. SRIDHAR

THE electoral victory that propelled Narendra Modi to the Prime Minister's Office in 2014 rested on the innocent-sounding promise of *Sabka saath, sabka vikas* (with everyone, development for all) that obviously struck a chord with a large section of the people. Five years later, as Modi faces the electorate again, that slogan is strikingly missing from the campaign caravan, a measure of how embarrassing it is for the ruling party to mouth a slogan that now draws attention to its gross multifaceted failures.

The simple truth is that no government in independent India has failed as spectacularly as Modi's. In part, this arises from measuring performance against promise: the taller the promise, the more spectacular the chances of failure. Modi promised the moon and has not delivered even a morsel. Worse, in a desperate attempt to block access to details or verification of the actual economic performance of his regime, it has concealed a range of data that were always available to Indians on a regular basis or bent them to present itself in a better light.

This book has been perfectly timed. It comes

just as Indians prepare to vote in an election that is widely seen as a referendum on the performance of the Modi regime. The very fact that the *Sabka saath, sabka vikas* slogan is being upstaged by the tale of Modi's stature as a muscular leader in his current electoral campaign is an admission that the *vikas* plank has slipped from under his feet.

Edited by a group of young scholars, this book is a compendium of essays on various aspects of the Modi government's performance. The essays are assembled in three sections: the economy, the performance in terms of a set of socio-economic indicators and governance. The hallmark of each essay is the data, meticulously assembled in tables and

charts, which reveal a level of attention to detail at a time when access to data on a range of subjects has been wilfully strangled by the Indian state.

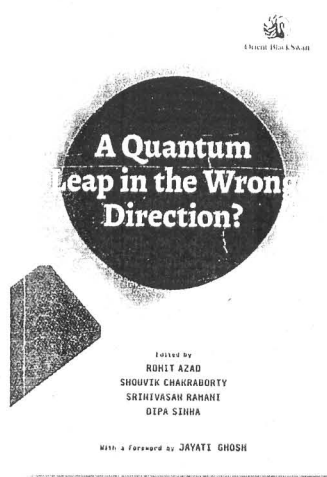
## MISSING DATA

One of the most notable features of the book is the remarkable effort the authors made to get around the problem of missing or insufficient data and the imaginative use of proxy data to overcome the problem. Interestingly, the chapters and sections are provocatively titled, generally deriding the tall promises made with apt pointers to the reality of actual performance. Clearly, this is for a popular audience.

The opening chapter in the volume, for instance, takes a slingshot at the *Sabka saath, sabka vikas*

slogan and argues that the Modi regime remained neither "with the people" nor did it promote meaningful *vikas*. Instead, Rohit Azad, despite being hampered by dodgy gross domestic product numbers, points out that economic growth was better during the first tenure of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) regime. More importantly, from a social justice perspective, he argues that the gains from economic growth appear to have been more broad-based and equitable, especially during the tenure of the second UPA regime.

He demonstrates this by showing that agricultural wages, possibly the floor wage for the Indian labour force, registered a significant increase compared with the overall national income during the second tenure of the UPA but declined significantly during the Modi years. It is no wonder that agricultural and rural workers fared worse under Modi if one recalls the mocking tone he adopted towards the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in a speech in Parliament. True to his word, the scheme, once touted for its transformative potential, lies in tatters today: wages have



## A Quantum Leap in the Wrong Direction?

Edited by Rohit Azad, Shouvik Chakraborty, Srinivasan Ramani and Dipa Sinha  
Orient BlackSwan, 2019

Price: Rs.495  
Pages: 315 + xxiii

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declined, payment for work done has been delayed and the scheme has been choked by budgetary cuts.

Using another data set, this time from the Income Tax Department, Rohit Azad points out that the share of the national income pie has become significantly skewed since Modi came to power. The income share of the top 10 per cent of Indian taxpayers increased from 56.2 per cent in 2014-15 to 57.9 per cent in 2017-18. Significantly, during this period the share of the bottom half of Indian taxpayers declined from 17.6 per cent to 16 per cent. Remark-

ably, this is as if the top 10 per cent walked away with the incomes of the bottom half of the Indian population during the Modi years. Whatever *vikas* there was, was thus clearly only for some at the expense of the vast many.

To be sure, the Indian economy was slowing down even as Modi assumed office. But it is also true that he started with several fortuitous advantages, among them low international crude oil prices. But even in this case, he frittered away the advantage by letting domestic petroleum product prices rise incessantly, evidently to boost his gov-

ernment's tax kitty. Even more importantly, in a situation of clearly slackening domestic demand, evidenced by the utter failure of Indian industry to invest in fresh capacities, he failed to initiate a significant injection of demand by promoting public investment through public sector undertakings or, for example, by investing public funds in Indian Railways, which could have had economy-wide ramifications. Indeed, the credit that the Modi government claims for reining in inflation during its tenure is actually a curse on the Indian peasantry as is proved by the dramatic

collapse of agricultural product prices, especially since demonetisation.

The precarious condition of Indian public sector banks, systematically run down by the rampant cronyism that has resulted in non-performing assets (NPAs) assuming menacing proportions, has prevented a bank-finance recovery. Instead, Modi's Mudra mantra as an answer to this has proved to be not only meaningless because of the ineffective ticket-sizes of the loans but also threatens to undermine the stability and viability of state-owned banks.

No account of Modi's



**P. RAJAMMA, A CONSTRUCTION WORKER,** recounts the hardships she faces because she lost her job after demonetisation. She was part of a large number of construction workers who petitioned the Madurai Collector on May 15, 2017, demanding employment.

G. MOORTHY

performance can be complete without reference to the whimsical, reckless and egregious abuse of economic policy in the name of demonetisation, which he unleashed on hapless Indians in November 2016. The economic warfare that he let loose, which has no parallel in human history, crippled livelihoods, compromised institutions and betrayed the faith ordinary Indians had in their currency, possibly forever. To worsen matters, the imposition of the goods and services tax regime soon after demonetisation hit the same vulnerable section again, and hard.

The scale of the collapse of agricultural commodity prices, unparalleled in independent India, makes a mockery of Modi's claims about doubling farmers' income by 2022. Instead of putting in place a procurement machinery to buy produce at the set minimum support price, the Modi regime is actually pressuring State governments (such as Kerala) to not purchase produce from farmers.

#### **JOBS**

The Modi regime's miserable failure on the jobs front has been highlighted by its brazen attempt at concealing data on employment. The colossal failure on this front is only upstaged by the disturbing anecdotal data that pour in about wage levels and the nature and terms of employment of even those who are employed. Soon after assuming office, Smriti Irani, the ever effervescent Minister then in charge of education, prom-



S. R. RAGHUNATHAN

**THE MAINSTREAMING** of the lynch culture is a unique contribution of the Modi years. Here, members of Citizens for Peace, Justice and Democracy at a demonstration in Chennai in July 2017 to protest against rising mob violence and cow vigilantism in the country.

ised a new policy on education, the last one being of 1986 vintage. Five years later, the nation still awaits one. Meanwhile, the Modi regime scarcely concealing its techno-utopian streak is ceding ground to the ever-greedy private sector.

Instead of doing something about the state of schools, the Modi regime prefers to appeal to a wafer-thin section of the elite that is enamoured of the adoption of "Edu Tech" in schools. Thus, instead of better infrastructure such as toilets in schools, recruiting more teachers or improving teacher salaries, the regime is focussed on things such as CCTVs to monitor teachers or biometric attendance registers. In keeping with the NITI Aayog's penchant for focussing on the frivolous, it provides the "policy" justification for such adventures.

Higher education has

obviously fared badly, too, which is not surprising for a regime that has actually mounted an assault on campuses of higher learning across the country. It is certain that if Modi returns to power, his government will do away with the University Grants Commission and replace it with a centralised authority that would not only rob institutions of their autonomy but impinge on States' rights with respect to universities that they currently control.

This is not merely a book about the economy in the times of Modi. The last section, which deals with governance, focusses on how Modi assumed office with a Mr Clean image but that has been tarnished by a series of scandals, the latest being the Rafale scam, which threatens to become Modi's Bofors. Anmol Somanchi provides an account of how the "bene-

fits" of the Aadhaar project were systematically neglected, while the many ways in which it actually harmed people were hidden.

Happymon Jacob's assessment of Modi's foreign policy notes that it has been shaped by the heavy hand of a right-wing "cultural nationalist agenda". While sucking up to American power by offering itself as a junior partner, it has alienated old friends. Ironically, for a party that is seeking office in the name of national security, Jacob notes that its managerial record is one of "systematic inefficiency".

#### **LYNCH CULTURE**

No account of the Modi years can be complete without reference to the manner in which the government has provided freedom for the explicit articulation of aggressive majoritarianism, which has seriously and systematically impinged on civil rights of all kinds. The mainstreaming of the lynch culture is a unique contribution of the Modi years. But the unprecedented freedom with which the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh and its affiliates have been allowed to strike at democratic processes and institutions in all walks of life is also a hallmark of the Modi regime.

This book, whose title probably comes from a remark by Amartya Sen that the Modi years have marked India's quantum leap in the wrong direction, is a must-read for all those seeking a real evaluation of Modi's tenure, not one that is coloured by the *bhakti* for one man. □

# Books

**THE RULES OF THE GAME: Indian Fiscal Federalism** by Y.V. Reddy and G.V. Reddy. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2019.

THE authors have produced a valuable contribution to the literature on federalism in India. As the title indicates, their focus is on *fiscal* federalism, the institutions and behaviour that determines how governments at different levels raise, spend and transfer funds. This is narrower than federalism more generally, since that would include political and judicial institutions, which determine divisions of powers more broadly, including spheres of legislative and legal authority and action. At the same time, the book's introduction begins, 'Fiscal federalism in India can be viewed, in practice, as a game in politics, economics and public finance played between the Union and States.' As the introduction elucidates, fiscal federalism has to be considered in a broader context, and its rules only specify part of the larger political economy game that takes place in any country, but particularly in one with India's scale and diversity.

The book has many strengths. It is clear and concise, while covering the full range of India's fiscal federal institutions, their historical origins and evolution, and how they have impacted public finances at different levels of government. Each chapter has well defined and clearly titled sections, and almost all include an end-

of-chapter summary that reviews the preceding content. A few specific references are provided at the end of each chapter, rather than being gathered at the end of the book. Because the book comes after a period of significant changes in India's fiscal federal institutions, its timing is particularly valuable. The chapters on the NITI Aayog, successor to the defunct Planning Commission, and the Goods and Services Tax Council, governing implementation of a major recent reform in indirect taxes, represent the first treatment of these developments that is integrated with consideration of the other features of Indian fiscal federalism.

The structure of the book is straightforward and sensible. It begins with the origins of Indian fiscal federalism in the colonial period, then provides an overview of its evolution. This is followed by an excellent summary of the Finance Commission, a core institution of Indian fiscal federalism, including its structure and its performance over the decades. These four chapters are a wonderful introduction to the basics of the subject at hand. The following two chapters consider vertical distribution of funds between the Union and the states, and horizontal distribution across the states, both based primarily on formulaic tax sharing. Each of these chapters provides a clear chronological summary of how successive Finance Commissions handled questions of balance between responsibilities and resources, and issues of equity across subnational jurisdictions.

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Chapter 8, as its title (The Detail Matters) indicates, provides more detail on various aspects of vertical and horizontal distributions and of the factors that have influenced the methodologies used.

The intervening Chapter 7 discusses grants-in-aid from the Centre to the states, and the varied and *ad hoc* nature of these grants is reflected, perhaps, in the absence of a summary and of references for this chapter. Instead, the chapter ends with a section titled 'Issues', which tries to come to grips with the multiple and sometimes contradictory goals of these grants. Perhaps the lack of conclusiveness in the discussion reflects the problematic status of grants-in-aid in Indian fiscal federalism, as compared to formula-driven tax sharing.

The topics in the book's first eight chapters represent the core, one might say, 'classic' issues of Indian fiscal federalism. They are slightly more than half the book's length. The next eight chapters, together with an Afterword, provide a more varied consideration of specific topics and recent developments. Chapter 9 tackles what could have been the most important modification (also summarized in Chapter 2) of Indian fiscal federalism in the nation's history, the creation of a constitutionally protected third layer of local governments. The treatment of this topic is again clear and concise, with historical background and a straightforward assessment of the weaknesses of local governments in terms of revenue autonomy and fiscal control. However, topics that could have been given more attention include the differences between urban and rural local governments, the political and constitutional constraints to strengthening local governments, and the reasons for states' varied failures to decentralize effectively. Some of these are mentioned in Chapter 2 but not revisited here.

Chapter 10 considers the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council as a new institution of 'cooperative' fiscal federalism. Indeed, the authors view the GST Council as 'a shining example' of this cooperation, since the Centre and states were able to come together to share a common tax base. What is important to realize is that the structure and assignment of indirect taxes that had evolved prior to the 1980s was so inefficient that reforms were desperately needed. The various versions of Value Added Tax (VAT), which provides the conceptual underpinnings for the GST, and the overcoming of uncoordinated, cascading sales and other indirect taxes, were a story of bargaining and cooperation that preceded the GST Council, and that could possibly have been described in more depth.

Chapter 11 turns to asymmetric federalism, which can have several dimensions, political and cultural as

well as economic. Much of this chapter focuses on so-called Special Category States, which were, to some extent, a creature of the Planning Commission. Divisions of states, particularly that of Andhra Pradesh (AP) into AP and Telangana, have created demands for expanded inclusion in this classification, because of the more favourable terms for transfers from the Centre. Given the demise of the Planning Commission, and the projected extinction of Special Category States, at least in their current incarnation, this chapter might have better followed Chapter 12, which covers the Planning Commission's chequered history.

The issue of the Planning Commission, and its successor, the NITI Aayog (Chapter 13), raise the question of federalism and development. The concepts of 'classic' fiscal federalism, involving vertical transfers and horizontal equity, are often implicitly based on a relatively static perspective on the economy – growth and development are not considered. The Planning Commission, the NITI Aayog, and possibly the approach to Special Category status, all foreground economic development. However, there has never been conceptual clarity in Indian fiscal federalism on how growth considerations should affect the nature of intergovernmental transfers or other aspects of federal institutions. The area of urban infrastructure and local government reform is another example of development related issues in fiscal federalism. It is not clear how a relatively short book could have tackled these issues, but they are worth highlighting. Certainly, if development requires investment, and investment requires targeted public funds, those linkages should be recognized in designing and managing the institutions of fiscal federalism. Perhaps one connection that could have been explored in these later chapters is the proliferation and persistence of various discretionary project or programmatic transfers, such as the numerous 'Centrally Sponsored Schemes'. These are only treated earlier in the book.

Chapter 14, on public debt and the Finance Commission, raises similar issues of conceptualization. The focus of the chapter is on fiscal management, and worries about large or growing deficits and of stocks of debt have been of particular concern for India's states (though less so than for subnational units in some other nations, such as Argentina and Brazil). The underlying issue, of course, is whether public borrowing leads to productive investment and higher growth, which in turn can make it possible to service or manage the higher public debt. Again, the problem is that the fiscal federalism literature has not given developmental issues enough attention, though there are exceptions.<sup>1</sup> Fur-

thermore, as argued here, the practice of fiscal federalism in India has not always dealt clearly with these developmental issues, a point that does not quite rise to the surface in the book.

The final two chapters of the book summarize aggregate transfers from the Centre to the states (Chapter 15), and consider the 15th Finance Commission, which faces unusual challenges (Chapter 16). To some extent, the first of these two chapters sets the stage for the second, since the latest commission's Terms of Reference (ToR) have the potential to roll back some of the increased flexibility and total of transfers resulting from the recommendations of the last commission. The latest commission also has to deal with the consequences of the implementation of the GST and the end of the distinction between plan and non-plan expenditures. Other items in the ToR are consideration of how grants-in-aid are determined; the requirement to use 2011 population figures, which will have horizontal equity implications; conditions for states to borrow; and possible performance based incentives for the states.

The book concludes with an Afterword, subtitled 'The Way Forward'. This is an exemplary summary of the issues that face Indian fiscal federalism at this moment in time, and further increases the value of the book. The authors emphasize the potentially centralizing biases of the current government, both in its vision of national economic development, and in the ToR for the 15th Finance Commission. The Afterword also revisits, or in some cases articulates explicitly for the first time, broader conceptual issues of efficiency and externalities, centralization and decentralization, public versus private goods, and specific issues in the operation of the Finance Commission and the NITI Aayog. Indeed, echoing the analysis in Chapter 13, the latter is seen as lacking sufficient effectiveness and impact. Perhaps one should not be surprised by that, in a situation where the national government itself is operating in a relatively centralized manner, with expertise being drawn from a limited range of sources.

1. For India, see, for example, M. Govinda Rao and Nirvikar Singh, *Political Economy of Federalism in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005; M. Govinda Rao, 'Making Federalism Work for India's Development', Chapter 2, in N.A. Khan (ed.), *Challenges and Issues in Indian Fiscal Federalism*. Springer, Singapore, 2018, pp. 9-13; Nirvikar Singh and T.N. Srinivasan, *Federalism and Economic Development in India: An Assessment*, in N. Hope, A. Kochar, R. Noll and T.N. Srinivasan (eds.), *Economic Reform in India: Challenges, Prospects, and Lessons*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013; more generally, see Barry Weingast, 'The Economic Role of Political Institutions: Market-Preserving Federalism and Economic Development', *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization* 11(1), pp. 1-31, 1995.

These kinds of issues bring one full circle to the political and economic 'game' of fiscal federalism. The manner in which democracy functions, the state of the judiciary, the way in which various regulatory institutions work, geopolitics, and social and cultural factors all feed into the manner in which fiscal federalism is conducted in India. What has been of interest in analyzing the Indian experience is how core institutions of fiscal federalism such as the Finance Commission and, somewhat different in categorization, the tax system, have survived the buffeting of these varied forces over many decades. Federal systems tend toward centralization, because of the inevitable dominance of the national authority, but India's scale and diversity have acted as checks on this bias.

The authors have done a remarkable job of producing a lucid, comprehensive, reasoned and up-to-date account of the working of Indian fiscal federalism. I am not sure that they have really come to grips with analyzing the larger political and economic game that continues to go on with respect to Indian federalism. M. Govinda Rao and I attempted something more in that vein, but much has happened since our work was completed 15 years ago. No doubt, others will keep writing on Indian federalism, including fiscal federalism, and hopefully they will revisit these bigger issues and the larger game being played. (Indeed, Dr Govinda Rao, whose work on this topic has been prolific and path-breaking, receives a special acknowledgment from the authors.) But the authors cannot be faulted for limiting their scope, since they have produced a compact, immensely readable volume that should serve as a primary reference for all scholars of the subject, and any policymaker who wishes to understand this critical aspect of governance in India. Even non-specialists will find the book accessible and informative, and I would actively recommend it to anyone interested in the Indian economy in any of its various aspects.

Nirvikar Singh

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**UNEVEN SOCIAL POLICIES: The Politics of Subnational Variation in Latin America** by Sara Niedzwiecki. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2018.

IN January 2019, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee declared that her state would stop implementing the prime minister's flagship health insurance

tina and Brazil. She finds that while the implementation of CCTs is negatively affected by having an opposition governor, the presence of an opposition governor is irrelevant for health policies because attribution of responsibility is unclear.

The author's qualitative research also provides examples of ways in which federal governments can improve policy implementation by sharing credit with subnational levels of government. For instance, in Brazil, some years after introducing Bolsa Família, the federal government invited states to complement the CCT with their own programmes and allowed them to put their state logo alongside that of the federal government on the ATM cards used by recipients to withdraw funds (p. 138).

Unfortunately, Niedzwiecki herself does not consider whether her theory of the politics of social policy extends to India, although she presents evidence to suggest that it holds in the case of the United States. There are, however, plenty of signs to suggest that it would be fruitful to extend her analysis to India in order to explore how national level credit-claiming and attribution affect the implementation of different types of social policy. If India is to move closer towards territorial universalism in welfare provision, it is crucial to understand these issues better.

**Louise Tillin**

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Author of *Indian Federalism*, 2019

**WHY DEMOCRACY DEEPENS: Political Information and Decentralization in India** by Anoop Sadanandan. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017.

**DEMOCRATIZATION FROM ABOVE: The Logic of Local Democracy in the Developing World** by Anjali Thomas Bohlken. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016.

COMPARATIVE political theory of democracy and democratization, which began with a focus on the national and cross-national levels, has now significantly shifted to the local level. In its first phase, this theory almost assumed that democratization at the national level subsumed democratization at the local level as well. By now a second phase of democratic theory has crystallized, which is significantly concerned with the phenomenon of local democracy.

In ancient India and Greece, democracy first began in small communities which subsequently came

to be overtaken by monarchical political formations with bureaucratic or feudal overtones. The reincarnation of democracy in modern and contemporary times has, more frequently than not, been initiated by the national level polity, often coupled with pressures from below, or sometimes above from the international level. In some cases even authoritarian national political elites initiate inauthentic drives to local democratization for ulterior or cosmetic motives.

The two books under review are remarkable pieces of research and theorization on the process of 'deepening of democracy' and the 'logic of local democracy'. Both are focused on India in vigorous comparative perspectives. Interestingly, both the authors are of Indian origin teaching in North America, the birthplace of modern democracy and federalism – presidential or parliamentary. And India happens to be a post-colonial parliamentary-federal democracy of reasonable success in the global South. Incidentally, the USA, Canada and India have a common British colonial past. Moreover, these three countries represent three routes to decolonization – a revolutionary War of Independence, evolutionary transition of a colony to a nation, and a nonviolent freedom struggle. The USA produced the first presidential-federal model; Canada, the first parliamentary-federal model; and India pioneered the Canadian model adapted to its needs in the Afro-Asian world.

Anoop Sadanandan seeks to unravel the 'puzzle' or 'deepening of democracy' in India in the wake of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992) relating to the rural local self-government (Panchayat Raj), which sought to give 'thick' democratic 'constitutional status' to it by way of a more vigorous model of local democracy suggestively outlined in the Constitution and prompting the state legislatures to re-enact their Panchayat Raj laws in its image.

It is important to remember that this amendment is an exercise in constitutional morality, not in constitutional law. For despite this amendment, local government under the Constitution remains a *devolutionary* feature; it does not become a *federal* feature. Local government remains a subject in the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, and the status of the 11th Schedule dealing with the 29 subjects devolved to the jurisdiction of panchayats does not become tantamount to the 7th Schedule dealing with the federal division of powers between the Union and the states. This point is also clearly clarified by the Andhra Pradesh High Court in its 3:1 judgement in *Ranga Reddy District Sarpanches Association v. State of Andhra*

scheme – PMJAY/Ayushman Bharat – which provides up to Rs 5 lakh health cover per family per year.

‘Today we are withdrawing from the Ayushman Bharat scheme. Now, the Centre will have to bear the entire cost of the scheme as we will no longer pay our share of the money. Why should we pay if it [Centre] takes all the credit? The Centre is sending letters to people from post offices saying that it has done health insurance for them. How can they take credit when the state governments bear 40 per cent of the cost for this scheme?’<sup>1</sup>

Similarly in Madhya Pradesh, the new Congress state government led by Kamal Nath decided not to facilitate implementation of the PM-KISAN cash transfer programme, introduced in February’s Union budget as a bid to reverse farmer dissatisfaction ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Former BJP Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan said that the new state government was deliberately not cooperating with the central government’s PM-KISAN scheme by refusing to share its list of farmers with the central government. He said ‘The MP government is not sending the list of farmers as it feels Modi will benefit if the money goes into the accounts of the farmers.’<sup>2</sup>

Attempting to put clear water between the BJP’s national scheme and the state government’s policy, Kamal Nath announced instead that his state government would be rapidly implementing its own loan waiver scheme before the Lok Sabha elections.

Decisions by state governments to either block or hinder the implementation of national policies – even where they are fully funded by the Centre – illustrate the ways in which political competition between the central and state governments can undermine the effective reach of centrally designed social policies.

Sara Niedzwiecki’s new book, *Uneven Social Policies*, explores precisely these dynamics in the context of social policy implementation in federal settings. While Niedzwiecki studies Latin American federations, there are many insights from her work that would be useful for understanding the dynamics in India.<sup>3</sup>

1. ‘Mamata Banerjee pulls out of PMJAY, says Centre taking credit’, *Indian Express*, 11 January 2019 <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/mamata-banerjee-pulls-out-of-pmjay-ayushman-bharat-scheme-says-centre-taking-credit-5532864/> West Bengal eventually agreed to implement the national programme, but under a joint banner with its own scheme – Ayushman Bharat – Swasthya Sathi with the cost shared between the central government and state government on a 60:40 basis.

2. ‘Congress-ruled Madhya Pradesh focuses on own loan waiver scheme, delays PM Kisan Nidhi’, *Economic Times*, 6 March 2019.

3. For a preliminary discussion of some of the contrasts between Latin America and India in this area, see Louise Tillin and Anthony

Niedzwiecki argues that there are two main types of social policy. First, there are a set of policies that clearly ‘belong’ to the national government and in which the attribution of responsibility for the policy is very obvious to voters. As examples, she uses conditional cash transfer (CCT) schemes such as Brazil’s *Bolsa Familia* (family allowance) or Argentina’s *Asignación Universal por Hijo* (universal child allowance). With these programmes there is a direct transfer of cash from the central government to individual beneficiaries on a non-discretionary basis and without the involvement of intermediaries at the state level. It is clear to individual beneficiaries that CCTs are central government policies, and there is evidence that these kinds of policies have helped national presidents get re-elected in countries ranging from Mexico, Brazil to Uruguay.

With such policies, Niedzwiecki argues, there are strong incentives for opposition ruled subnational governments to hinder or refuse to implement them. They have various means of doing so, including refusing to share lists of beneficiaries with the national government, or simply failing to instruct their staff to work on national policies. They can also introduce their own programmes which compete with national programmes.

Second, there are a set of policies in which attribution of responsibility is less clear. This includes the case of social services such as health care, where funding is transferred from higher levels of governments to clinics or health care providers at the subnational level. It is less easy for voters to attribute responsibility for such services to a particular layer of government.

For such services, Niedzwiecki suggests, the quality of implementation is less affected by vertical political alignment between the national and subnational governments. There is still considerable unevenness in how these policies are implemented across space, but the variation is caused by institutional capacity and the nature of subnational policy legacies; rather than by a deliberate attempt by opposition ruled subnational governments to undermine the performance of national policies.

Niedzwiecki tests her theory about the impact of vertical political (non) alignment on the implementation of different types of social policies with a mixture of statistical and qualitative analysis, focusing on the two most decentralized countries in Latin America – Argen-

Pereira, ‘Federalism, Multi-Level Elections and Social Policy in Brazil and India’, *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 55(3), 2017; and articles in a special issue of *Regional and Federal Studies* 29(2), 2019 entitled ‘Negotiating Universalism in India and Latin America: Fiscal Decentralisation, Subnational Politics and Social Outcomes’, edited by Andres Mejia Acosta and Louise Tillin.

Pradesh.<sup>1</sup> Only Switzerland, Germany, and the new Constitution of Nepal (2015) give federal status to the local government in the respective countries.

Sadanandan defines 'deepening of democracy' in terms of greater conformity to the 73rd amendment in varying responses of the various states of the Indian Union (28 at the time of this study; now 29 after the creation of Telangana in 2014). He seeks to measure and compare this phenomenon by systematically reviewing the decentralization policies of the 14 states from 1994 to 2008. Eight different indicators of deepening of democracy are used in the study: (i) functional devolution, (ii) decentralized planning, (iii) panchayat autonomy, (iv) integrated decentralization across state and Union programmes, (v) local capacity building, (vi) local institutional strength, (vii) local spending capacity, and (viii) regular, free and fair elections.

The summary interrelations among the various indicators are subjected to statistical factor analysis to yield a composite score for democratic deepening in the states. On this basis, the studied states are classified into three clusters of categories: (a) High democratic deepening (Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka and Kerala); (b) Moderate democratic deepening (Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu); and (c) Low democratic deepening (Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Bihar and Orissa).

The rest, and the bulk, of the book is devoted to explaining the varying levels/degrees of democratic deepening in the studied states in terms of a variety of hypotheses culled from an enormously large corpus of theoretically oriented empirical researches on India and all over the world.

Is democratic deepening attributable to political ideology and party organization? Is it attributable to international factors like the UN and the World Bank or FDI inflows? The author persuasively – by reasoning and evidence – shows that these factors have limited explanatory mileage. Some supportive evidence for their impact is largely negated by equally or more contradictory evidence. A more general and consistent explanation, according to this author, lies with the characteristics of the larger entity on the ground, i.e. the states concerned. These state attributes relate to two dimensions: (i) States with relatively secure socio-economic circumstances (Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu) and those with high levels of socio-economic vulnerability (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh,

1. <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1981313>; accessed 23 February 2019.

Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh); (ii) States with the salience of local information for national leaders correlated with the states with socio-economic circumstances of vulnerability.

According to the author: 'Attributes of states affect the voter-related informational asymmetries that exist between the state leaders and local politicians. These state-level attributes shape the political value and cost of local information to leaders and, in doing so, they make it more or less likely for leaders to decentralize power and foster local democratization.' (p. 53)

The author thus offers a well elaborated and documented 'information theory of democratic deepening.' A telling and concluding line of the book is: 'Democracy deepens when the central leader's political survival rests on local information.' (p. 157) This local information largely pertains to the political preferences of the local leaders and voters. I feel inclined to add that the quality of democracy may ultimately be premised on the rule of law and constitutionalism, but its immediate survival depends on the minimalist criterion of free and fair elections.

The puzzle of the second book under review is the same as that of the first: the explanation for democratization from above. Bohlken finds that there is a significant measure of variation across the developing world in the degree of democratization the national elites are willing to allow at the local levels of the political systems they govern. What factors are accountable for it? The author suggests that, 'This book offers a theory of local democratization... that rather than being a means of granting *more autonomy* to local actors, local democracy emerges from the need of these government elites to *control* local intermediaries on whom they rely for political support. Thus, the book offers a logic of local democratization that runs counter to the logic of national democratization and to the logic of decentralization.' (p. 3)

Bohlken clarifies that while national democratization theories are mostly defined and theorized as exposing the incumbent elites to democratic contestation and possible electoral turnover of power, the theory of local democratization here offered 'may be implemented as a means of allowing national incumbent to consolidate their power.' (p. 18)

Sadanandan's theory of democratic deepening is more authentically and holistically democratic in intent and content than Bohlken's theory of local democratization, which has a tinge of authoritarian-democratic ambivalence in the motivation of the national elites in allowing local democratization.

It is a moot question whether the former is more idealistic and the latter more realistic. It goes without saying that the motive of manipulative, if not exploitative, use of information and skill of the local political intermediaries by the national elites is germane to both the theories. For, much like Sadanandan, Bohlken also introduces the hypothesis of 'local democratization as a solution to an information problem' and 'local intermediary performance and informational asymmetries' while constructing her 'strategic logic of local democratization.'

Both the studies use a significant amount of qualitative as well as quantitative data (Sadanandan's about 14 states of the Indian Union and Bohlken's about 68 countries with a population greater than 10 million in three continents – Asia, South and Central America, and Africa). In the case of India, the period covered by the latter is 1950 to 2010; and the year of subnational democratization reform is 1992, the year of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments relating to the rural and urban local governments.

To sum up, in Sadanandan's theory of democratic deepening, the primary causal effects of the socio-economic characteristics of state contexts are intermediated by the intervening causal effects of the need of local information for national leaders who, in the bargain, allow local democratization. In preference for this parsimonious theoretical formulation, other explanatory factors like party ideology and organization or international factors like the UN and Bretton Woods institutions/FDI inflows are rejected by Sadanandan as only partially valid or even spurious.

This kind of parsimonious explanatory clarity seems to elude Bohlken's theory of local democratization in which the complicating effects of alternate causal factors like the nature of political party organizations in India (chapter 3), intraparty competition in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (chapter 6), etc. are not easily shown to be less efficacious than the master explanatory factor of the strategic need for local information for the national elites. The messy causal effects of the primary and intervening/intermediary factors on the dependent or effect phenomenon of local democratization are not clearly disentangled. In fact, come to think of it, the nature of party organization and intra-party competition may well be a dimension or aspect of democratization rather than its cause.

*Political Science*

# A case for uncivil disobedience

Jason Brennan posits a radical, if problematic, thesis that responsible citizens should question authority and fight back when the government encroaches upon their rights. BY **SHELLEY WALIA**

**R**ELATIONS between people and the governing public institutions must be based on tolerance and mutual respect. To impose the hegemony of the state on the public is to rule via an authoritarian, militaristic structure that is bound to ultimately create unrest. This results in the failure of the modern state that remains oblivious to, as Subcomandante Morcos, the leader of the Zapatista movement, said, “an alternative set of ideas, an alternative attitude to the world”. Morcos elaborated: “There is an oppressor power which decides on behalf of society from above, and a group of visionaries which decides to lead the country on the correct path and ousts the other group from power, seizes power and then also decides on behalf of society.” To reconstruct a new world, the discourses of the conventional state machinery have to undergo a radically transformative change.

It is in this context that Jason Brennan focusses on the “ethics of resistance to state injustice” in *When All Else Fails*. At the vanguard

**WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS**

**THE ETHICS OF RESISTANCE TO STATE INJUSTICE**

**JASON BRENNAN**

**When All Else Fails**

**The Ethics of Resistance to State Injustice**

By Jason Brennan  
Princeton University Press

Pages: 288

Price: £22.00

of any social system stands resistance to the state machinery with the belief “that we can speak on behalf of those beyond ourselves” and not engage in any “political masturbation” where leaders are obsessively preoccupied with themselves. This narrative has to be moved to another level to usher in a new vitality to all resistance movements that are vocal about the denunciation of violence by the state towards the deprived or the marginalised. When we stand up against a police force engaged in any disproportionate disciplining of the putatively felonious, for instance, we express our open opposition to the

very idea of injustice. Unequal justice must become unacceptable to a civil society.

Brennan refers to the economist Albert O. Hirschman, who was of the view that citizens of democracies have only three conceivable responses to discrimination or transgressions by their governments: they can either leave, complain or comply. Brennan argues that there is a fourth possibility; when governments encroach upon your rights, you can fight back or resist through “non-compliance—that is, by strategically breaking or ignoring the state’s commands” or through more active forms of resistance,

such as “blocking police cars, damaging or destroying government property, deceiving or lying to government agents, or combating government agents”. If the governments are truly democratic, individuals will be free to pursue these anti-state actions when the situation warrants it. This is the fulcrum around which Brennan builds his thesis, countering the epistemic position that people might misuse this theory and engage in an unethical fight against the state machinery. Brennan takes the contrary position, arguing “that it seems more plausible that citizens are more likely to engage in wrongful obedience than they are to engage in wrongful resistance”.

However, it is a common reality, Brennan believes, that people are more conformist, taking the self-serving course of personal well-being over opposition to the status quo. They become inured to the unwarranted violence of the police and mindlessly comply with the government’s call to arms. They obey the law, but if in certain cases they do rebel or demonstrate against its illegitimacy, they must be prepared to bear the consequences. They may “even have a moral duty to do so”. Brennan goes on to question the morality behind the supposed assassination of Adolf Hitler to stop him from attacking Poland or sending Jews to the gas chamber. Would it not be just as acceptable to kill a President “in order to stop him from invading the Philip-

piners, or ordering the genocidal slaughter and forced relocation of an ethnic group?"

The deception and killing in self-defence by an officer in uniform is considered legitimate and takes away the right of the citizen to use self-defence against a person in office "elected by [his/her] neighbour". Understandably, if imprisoned for something you are not guilty of, you should be free to escape. Soldiers may be justified in flouting unjust instructions. Dissemination of classified information may be for the good of society, and whistleblowers such as Julian Assange, Edward Snowden or Chelsea Manning may not be held guilty. The judiciary can very well lie about its interpretation of the Constitution if only to prevent the operation of an unjust law. Coalescing the moral principle with common sense can lead to controversial issues, but philosophically the rationality of ethics and human behaviour must be permitted to supersede draconian stipulations.

Existing democratic structures establish a mindset that the public must acquiesce to their elected representatives and not interfere in the running of the state, notwithstanding the latter's actions. We may complain, dissent, indict or vote officials out, but we cannot fight back. But Brennan emphasises the imperative need of "uncivil disobedience" to counter any wrong or confinement in violation of unjust laws: "We may disobey orders, sabotage government property, or reveal classified inform-

ation. We may deceive ignorant, irrational, or malicious voters. We may even use force in self-defence or to defend others."

This is a provocative challenge to state power and its unjust undertakings. Take, for example, the case of a black driver pulled up by white policemen for a slip-up that he has not committed. It is an obvious fault of another white man who made the wrong turn and caused the accident. And this is observed by an eyewitness who has the courage to intervene. The result is that he, too, is hauled up for interfering with the law and order machinery.

In another case relating to a youth sitting under a tree with his girlfriend, the constable beats up the boy and questions the girl, making her do sit-ups as punishment. An onlooker tries to stop it but is unsuccessful. The boy is taken to the police station and a report registered against him, thereby blemishing him for life. The onlooker goes out of his way to visit the police station to help the boy, but the state machinery is impervious to his entreaties. Brennan's thesis bases itself on the interrogation of one's assumptions while taking action to defend oneself or a fellow-citizen against this obvious injustice.

The disarray of established assumptions comes to the surface, creating a murky picture of injustice and violence. This was the case in ancient Greece too, as Brennan points out: "The pious could not explain what piety is; the just could not explain what justice is." The silent

masses remained silent and perpetually in a state of acceptance. This was unacceptable to Socrates, provoking him to incite the masses, which led to his own end. Many questions come to mind about the problem of ethics, sexual assault, war and environmentalism, and the value society attaches to human rights and justice. It is indeed vexing to debate the morality of violence and argue that it is justified in a specific context. For instance, a rape could be prevented by using force or firearms to suppress the assault and assist the victim. Or, in the case of stealing or killing, what is it that deems it to be a crime?

The book does not question the veneration for laws that stand up for the good of the public. It asks the reader to come to grips with equality and piety in the context of the inordinate force of the state apparatus employed for misuse of its power against the public. Action from the public might lead to arrest, but will the public still take the step to prevent discrimination against the marginalised?

The threat of injustice at the hands of the state is a matter of serious concern: "In the real world, almost every day, people who hold power in democratic societies—including presidents, bureaucrats, judges, police officers, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents, and even democratic voters—use their power in deeply unjust and irresponsible ways. Thus, one pressing question for political philosophy is what ordinary citizens are licensed to do in the face of injustice." And a moral is-

sue about self-defence raises the question as to whether there is any good reason to grant government agents "special immunity" from common-sense principles of self-defence. The corollary to this would be to hold an unjust civil servant as responsible for his crime as an ordinary citizen's unmerited acts.

There remains, finally, the indecision of action and its legitimacy both as regards the citizen and the government agent. The right of validity given to an official's actions indicates his immunity, which is questionable. The use of violence, therefore, for defensive reasons will remain debatable.

The quest for living in a just, free society, governed by an accountable government working for the betterment of the electorate is age-old and drives the masses to continuously strive to change their elected leaders. It is an ideal that is highly debatable in the context that human beings are fundamentally flawed and will, given the choice, wield abusive power.

Brennan has posited a radical thesis, one that is problematic and wildly anarchic. However, as responsible citizens of a democratic state, it is incumbent upon us to question authority and seek redress of our grievances. The purpose of this book is to awaken us from the slumber of blind, apathetic acceptance. It is time to be engaged in a robust conversation about how to turn our "received" democracy on its corrupt head and make it truly participatory and equitable. □

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# Politics of polarisation

This book explains the conditions that facilitate fascist politics and the multiple strategies that its advocates employ. BY SHAIKH MUJIBUR REHMAN

EVER since the coming to power of Narendra Modi in India in 2014 and Donald Trump in the United States in 2016, there has been a growing concern among scholars about the shortcomings of liberal democracy and its dangerous potential to elect political leaders who could pose a threat to democracy itself. Despite its limitations, democracy is a cherished political practice in many parts of the modern world. But the conditions under which it can be hijacked and destroyed by an authoritarian alternative or fascist substitute is a question that many scholars are currently engaged with. In *How Fascism Works*, Jason Stanley, Professor of Philosophy at Yale University, attempts to explain the various conditions that facilitate fascist politics and the multiple strategies that its advocates employ by reflecting on the contemporary political conditions of the U.S. and other countries.

At the outset, the author makes it clear that the book is about fascist politics and not fascism as such. Scholarship on fascism is a genre by itself, and there

are plenty of monographs on the subject. The German philosopher Hannah Arendt's works stand out among others, and there is a renewed interest in her scholarship in order to make sense of the dark side of state power. This book also alludes to Hannah Arendt's work.

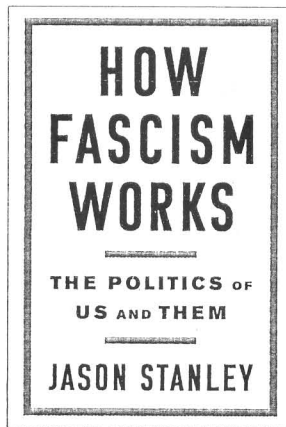
All fascist politics, claims Stanley, do not lead to a fascist state, which is where fascism finds its fullest expression. But the attempt to practise fascist politics in itself contributes to the de-democratisation of a society and perpetuates the politics of hate and prejudices in the name of religion, ethnicity or race. More specifically, the author is interested in exploring fascist tactics as

a mechanism to achieve power. This fascist politics is practised within the framework of liberal democracy and employs particular strategies such as the mythic past, propaganda, anti-intellectualism, hierarchy, victimhood, law and order and sexual anxiety in pursuit of its agenda. It builds up different types of narratives around these themes in order to indoctrinate its followers and advocate a world view so that they see their interpretations as the only viable facts. Stanley examines and elaborates particular themes that he considers are used as strategies by practitioners of fascist politics. Thus, we have informative and

richly textured content under the various themes mentioned above.

The author further recognises that fascism today is not what it was in Hitler's Germany or any part of Europe in the early 20th century and that it will acquire different shapes and forms depending on its leader and the group it aims to target. What is perhaps similar are the tactics fascist politics employs and its ultimate objective of creating a pure state with a repressive apparatus and a majoritarian ideology that dehumanises fractions of its own population. He writes: "Following the horrors of World War II, which sent masses of refugees fleeing fascist regimes, the 1948 Universal Declaration Of Human Rights affirmed the dignity of every human being.... Fascism today may not look exactly the same as it did in the 1930s, but refugees are once again on the road everywhere. In multiple countries, their flight reinforces the fascist propaganda that the nation is under siege, that aliens are a threat and danger both within and outside their borders. The sufferings of strangers can solidify the structures of fascism. But it can also trigger empathy once another lens is clicked into place." In other words, fascist tactics or politics generate almost identical outcomes each time even though they may appear different in form.

One prominent tactic that the advocates of fascist politics employ is to



**How Fascism Works**

**The Politics of Us and Them**

By Jason Stanley  
Random House,  
2018

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Pages: 218

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show a distinction between “us” and “them”. Fascism as an ideology and fascist politics as a strategy do not recognise common humanity. Fascism presupposes that one set of human beings is the greatest threat to another set of human beings, and thus one of the most definitive symptoms of fascist politics is division. By appealing to ethnic, religious or racial distinctions, these forces try to shape the ideology and ultimately the policy of the state they capture to govern. They understand the strengths of a democratic society and work within its framework until they are completely in charge, and also learn to control structures of power in order to purge every bit of democratic ethos that forms the system.

In India, for instance, religious identity—Hindu and Muslim—is considered useful for the “us” and “them” division that the Hindu Right seeks to perpetuate. Hindu and Muslim identity is the basis on which the Bharatiya Janata Party and Modi and the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh have practised a politics of polarisation as part of their electoral and political campaign.

### NATIONALISM

At the core of the fascism is the issue of nationalism. The author explores in detail the relationship between fascist politics and nationalism, drawing examples from American and European history and connecting them with contemporary developments. The chapters on the mythic past and victimhood present fascinating insights into the strategies

that fascist forces employ in the context of the larger discourse on nationalism. As part of the strategy, a sense of collective victimhood to create a sense of group identity that is adversarial to the ethos of liberal democracy is generated at multiple levels. However, we need to learn that all nationalisms are not the same. Stanley clarifies that the difference between the nationalism motivated by oppression with an unambiguous objective for domination and the nationalism that is inclusive and stands for human dignity is their respective relationship to equality. In other words, nationalism could lead to fascism, but there are possibilities for exploring nationalism as inclusive and driven by ideals of social justice and equality. But for average citizens, both types appear the same and the sanctity of nationalism fascinates them.

The major strength of this research is the comparative insights gleaned from its narrative. Group identity could be variously based—on skin colour, religion, tradition or ethnic origin. This is often contrasted with the invented “other”. Fascist nationalism creates a dangerous “them” with the objective of restoring group identity. According to the author, dehumanising and demeaning various sections of the population on one pretext or another is one of the major strategies that these forces follow. The idea is to exclude and marginalise and create conditions of dehumanisation as part of the normal process, often viewing it as a necessary condition for “histor-

ical justice”. This is apparent in the Indian case revealed in public discussions with regard to Aurangzeb or ghar wapsi, and so on, or even the controversial Babri Masjid-Ram temple issue that has been at the centre of the raging debate over secularism and the Hindu Rashtra.

The author analyses the use of history as part of fascist politics. Fascist politicians justify their ideas by breaking down a common sense of history to create a mythic past to support the vision for the present. Anti-intellectualism seems to be the main driving force. There is a fascinating discussion on this theme in the book. There is a great deal of resonance of this narrative of anti-intellectualism in the Indian context—particularly what has been witnessed since 2014 with regard to the various assaults unleashed on institutions such as Jawaharlal Nehru University or Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi or incidents such as the suicide of Rohith Vemula, a research scholar at the University of Hyderabad.

Clearly, the Modi government’s purpose is to advance the ideological agenda and create universities that would be hospitable to its agenda but not as a space of scientific temperament and debate. Indeed, there is a role for universities in fascist politics, but the idea of the university is very different, according to Stanley. In fascist ideology, there is only one legitimate viewpoint, that of a dominant nation, according to the author. But the challenge is how to retain the university as a place for resistance

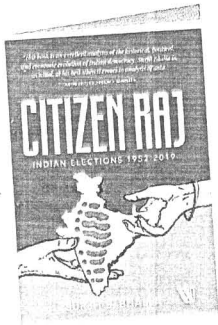
to growing fascist politics. This is a challenge when fascist forces occupy the state, and the universities depend on the state for funding, which makes them vulnerable to the state’s demands.

One of the most fascinating chapters in this book is entitled “Sexual anxiety”. It is also typical of fascist politics because issues of gender equity destabilise and threaten patriarchal hierarchy. Discussions on love jihad in India in recent years corroborate the claims that the author makes here.

“*Arbeit macht frei*” (Work sets you free) was an infamous slogan of the Nazi regime. The author devotes a chapter to this theme and explains why and how this forms the moral core of a fascist narrative: “In fascist ideology, in times of crisis and need, the state reserves support for members of the chosen nation, for ‘us’ and not for ‘them’. The justification is invariably because ‘they’ are lazy, lack a work ethic, and cannot be trusted with state funds and because they are criminal and seek only to live off state largesse. In fascist politics, they can be cured of laziness by hard labour.”

This book is a classic piece of research that should appeal to anyone who cares for democracy and human dignity. Scholars and citizens of India would particularly profit by reading this book to make sense of the danger they are already in. □

*Shaikh Mujibur Rehman is the editor of Rise of Saffron Power: Reflections on Indian Politics (Routledge, 2018) and teaches at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.*



**books** Surjit S. Bhalla

Citizen Raj: Indian Elections 1952-2019 | Westland | (xxviii) + 222 pages | Rs 499

## Line-Up Where Everyone Bats

Disdaining failure, the wise Bhalla sticks his neck out and predicts the poll results. But less of economics, and sharper focus, would have helped us.

BY BIBEK DEBROY

**S**URJIT Bhalla is a friend. But anyone without that bias will also admit Surjit writes well, irrespective of whether you agree or disagree with him. His interest in both cricket and films, two themes every Indian is interested in, allow him to use similes/metaphors to get the reader interested. (For a very long time, Surjit's only book was on cricket.) This book avoids cricket. However, each of the 14 chapters, and an initial Introduction, begins with lyrics from a popular Bollywood song, reflecting Surjit's tastes in film music. The book is on Indian elections, from 1952 to 2019, and the author has himself been a forecaster, proved both wrong and right in the past: "Just two secrets—forecast often, and always remind people when you are right. If I am wrong, well, life goes on, but now with an additional barrage of kind trolls (I realise that is an oxymoron, but emphasis is needed). If right, well, we will just have to wait till the next election to go wrong."

May 23 isn't far away. Skipping initial chapters, what do the final chapters project for the BJP and the Congress? Forecasts are done under different sets of assumptions and there is always a range, not a specific number. For BJP, the range is 253 to 265. These are 'objective' estimates that mechanically follow the assumptions. Thereafter, there is a 'most likely scenario' that factors in some subjectivity, through judgement. In other words, the most likely estimate doesn't have to be from within the range. For the BJP, Surjit's forecast is 274. Likewise, for the Congress the range is 69 to 97 and the most likely number is 57.

Surjit Bhalla is an extremely careful writer, rigorous and analytical, with an eye for detail. "The controversial bank

nationalisation initiated by Indira Gandhi was contained in the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947, which included a list of industries which could be declared public in the interests of the state or for the overall development of the nation" (p.39). Yes, IDA does have a schedule which lists industries which can be declared public utility services under sub-clause Section 2(n)(vi). However, IDA's purpose is quite different. Perhaps Surjit meant Banking Companies Act (1949) or Industries Development and Regulation Act (1951).



PTI

Bhalla's writing is rigorous and analytical. But he has erred in painting on too broad a canvas. One really interesting chapter is about the problems of opinion poll projections.

"Were economic reforms responsible for this spurt in GDP growth in UPA-I? Not according to Montek Ahluwalia, who was then chairman of the Planning Commission" (p.73). The chairman of Planning Commission was the PM; Montek was the deputy chairman. "He (Narendra Modi) became prime minister without being a member of Parliament" (p.199). Lac is a resinous substance, the number is lakh (p.11). I attribute these errors to the haste in publishing this book. Otherwiſe, the forecast (not the rest of it) would have

been dated.

There is a "rest of it" and I think Surjit also committed the error of painting on too broad a canvas. One really interesting part of this book is chapter 7, where Surjit talks about the problems with opinion polls and projecting from these. Had Surjit expanded on this strand, it would have made for a more focused and better volume. "At one level, psephology seems like the easiest job in the world. Just go out and ask some people what they think. Tabulation of these responses should give you the right answer.... There are several possibilities of 'errors' between prediction and reality. First and foremost, the preference for a particular candidate can change... second, a non-scientific sample may have been chosen.... Third, there might have been errors in the choice of constituencies chosen for an aggregate state or national level forecast.... The biggest hurdle however still lies ahead.... This is possibly the major reason for going wrong—the uneasy, non-linear, relationship between the counting of votes, and the counting of seats.... People lie.... If there is lying, the obvious question is: can it be measured and measured successfully?" How one handles these problems would have offered insights on Indian elections from 1952 to 2019.

The merit of Surjit Bhalla's last book (*The New Wealth of Nations*) was this focus. The 2019 general elections are occurring in a certain context and it possible to argue the reader needs to understand these debates on tax compliance, reservation, socialism, GDP and employment numbers and demonetisation. Surjit has been writing on such issues and will continue to do so. But I feel this broadening of the canvas has also diluted the focus. Surjit can write a book on economic reforms and he can write one on electoral forecasting. Trying to do both together hasn't quite worked. □

BOOKS IN  
REVIEW

## THE ERA OF MANIPULATION

Christopher Walker

*The People vs. Tech: How the Internet Is Killing Democracy (and How We Save It).* By Jamie Bartlett. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018. 246 pp.

At the beginning of this century, it was widely assumed that the internet would usher in a new era of freedom. This technological wonder of computerized, open-architecture networking would allow people around the world to share information without constraints, eliminate media “gatekeepers,” and foster extraordinary connections, bringing unprecedented advances in knowledge and democratic progress. So went the thinking.

But in the arenas of politics and freedom of expression, this optimistic vision has not been realized. Instead, we find ourselves in a dramatically different set of circumstances, living in an era shaped not by openness, but rather by manipulation.

Over the years, digital technologies have transformed how people understand and interact with the world around them. New social platforms now play a critical role in providing news and information. But the powerful algorithms that are the beating heart of these platforms tend to prioritize what is popular over what is important for civic and public affairs. A 2017 report produced by the Omidyar Group, “Is Social Media a Threat to Democracy?” describes the “algorithmic logic” of social-media platforms that “engineer viral sharing in the interest of their business models.” As platforms such as Facebook and Twitter grow, so does the predominance of emotional and sensational content. Distortion

becomes a feature of the system rather than a bug. Politically poisonous discourse is elevated. Foreign adversaries insinuate themselves into the discussion with troubling ease.

Writing in the January 2019 issue of the *Journal of Democracy*, Ronald Deibert trenchantly articulated “three painful truths” associated with social media: first, that the business model is based on relentless surveillance of consumers’ personal data; second, that users permit such surveillance willingly; and third, that social media are compatible in certain ways with authoritarianism. This is a harsh assessment, to be sure, but one that is likely to convince a growing number of observers around the world. Facebook has some 2.6 billion users globally, creating what is in effect its own massive information ecosystem. Google, for its part, owns more than 90 percent of the global search market and receives 63,000 searches per second on any given day. While growth in Facebook users recently has slowed in places such as the United States and parts of Europe, it is on the rise in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, as well as across sub-Saharan Africa. The same social-media pathologies that emerged in the United States and Europe now are manifesting themselves in distinct ways in new settings.

As these problems have grown, the spotlight on the leading social platforms has become more intense. Recently, a scathing 108-page report written by members of the U.K. Parliament concluded that the United Kingdom should adopt comprehensive new regulations so that lawmakers can hold Facebook and its peers in Silicon Valley accountable for digital wrongdoing. Policy makers in other democracies are now turning their attention to such issues with renewed purpose.

So how did we arrive at this point? In *The People vs. Tech: How the Internet Is Killing Democracy (and How We Save It)*, Jamie Bartlett argues that a “bitter conflict” has emerged between “technology and democracy,” which are “products of completely different eras and run according to different rules and principles.” Pitting technology against democracy (or against “the people,” as in the book’s title) presents a challenge, because technology is now embedded so intimately and seamlessly into our daily lives and, for better or worse, into the fabric of our democratic systems. Political debates and campaigns have moved online. Political pros seeking to reach and influence voters get the biggest bang for their buck by investing in social media. On a personal level, we are inundated and tempted by information as never before. Bartlett acknowledges this reality: “The modern citizen is expected to sift through an insane torrent of competing facts, networks, friend requests, claims, blogs, data, propaganda, misinformation, investigative journalism, charts, different charts, commentary, and reportage” (p. 53).

While Bartlett is critical of the impact of the internet (especially social media) on democracy, he is no technophobe. Rather, as director for many years of the Center for the Analysis of Social Media at Demos,

a London-based think tank, he has devoted considerable thought to the large and complex contradictions that the internet and other communications technologies pose in a democratic context. Over time, Bartlett's views on the impact of these technologies on democracy have shifted from "optimism" to "realism" to "nervousness" and then, finally, to "a state approaching panic."

The basis for Bartlett's panic is that the pillars needed to support democracy—including active citizens, a shared culture, free elections, and trust in authority—are at risk in the digital era. Bartlett gives special attention to social media's enabling of manipulation and "hidden persuasion" (p. 30). Today, he grimly observes, "no one understands how modern manipulation works," and this ignorance is itself a threat to democratic institutions. His chapter on "software wars," which examines "how digital analytics has changed elections," makes for especially worthwhile—and troubling—reading. On our present trajectory, "far more important than any one election is how the continued evolution of [data-analytic] techniques will change the way we form political choices, what sort of people we elect, and even whether we think our elections are truly free and fair" (p. 83). Absent new norms that take into account the new realities of fast-developing tech-heavy election campaigns, things are bound to get worse before they get better.

Critically, as the major tech platforms have amassed greater power, they have failed to take on the responsibility for maintaining public trust in news and information that their new role requires. As Bartlett argues, "newspapers have long traded on public outrage and sensationalism, because they've long known what algorithms have recently discovered about our predilections. However, the difference is that newspapers are legally responsible for what they print, and citizens generally understand the editorial positions of various outlets" (p. 63).

In contrast, social-media companies are not held accountable for what appears on their platforms. In part, this is because they are controlled by algorithms, which "give the impression of being neutral . . . even though the YouTube algorithm alone shapes what 1.5 billion users are likely to see, which is more than every newspaper in the world combined" (p. 63). The leading social platforms have taken on the role of publishers, but they have not developed mechanisms to provide sound editorial scrutiny of the billions of pieces of information that they disseminate.

So now that the roots of online manipulation and distortion have grown alarmingly deep, what should be done? Bartlett lists twenty responses to meet this "long-term challenge with no immediate fixes" (p. 207). Many of his recommendations call on consumers of information to change their behavior. For example, Bartlett advises citizens to "be-ware of outsourcing the responsibility to think for themselves," to "fight distraction," and to "teach critical thinking" (pp. 208–11). These are excellent suggestions, but one wonders how much of the burden can be

shouldered by ordinary consumers given the "insane torrent" of information they confront, as well as the force of "algorithmic logic."

More intriguing are Bartlett's ideas on strengthening the transparency of Big Tech algorithms, rethinking the internet economy's advertising model, and updating rules governing the use of personal data in campaign contexts. "Analogue regulations," he asserts, "need to be brought up to speed with the digital reality" in order to promote free and fair elections (p. 214). These proposals are more likely to help us meet the complex, multidimensional challenge that has emerged in the digital age, because they are better suited to target the problems at their sources in a way that would alter the structures that convey information to people. As policy makers, scholars, and citizens address the challenge of bringing transparency, accountability, and democratic norms to the digital realm, Bartlett's recommendations deserve serious thought, particularly as the era of AI comes upon us in earnest.

The paradigm for understanding the internet has shifted, and we all need to rethink our assumptions about whether democracy can flourish, or even survive, in an era of such intensive and relentless manipulation.

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*Christopher Walker is vice-president for studies and analysis at the National Endowment for Democracy. He is coeditor with Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner of *Authoritarianism Goes Global: The Challenge to Democracy* (2016), and coeditor of the report *Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence* (2017).*

## BOOKS RECEIVED

*The books listed below were recently received by the editors. A listing here does not preclude a review in a future issue.*

### *Advanced Democracies*

*American Justice 2018: The Shifting Supreme Court.* By Todd Ruger. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. 138 pp.

*The Back Channel: A Memoir of American Diplomacy and the Case for Its Renewal.* By William Burns. Random House, 2019. 483 pp.

*Choosing the Leader: Leadership Elections in the U.S. House of Representatives.* By Matthew Green and Douglas Harris. Yale University Press, 2019. 304 pp.

*Cult of the Irrelevant: The Waning Influence of Social Science on National Security.* By Michael Desch. Princeton University Press, 2019. 351 pp.

*Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe: From the Ancien Régime to the Present Day.* By Sheri Berman. Oxford University Press, 2019. 545 pp.

*The Foundations of American Jewish Liberalism.* By Kenneth Wald. Cambridge University Press, 2019. 255 pp.

*Fox Populism: Branding Conservatism as Working Class.* By Reece Peck. Cambridge University Press, 2019. 289 pp.

### Africa

*Digital Democracy, Analogue Politics: How the Internet Era is Transforming Politics in Kenya.* By Nanjala Nyabola. Zedd Books, 2018. 273 pp.

*How Autocrats Compete: Parties, Patrons, and Unfair Elections in Africa.* By Yonatan Morse. Cambridge University Press, 2019. 336 pp.

*Uganda: The Dynamics of Neoliberal Transformation.* Edited by Jörg Wiegatz, Giuliano Martiniello, and Elisa Greco. Zedd Books, 2018. 391 pp.

### Asia

*Scandal and Democracy: Media Politics in Indonesia.* By Mary McCoy. Cornell University Press, 2019. 208 pp.

### Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union

*The Putin System: An Opposing View.* By Grigory Yavlinsky. Columbia University Press, 2019. 231 pp.

### Latin America and the Caribbean

*Politics After Violence: Legacies of the Shining Path Conflict in Peru.* Edited by Hillel David Soifer and Alberto Vergara. University of Texas Press, 2019. 383 pp.

### Middle East and North Africa

*Revisiting the Arab Uprisings: The Politics of a Revolutionary Moment.* Edited by Stéphane Lacroix and Jean-Pierre Filiu. Oxford University Press, 2018. 330 pp.

### Comparative, Theoretical, General

*Chains of Persuasion: A Framework for Religion in Democracy.* By Benjamin R. Hertzberg. Oxford University Press, 2018. 210 pp.

*Civic Activism Unleashed: New Hope or False Dawn for Democracy?* By Richard Youngs. Oxford University Press, 2019. 183 pp.

*Creating Political Presence: The New Politics of Democratic Representation.* Edited by Dario Castiglione and Johannes Pollak. University of Chicago Press, 2019. 353 pp.

*Democracy and Truth: A Short History.* By Sophia Rosenfeld. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. 213 pp.

*Forms of Pluralism and Democratic Constitutionalism.* Edited by Andrew Arato, Jean Cohen, and Astrid von Busekist. Columbia University Press, 2018. 377 pp.

*Geo-Economics and Power Politics in the 21st Century: The Revival of Economic Statecraft.* Edited by Mikael Wigell, Sören Scholvin, and Mika Aaltola. Routledge, 2019. 239 pp.

*Liberalism and Democracy in Myanmar.* By Roman David and Ian Holiday. Oxford University Press, 2018. 234 pp.

*The Lost History of Liberalism: From Ancient Rome to the Twenty-First Century.* By Helen Rosenblatt. Princeton University Press, 2018. 348 pp.

*Populisms: A Quick Immersion.* By Carlos de la Torre. Tibidabo Publishing, 2018. 200 pp.

*Power Sharing and Power Relations after Civil War.* Edited by Caroline Hartzell and Andreas Mehler. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2019. 255 pp.

*Rise of the Revisionists: Russia, China, and Iran.* Edited by Gary Schmitt. The American Enterprise Institute, 2018. 112 pp.

*Secret Wars: Covert Conflict in International Politics.* By Austin Carson. Princeton University Press, 2018. 325 pp.

*The 3<sup>rd</sup> Ingredient: The Journey of Analog Ethics into the World of Digital Fear and Greed.* By Jim Blasingame. SBN Books, 2018. 314 pp.

*When Democracy Trumps Populism: European and Latin American Lessons for the United States.* Edited by Kurt Weyland and Raúl Madrid. Cambridge University Press, 2019. 216 pp.

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# Fight against polio

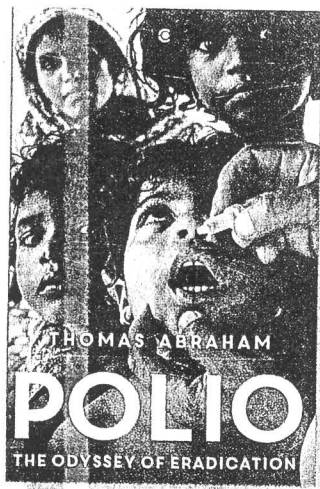
An account of polio, the virus that causes it and the efforts being made to eradicate both.

BY SASHIKALA ASIRVATHAM

THOMAS ABRAHAM, the author of *Polio: The Odyssey of Eradication*, tells us “this book is driven by an outsider’s desire to understand one of the most ambitious acts that human society can undertake: to permanently rid the world of a disease by exterminating the pathogen that causes it”.

On the face of it, disease eradication appears to be a noble undertaking worthy of the effort and funds expended on it. Abraham says: “In 1988, before the eradication campaign was launched, the WHO [World Health Organisation] estimated there were around 350,000 new cases of polio every year, spread over 125 countries. By 2000, there were only an estimated 2,880 cases a year, spread over twenty countries.”

Right from the book’s first pages, the author gives details of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) that make one question the wisdom of eradication as a means to tackle disease. Having made this point clear early on, the author proceeds to tell the polio story. In a way it could be said that Abraham is treading familiar ground; his earlier book was on the severe acute res-



**Polio**  
**The Odyssey of Eradication**

By Thomas Abraham  
Context, an imprint  
of Westland  
Publications Private  
Limited Chennai,  
2018

Price: Rs.699

Pages: 252

piratory syndrome, or SARS.

Although he says in his author’s note that this book is not meant to be a comprehensive history of polio eradication, chiefly because the disease is still present in three countries, for all practical purposes it is a more than adequate account of the disease, the virus that causes it and the efforts being made to eradicate both. (The notes and select bibliography will be of help to those who want more information.) His experience in the profession of journalism, both as an academic—he once taught health and science journalism at the University of Hong Kong—and as a foreign correspondent for *The Hindu*, and his stint at the WHO headquarters in

Geneva have stood him in good stead.

There is a clear distinction between disease-control programmes and eradication. Success in the first instance means a reduction in the number of cases so that the disease is no longer a threat, and for this situation to persist immunisation is a must. The second instance entails complete elimination of the pathogen from humans and the environment; if this goal is attained, then it means that at some point immunisation for the disease can be stopped as happened with small pox, the only disease that has been eradicated so far. Thus, eradication is an ambitious target to aim for.

The book is divided into three parts. The first sec-

tion tells us about the virus and the disease and outlines the history of vaccine development. The impetus behind the search for the vaccine was President F.D. Roosevelt of the United States. He had contracted the disease, or at least that is what a doctor diagnosed it as. Abraham says that there is an ongoing debate about whether Roosevelt had polio or Guillain-Barre syndrome. But it matters not what he actually had. It is sufficient that he believed he had polio, and the foundation he set up, the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, ended up funding the research that came up with the two polio vaccines available today: Jonas Salk’s killed virus vaccine, which has to be injected, and Albert Sabin’s live attenuated virus vaccine, which has to be administered orally. Sabin’s oral polio vaccine (OPV) became the vaccine of choice for the GPEI.

A significant aspect about the GPEI was that it broke new ground when it came to funding: it was the first time private organisations—Rotary International and, later, the Gates Foundation—joined the WHO, UNICEF and the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and became involved in a global health programme. This in effect gave private players, and their donors, enormous say in deciding the priorities of the campaign, perhaps more than the governments whose citizens were its target.

The second section delves into the push for eradication of polio and

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SINGAM VENKATARAMANA

A HEALTH WORKER gives a polio vaccine to a child at Nalgonda railway station in Telangana on March 10.

the progress of the campaign.

The book turns the spotlight on the inequalities between rich countries and poorer ones and the part these played in making the polio eradication programme a global initiative rather than one focussed in the West where polio epidemics started becoming a routine occurrence sometime in, ironically, the late 19th century, when there was a general improvement in public hygiene standards. We get the answer to the question why countries tackling the challenges posed by various diseases utilised their scarce resources to focus on one disease, one that was not more of a problem for them than the others, and especially when they were still grappling with the basics of public health: sewerage systems, treatment plants and provision of drinking water. Like in so many areas of human endeavour, one's station in life decides how one's concerns are taken care of and how one is treated. For in-

stance, in poorer parts of the world, the polio eradication campaign routinely threatened parents with jail if they refused to allow their children to get the polio drops. The author points out that if such tactics had been used in the West, they "would have been met with horror and public protest".

The final section of the book brings the story closer home—an entire chapter is devoted to India—and up to date, discussing the current status of the global polio campaign, which has missed its eradication deadline by almost 20 years as Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan have still not been declared polio-free.

Abraham highlights a lurking impediment to eradication: the OPV in numerous instances has itself caused disease. And this was not confined to a case of just a vaccinated child or its immediate contacts getting infected. The vaccine "went rogue" and caused disease in the general population in the same way the wild

poliovirus did. The author says: "Thus in 2015, nearly a third of all polio cases globally were caused by vaccine-derived viruses.... Of these vaccine-derived cases, Laos, Madagascar, the Ukraine, Guinea and Niger had been previously declared polio-free by the WHO.... Studies showed that vaccine-derived polio broke out in areas with low vaccination rates, high population density and poor sanitation.... This set of conditions described large parts of the developing world." Abraham reports that there was a vaccine-derived outbreak in June 2018 in Papua New Guinea, a country that was declared polio-free in 2000. The worrying aspect of this reality is that though it is debated and written about in technical and scientific circles, it is not something the polio campaign chooses to publicise. Indeed, its public face is one of unremitting optimism. This is exactly the sort of thing that is grist to the mill of the anti-vaccination movement. The alarming rise in recent

times of the number of cases of diseases that were thought to have been consigned to the past in the West, such as measles, whooping cough (pertussis) and diphtheria, is proof of the growing antipathy towards vaccination there.

The book discusses the historical, political and technical issues relating to polio eradication. But this is no dry as dust narration. Much like Siddhartha Mukherjee does in his two medical opuses on cancer and the gene, Abraham gives us some insight into the personalities of the important people in the polio story. All along, one gets to understand their motivations and why they did things the way they did. One is pulled into the story because he presents the human aspects of it every step of the way.

No one, least of all the author, wants to detract from the remarkable achievements of the polio eradication campaign. However, he does hope that those involved in setting and funding public health agendas will take the time to ponder the enormous effort and the considerable amount of money ("[t]he world has already spent close to US\$15 billion") that was spent on tackling just one disease and think twice about embarking on another such exercise. He says: "If the money spent by the polio eradication campaign had gone into broader vaccine programmes (including polio vaccination), perhaps the world's children would be better off today." The book makes the general reader ponder this point as well. □

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AsianAge 12/5/19

# Diet and diabetes: Pg-11

## Why Indians are prone to diabetes



Kamal Mahawar

excerpt

**T**he link between diabetes (Type 2 diabetes which is by far the commoner variety) and obesity is so strong that we even had to coin a new term to address this association — Diabesity. The strength of the relationship is only just beginning to be fully understood.

In the past, doctors used to think diabetes is one of those diseases where the pancreas just stops functioning properly and can't produce enough insulin. We now know that dietary factors and body weight are largely responsible for the dramatic rise in the incidence and prevalence of diabetes seen all over the world.

It is recognised that those suffering from obesity have a condition called insulin resistance — the insulin that

their pancreas makes just doesn't go far enough. Whether this insulin resistance is a protective mechanism — a way for our body to protect tissues from too much sugar and calories in blood — remains to be fully understood...

The best treatment for diabetes is a low sugar, low calorie diet and weight loss. But this fact is not always so clearly stated by doctors dealing with diabetic patients. Their obsessive focus on more and more tablets and eventually insulin treatment — which leads to further weight gain through its anabolic effect — means patients are caught up in a vicious circle.



By Dr Kamal Mahawar  
Fingerprint, ₹299

**T**here are a number of conditions that are directly caused by obesity but there is none more important than diabetes. The twin epidemic of obesity and diabetes is all set to wreak a havoc upon us and it is made worse by Indians being especially predisposed to developing the metabolic syndrome and diabetes. This is largely due to our dietary habits as we consume very little protein and too much fat and carbohydrates. A relative lack of exercise and some genetic factors might also be behind this observed phenomenon... The end result is that we Indians have more body fat than, for example, Caucasians after matching for weight and height.

Researchers have also found that fat deposited within and around our belly carries a bigger health risk than fat deposited elsewhere. This is the worst kind of fat with the most dangerous metabolic consequences. There again, the mother nature hasn't been particularly kind to us as we Indians are more predisposed to carry fat around our waist than elsewhere. Abdominal obesity, as it called, increases the insulin resistance disproportionately.

**I**don't quite understand how, as a race, Indians have evolved to our current diet of largely agricultural produce with very little high-quality protein in it. Around the developed world, animal farming and seafood contribute to a large portion of what people eat. Comparatively, in India, most of us live on agricultural produce. There is no doubt it has benefits in terms of increased fibre intake and reduction of certain cancers. However, the relative lack of proteins must have an effect on the size of our body frame and physical stamina and endurance. It is possible that the price of non-vegetarian food — as it is commonly called — has had something to do with it as animal protein is not cheap.

Many Indians, Hindus in particular, claim to be vegetarians on religious grounds but I am not sure our religious scriptures support this. In fact, I am convinced that ancient Hindus, just like followers of any other religion, hunted and killed for their survival. So, when did this all change? When did we change into a society that started depending mainly on agricultural produce for food? It is possible that the weather had something to do with it...

Whatever your reason for being a complete vegetarian, if you are one, you should know that your diet may be poor in proteins and hence not fully balanced. It is a fact that a completely vegetarian diet makes it difficult to consume adequate amounts of proteins and is comparatively richer in carbohydrates and fats. It is my belief that our diet is partly responsible for our proportionately higher body fat content which in turn is linked to diseases like diabetes.

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# Of times and tales past

An exhaustive but accessible translation of a crucial mythological text

ARSHIA SATTAR

AFTER CONQUERING the critical editions of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Harivamsha*, Bibek Debroy now presents us with a translation of the *Bhagavata Purana*, continuing his project to translate Sanskrit's longest mythological texts into English. Debroy takes these texts head on — no abridgements, no editing and very little by way of commentary and context. As he says in his introduction, "the attempt has been to provide a word-for-word translation, so that if one were to hold up the Sanskrit text, there would be a perfect match." With regard to that intention, he has succeeded admirably.

Among the 18 designated mahapuranas, the *Bhagavata* holds a special place for scholars and believers. Depending on how you date it (as early as the 5th century CE or as late as the 10th century CE), it is either the source for or the culmination of a full-blown, rich and complex Vaishnava theology. The *Bhagavata* tells the stories of all Vishnu's avatars but none more lovingly and fully than those of Krishna and so, more accurately, it is a text that formulates the tenets of Krishna bhakti within the Vaishnava tradition.

The *Bhagavata* consists of 12 *skandhas* which together consist of 16,000-18,000 verses, depending on which Sanskrit text you regard as most authentic, given that this

Purana, like all the others, was compiled over centuries. The *Bhagavata* is, however, dominated by the 10th *skandha* which holds within it the stories of Krishna — mischievous and unknowable child, mysterious and irresistible lover and beyond all of that, master of *lila* who joyously plays in the world that he has created. Hugely popular, the *Bhagavata* appears in almost all Indian languages and typically, the versions of the avatara myths that we know best are those that are found here.

More than in any other text of its genre, the Puranas, the *Bhagavata* revels in the exploration and articulation of how a human being might attain liberation. The answer it provides is eloquent in its simplicity: complete devotion to Krishna will lead to *moksha*, which, in the bhakti universe, is union with the divine. The *Bhagavata* draws on the modalities of bhakti that are nascent in the *Bhagavad Gita* and carries them to their logical conclusion. And because it is more fully a sectarian religious text than the other Puranas, it is often referred to with the appellation 'Shrimad'.

Given all that the *Bhagavata* contains within itself, the later date of the 10th century CE is a more likely one for its composition. Scholars suggest that the Puranas (in the main, composed after the epic period between the third and 10th centuries CE) combine two distinct but intertwined oral traditions — one, of the practices and values of the Vedic priests and the other, of the

heroic deeds and aspirations of kshatriya kings. The *Bhagavata* fully represents both these narrative strands. Many of the narrators and characters that we encounter here are familiar from stories in the *Mahabharata*. Vyasa hovers in the margins as the putative author of this compilation, called (like other texts of the period) the 'fifth Veda.' Saunaka, Lomaharshana and Prithu inhabit its pages but we also meet Uddhava, Vasudeva and Yashodhara from the *Harivamsha*. Hiranyakashipu and Narasimha are here as is a full description of a Manvantara, there is even a "prediction", as it were, of the yuga in which we now live. Apart from the sophisticated, highly developed and well-rounded myths that the *Bhagavata* recounts, it also carries an extensive exegesis of both Advaita and Dvaita schools as well as a full and expansive exposition of Sankhya philosophy.

But the *Bhagavata* also reaches further back in time and absorbs the corpus of the Vedas into Krishna himself — Krishna is the Vedas, in both his inner nature and in his

THE BHAGAVATA PURANA,  
3 VOLS

TRANSLATED BY BIBEK DEBROY

Penguin Modern Classics

500 pages

Rs 599

outward being. Unlike the other Puranas, all of which include stories about the Vedic gods (such as Indra, Vayu, Prajapati and others) in radically reduced versions of themselves, the *Bhagavata* transforms the Vedas from smriti as a remembered source of religious experience into the living embodiment of divinity in the person of Krishna. In doing so, the *Bhagavata* becomes a cornerstone in the edifice of Hinduism presented as an unbroken religious tradition.

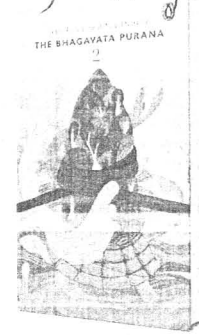
It would not be out of place to recall that most of the Puranas were compiled at a time when Buddhism was an active force in northern India. Hinduism's older and newer gods were pitted against a radically different way of being and believing, its so-

called fundamental philosophical positions were being refined and restated in the face of real intellectual challenges. It is not surprising then, that the *Bhagavata*, coming as late in the classical period as it does, seeks to combine many disparate ideas that nestled in the co-mingled traditions from which it had sprung. For Vaishnavas, the *Bhagavata* is able to provide a coherent and compelling theology that leads to liberation from endless rebirths. For scholars, the *Bhagavata* is a template for how a religion grows in time and place. Debroy tells us that his translation is neither for the sectarian nor for the academic reader. His audience is the "ordinary reader who seeks a faithful rendering of the Sanskrit text." He has certainly brought this multi-layered text within our reach, but I think even the least curious of us would have been grateful for an Index of names and characters.

The writer has translated Valmiki's *Ramayana* and the *Kathasaritsagara* into English and is a founder of Sangam House

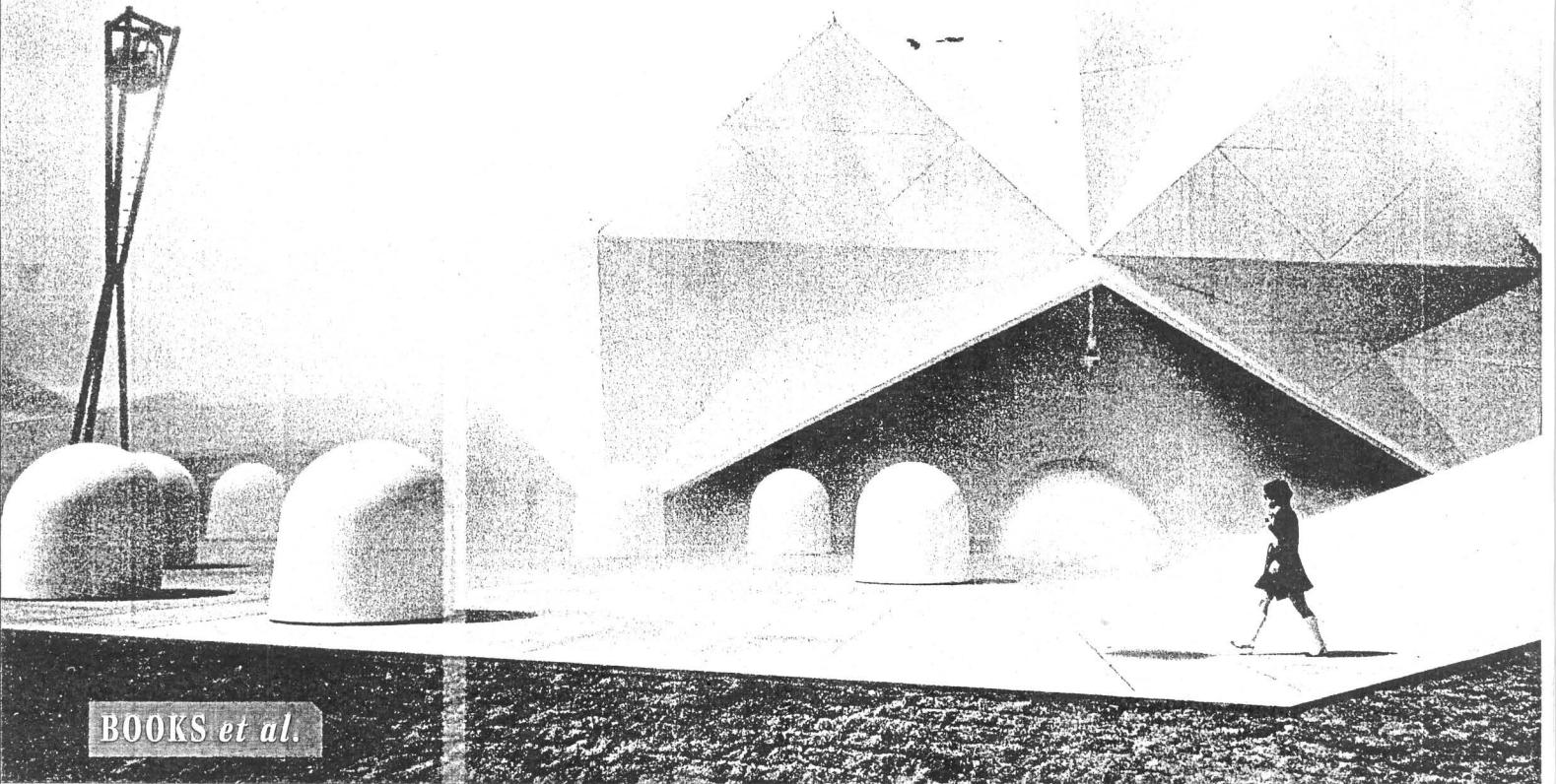
New Delhi

Indian Express; 4/5/19; Pg-21



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# INSIGHTS



BOOKS *et al.*

SCIENCE AND THE ARTS

## Snow's storm

C. P. Snow's 1959 diagnosis of a divide between British scientists and humanists took on new meaning in America

By W. Patrick McCray

In May 1959, Charles Percy Snow took the stage at the Senate House in Cambridge to give the annual Rede lecture. The British chemist-turned-novelist's appearance—a rotund jowly face atop a bulky, shambling figure—led wags to comment that the speaker was well rounded in more than just his intellect.

Snow's talk, titled "The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution," broadly diagnosed a problem he believed challenged

the future of all western democracies. For years, he had noted that British humanists and scientists shared "little but different kinds of incomprehension and dislike" (1, 2). The inability of literary scholars and scientists to understand and communicate with one another was not just an intellectual loss, Snow claimed, but something that threatened the ability of modern states to address the world's problems.

In his lecture, his analysis sharpened as he derided Oxbridge humanists as an insular community of pessimistic Luddites responsible for Great Britain's national decline. By contrast, it was scientists—Snow famously cast them as optimists with the "future in their bones"—who could spread

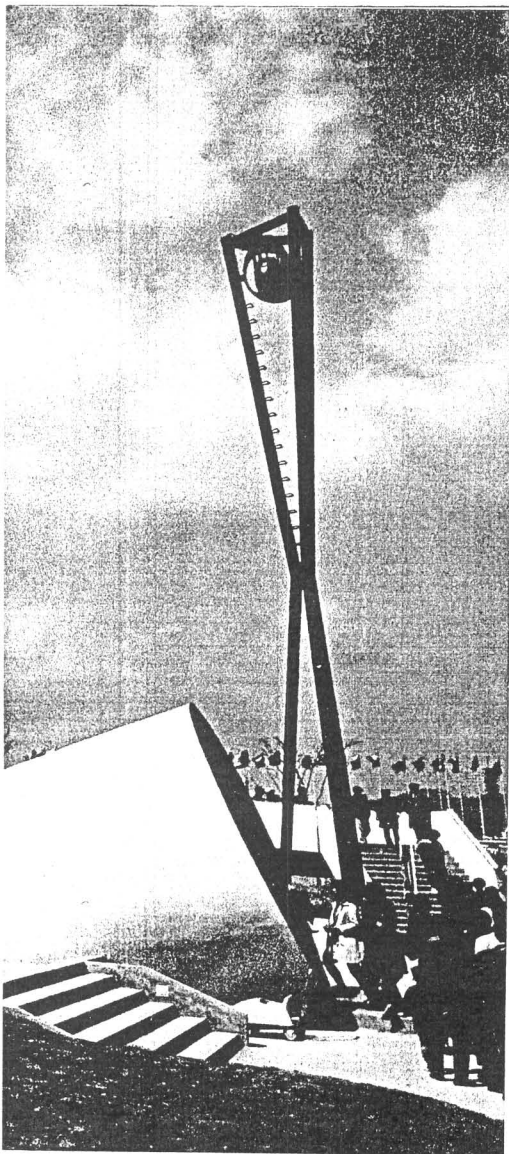
progress and prosperity at home and abroad. And with the British civil service dominated by those with a backward-looking literary orientation, Snow claimed that the Soviet Union, where scientists and engineers were more influential, won an advantage.

Snow's diagnosis precipitated a blizzard of heated objections, ad hominem attacks, and retaliatory articles. Like the chasm between the "two cultures" itself, these vituperative volleys drew deeply on longstanding divides in British society when it came to class, education, and dominance. Seen another, equally nationalistic way, the fight was also about the role of scientific and technological expertise in postwar Britain, with Snow largely cheering for the technocrats (3).

### THE CULTURE CLASH CROSSES THE POND

Although Snow's lecture provoked an immediate sensation in Great Britain, initial reactions in the United States were muted. It received little notice, for example, in *The New York Times* until a lengthy review of

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The Expo '70 Pepsi pavilion embodied an avante-garde collaboration between artists and engineers.

try leaders, and researchers gave to science and technology circa 1960. Sputnik had galvanized American efforts to reform engineering and science education as Congress passed the National Defense Education Act. This massive infusion of funds, coupled with the manpower needs of the space race and the arms race, dramatically increased the number of young people entering fields such as physics and engineering. Consequently, discussions of the two cultures from the early 1960s are best imagined with an insistent Sputnik-generated “beep-beep-beep” chirping in the background.

In the years following Snow's original lecture, articles and letters agreeing with, referencing, or rebutting his claims appeared in American science and engineering journals. *Scientific American*, for example, ran a lengthy piece by historian Asa Briggs, who expressed some agreement with Snow's general argument while challenging Snow's binary reductionism. Reviews published in *Physics Today* and the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* struck similar notes.

Besides transforming Snow into a well-known public intellectual, his lecture (and the rancorous debate it provoked) transformed “the two cultures” into a metonym. Invoking the phrase became an abbreviated and efficient, if not always precise, way of referring to a more complex set of concerns. As a result, throughout the 1960s, Snow's phrase became a universal solvent into which all sorts of concerns, anxieties, and remedies could be mixed. Part of the power of Snow's phrase lay in its binary nature—the image of two cultures was easily grasped—and this aspect remains what is most widely referenced today.

#### A QUEST TO HUMANIZE TECHNOLOGISTS

These dialogues were part of a much more expansive conversation about American education in the postwar period. Former chemist and Harvard president James Conant, for example, commissioned a prominent 1945 study, *General Education in a Free Society*, which proposed that all students receive a holistic liberal education that would foster creativity and more flexible, open minds (5). The report emphasized a need to balance coursework in the humanities and sciences so as to avoid the sort of noncommunication and specialization later seen as pervasive in Snow's two cultures.

The question of exposing future technologists to “culture” was seen as an even more pressing issue when it came to educating engineers. Engineers still struggled to be accepted as the professional equal of scientists. Caricatured as defiantly “crass, materialistic, insensitive” people whose acquaintance with the arts and literature was “limited to cheap movies and comic books,” such stereotypes (these are from a 1956 study on engineering education) suggested that “humanizing” future technologists would be an even tougher task (6).

One suggested remedy was exposure to the fine arts. MIT's administration, for example, created a Committee for the Study of the Visual Arts led by leading art history professors and directors of major East Coast museums. The hope was that the arts and humanities would provide more than just a “cultural veneer” and actually serve a utilitarian purpose by enhancing engineers' creativity. These concerns acquired greater urgency toward the end of the 1960s, when student activists, opponents of the Vietnam War, and critics of large, impersonal, and destructive technological systems increasingly labeled engineers as amoral technocrats beholden to the large companies they served.

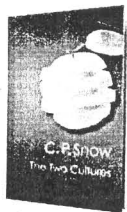
The tensions between instrumentalism, pragmatism, and idealism were found in other lengthy reports that piled up like so many bricks on the desks of education reformers throughout the

1960s. Although these might not reference the “two cultures problem” explicitly, they didn't need to. Building rapport between engineering, science, and the humanities had been absorbed by educators and many practicing engineers as a goal worthy of pursuit (if indeed not easily attainable). Likewise, so had Snow's two cultures concept.

#### ART AND TECH OUTSIDE ACADEMIA

The winds from Snow's storm were felt outside the academy as well. In the 1960s, a slew of initiatives to unite artists with scientists and engineers burst forth from corporate laboratories, cold-water flats, publishing houses, and museum galleries. An essential ingredient of all these efforts was the remarkable economic prosperity of the 1960s. Companies and corporate laboratories, buoyed by years of profitability, could afford to allow—even encourage—their scientists and engineers to partner with artists.

One of the most notable of these efforts was the New York-based group Experiments in Art and Technology. Cofounded



#### The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution

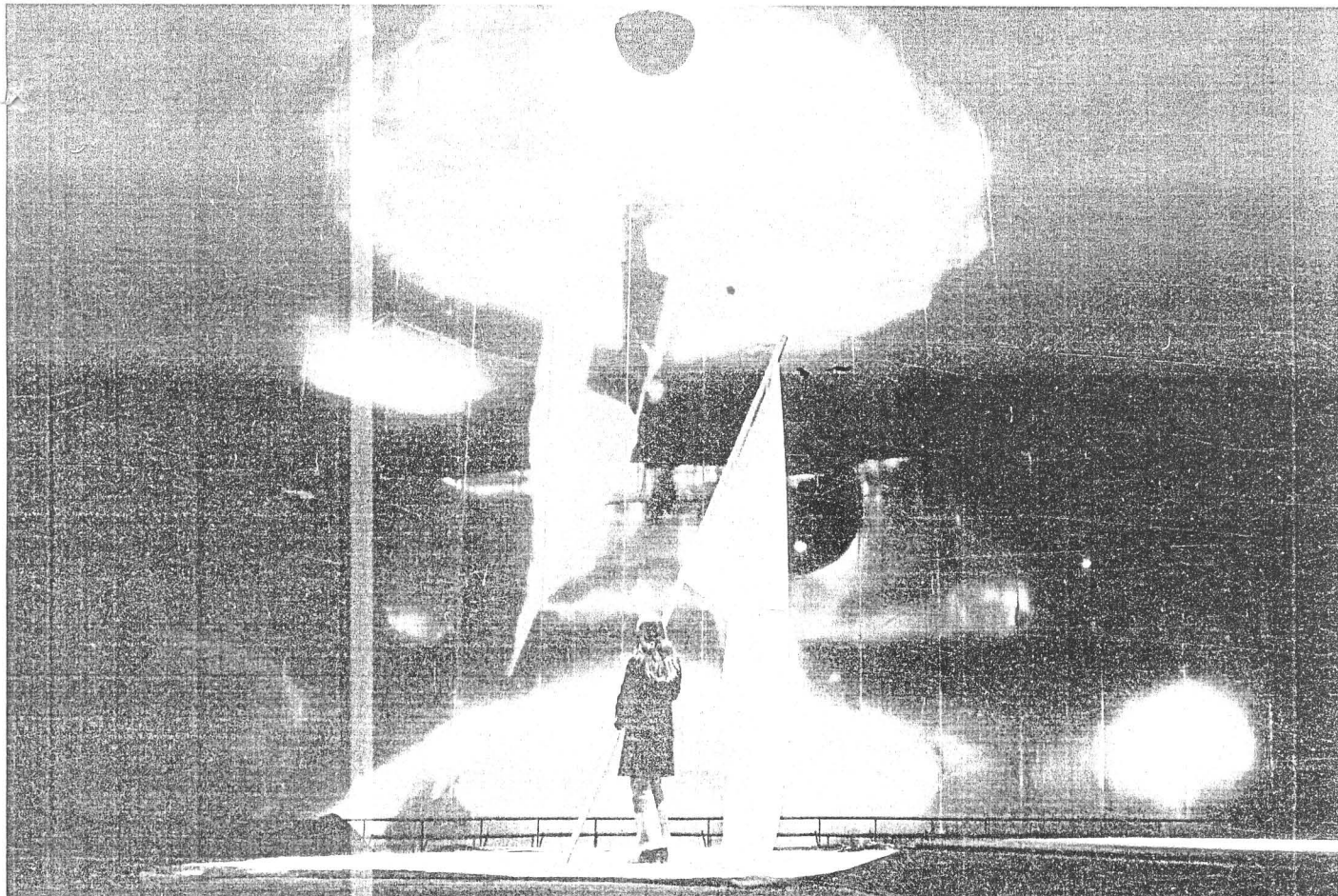
C. P. Snow  
Cambridge Univ. Press,  
1959. 52 pp.

Snow's ideas, now converted into a modest-sized book, appeared in January 1960. J. Tuzo Wilson, a Canadian geophysicist, gently rebutted some of Snow's claims while demonstrating, with deference to Snow, his own familiarity with contemporary literature (4). Nonetheless, Wilson concluded that “no one has yet refuted” Snow's basic argument.

In the months that followed, however, Snow's judgments generated an avalanche of discussion in the United States. Columbia University made the book required reading for all freshmen. Then-senator John F. Kennedy praised Snow for his insights, and American book clubs soon began to offer *The Two Cultures* to members. What was originally formulated to diagnose specific British conditions started to diffuse into American public discourse.

#### SCIENCE ANXIETY IN COLD WAR AMERICA

The different importance Snow's phrase acquired in the United States can be traced, in part, to renewed attention, bordering on obsession, that policy-makers, indus-



A figure holding a flag is reflected in the Mylar-covered ceiling of the Pepsi pavilion at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan.

in 1966 by engineer Billy Klüver and artist Robert Rauschenberg, EAT helped connect engineers and artists and carried out a series of high-profile art-and-technology programs. Implicit—if not stated outright—as a motivation for these activities was the generative value in bringing people from different professional cultures together. Art-and-technology advocates imagined that their intervention could help solve the “two cultures problem” or at least build beachheads to an armistice. Viewed by some as too important to be left just to artists, making art was something to which engineers and scientists could and should contribute.

#### “STEAM”: INSPIRED, PRAGMATIC, BOTH?

Creative collaboration, a primary goal of the art-and-technology movement 50 years ago, is still prized by today’s corporate leaders and college administrators. Conferences, journals, and societies devoted to activities at the interfaces between art, science, and technology are proliferating. Since 2010, national education leaders have lauded the value of adding arts and design to the traditional science, technology, engineering, and math framework (labeled as “STEM to STEAM,” where the “A” means Arts). These contemporary activities reflect aspirations expressed by art-and-technology advocates 50 years ago.

But where the earlier collaborative efforts were fueled by economic prosperity and a pronounced sense of utopian possibilities, one senses that enthusiasm for today’s STEM-to-STEAM initiatives is driven by more prosaic concerns. It’s no coincidence that the most recent efforts to connect art, science, and engineering gained steam after the Great Recession of 2008–2009. Politicians regularly (and wrongly) claim that majors such as theater or history are impractical luxuries that don’t lead to jobs.

Meanwhile, a prime concern for educators and policy-makers remains how and what to teach the next generation of technologists. Once again, some education experts see the integration of the arts into science and engineering curricula as an answer. Moreover, today’s efforts to meld creative cultures often insinuate that technological art (or artful technology) is a pathway to commercial innovation and profits. Seen this way, STEAM advocates can sometimes appear more instrumental than idealistic in their goals.

#### FOCUSING ON WHAT UNITES US

A few years after Snow’s imagery of two cultures at odds and incommensurate with one another migrated to the United States, *Science* published a short article challenging his claims (7). The author—a his-

tory professor—suggested that the divide between the sciences and the humanities wasn’t as wide as imagined. His small liberal arts school had not two but “perhaps two hundred” cultures, any of which could be relentlessly esoteric and insular. But (besides a common antipathy toward campus bureaucrats), these practitioners all shared values such as academic freedom, a respect for evidence, and a belief that more knowledge and understanding was an unalloyed good thing.

At a time rife with a disregard for facts and the methods used to produce them (even when they portend a catastrophic future), perhaps Snow, were he alive today, would encourage scientists and humanists, engineers and artists, to focus on the one culture to which we all belong. ■

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10.1126/science.aaw9396

## BIOENGINEERING

# Leveraging nature's tool kit

## Blending biology and engineering, researchers seek to tackle our biggest existential threats

By Adrian Woolfson

**T**wo to three million years after the first stone flakes were assembled into a rudimentary tool kit by a hominid, *Homo sapiens* stumbled across a new suite of tools that would fundamentally affect humankind. Initially known as “corpuscles” and then as “electrons,” the technology had its basis in the particles carrying “negative electricity” discovered in 1897.

In her entertaining and prescient *The Age of Living Machines*, Susan Hockfield argues that the resulting “parts list” of the physical world facilitated the development of electronic tools, including the telegraph, television, computers, satellites, and the internet. Catalyzed by the interdisciplinary efforts of the Second World War, the technologies forged in this convergence of physics and engineering fueled a period of unprecedented industrial and economic growth that placed the United States in a global leadership position.

In the 1950s, a new generation of interdisciplinary researchers set out to break down the biological world into parts and rules. Building on the 1944 discovery that DNA was the “transforming principle” and chemical substance of genes, these pioneers formulated a new digital age, based not on the binary code script of computing machines but on the sequences of nucleotide bases. Hockfield asserts that the elucidation of this biological parts list, along with an unprecedented ability to manipulate it, has taken humankind to the cusp of a second convergence at the interface of biology and engineering.

That the idiosyncrasies of organismal biology should offer a trove of molecular innovation is not surprising. Indeed, we are surrounded at every scale by the blind ingenuity, creativity, and raw intensity of Darwinian evolution. As Hockfield writes, even humble sea snails are engineering virtuosos. These erudite alchemists have conjured up an ingenious method for transforming calcium and carbonate into a lightweight shell of remarkable dynamic strength through the judicious interleaving of protein filaments.

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By detailing examples of multidisciplinary projects that combine biology and engineering, Hockfield demonstrates how nature's molecular riches may be leveraged to provide potential solutions to some of humanity's existential challenges.

Hockfield meets with Jim Carrington, president of the Danforth Plant Science Center in St. Louis, who estimates that unless substantial improvements are made to current agricultural practices, additional farmland—equivalent in size to Africa and South America combined—will be required to feed the world's predicted 9.5 billion inhabitants by 2050. To help generate the next generation of resilient, high-yield crops, researchers at the Danforth Center have coupled sophisticated engineering technologies with bioinformatics and high-throughput analysis to allow the comprehensive characterization of individual plant “phenomes.” Each phenome comprises a map linking a plant's

physical traits to its genomic structure that facilitates the selection of variants.

The need for clean water is an equally compelling problem being tackled by bioengineers. Biophysicist Morten Østergaard Jensen speculated that aquaporin, a naturally occurring protein that transports water across cell membranes, could form the basis of a biological water filter. Together with en-



**TOMORROW'S EARTH**

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**The Age of Living Machines**  
How Biology Will Build the Next Technology Revolution  
Susan Hockfield  
Norton, 2019. 244 pp.



trepreneur Peter Holme Jensen, he formed a company in 2005 that aimed to scale up aquaporin-based water filtration. In 2015, Danish astronauts used Aquaporin A/S membranes to filter the water they drank in space.

Other innovators use biologically inspired engineering approaches to derive previously unidentified energy sources. Chemist and material scientist Angela Belcher has shown, for example, that viral coat proteins may be engineered to bind metal particles and carbon nanotubes that self-assemble into biological batteries. Unlike traditional batteries, Belcher's batteries require little energy to make and produce no toxic byproducts.

In 1933, Ernest Rutherford famously stated that the transformation of atoms would never result in a source of power. As we contemplate the inevitable transition from an age defined by electron-based tools to one informed by biological tools, we too will be hard pressed to predict the ultimate outcomes, risks, and benefits that this new biological tool kit will bring to humankind. But as Hockfield cautions, the maintenance of a pole position in this new frontier of human accomplishment will require an infrastructure that fosters interdisciplinary projects, encourages curiosity-driven science, cultivates a diverse scientific workforce, and encourages financial instruments that facilitate long-term returns. □

10.1126/science.aaw9433

### PODCAST

**Nightingales in Berlin**  
Searching for the Perfect Sound  
David Rothenberg  
MIT Press, 2019. 184 pp.

“[O]ne easy way to make nature matter. Listen to it,” writes philosopher David Rothenberg in his new book, *Nightingales in Berlin*, which chronicles his efforts to forge musical collaborations with nonhuman musicians: namely, the eponymous nightingale. This week on the *Science* podcast, Rothenberg reflects on the aesthetics of birdsong, a feature often overlooked by scientists, and explains how making music with other species has changed the way he thinks about our place in the world. [sciencemag.org/podcasts](http://sciencemag.org/podcasts)

10.1126/science.aax5548

sciencemag.org **SCIENCE**



# CATCH A FLEETING IDEA

Written over a decade, the 66 short pieces in this volume take the reader through history and culture, urban design, and economics



**India In The Age Of Ideas**  
Sanjeev Sanyal  
318pp, ₹699  
Westland

**Sudhirendar Sharma**

■ letters@htlive.com

Ideas are fleeting. Many believe that unless ideas root and grow, they wither and lose relevance. Yet, they are rarely in short supply. Everybody has ideas. They erupt in fertile minds without any regard for time and place. But unless ideas are allowed to mature, they do not catch much attention. If this is what ideas may mean then why should newspaper columns compiled as a book of ideas catch any attention?

In his foreword to *India in the Age of Ideas*, economist Bibek Debroy sets aside this dilemma by arguing that other than pandering to the writer's ego the idea of packing 'ideas' in a book may remain somewhat questionable.

Written over a decade and more, the 66 short pieces in this volume take the reader through history and culture, urban design, and economics. Several pieces are set in the past and are therefore dated; the more recent ones reflect contemporary concerns.

While the author claims to have addressed diverse issues from an interdisciplinary perspective using a Complex Adaptive System lens, the narrative is a linear response to evolving situations. It could not have been different as the basic premise is rooted in providing a quick response to current challenges.

Many of the issues raised are simple and

**WHILE THE AUTHOR CLAIMS TO ADDRESS ISSUES USING A COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEM LENS, THE NARRATIVE IS A LINEAR RESPONSE TO EVOLVING SITUATIONS**

relatable. Who would not agree that Indian history must be rewritten by properly revisiting the primary evidence? Isn't the issue of the legitimacy of the ruling elite at the core of the current crises in democratic governance? Can the country afford to discount the new middle class as a harbinger of cultural transformation? These and others issues need a nuanced understanding rather than a quick fix. Given his academic and administrative background, however, solutionism remains a core concern for Sanjeev Sanyal.

*India in the Age of Ideas* misses out on assessing the complexities of interactions between human psychology, cultural norms, and social behaviour in addressing contemporary social, economic, cultural, and political challenges with which society is currently grappling. While the author holds up a mirror to historical contradictions, cognitive dissonances, and governance deficit, the question of how the collusion course between them is to be resolved has remained largely unaddressed.

Though there is a limit to which meanings can be layered into newspaper columns, many pieces included in the book are engaging. In an easy-to-read style, Sanyal shares some of his concerns. While agreeing with the author on the need for relocating Independence Day celebrations across different parts of the country, this reviewer suggests that similar attention be paid to other events of national importance. Similarly, there is merit in the author's laying emphasis on debates based on evidence than on ideologies and personalities.

However, by avoiding updating these articles, Sanyal has weakened his own arguments in several places. The author's assertion that a quick response to a situation is more important than a meticulous plan seems preposterous. And for a book of ideas, the inclusion of such unsubstantiated ideas is surely not a good idea. There are also a few repetitions and contradictions.

Given that *India in the Age of Ideas* is a compilation of old articles, it seems overpriced. This genre of book publishing has value provided the information is updated and the arguments substantiated into a coherent narrative.

Sudhirendar Sharma is an independent writer, researcher and academic.

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## Book Reviews

Anand Chakravarti, *Is This Azaadi? Everyday Lives of Dalit Agricultural Labourers in a Bihar Village*, Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2018, (xiv+266) 280 pages, Rs 750.

This book is a major contribution to the ongoing research in the academic sphere on the subject of the peasant psyche. It is a problematic which had intrigued political philosophers and practitioners ranging from Karl Marx in the nineteenth century to Mao in the twentieth century. It had continued to attract serious attention from a galaxy of academics and historians like Barrington Moore, Eric Wolf, David Arnold and James Scot in the west, and Suprakash Ray, Ranajit Guha, Nirmal Kumar Chandra, D.N. Dhanagare, Ghanashyam Shah and Tariq Omar Ali among others in the Indian sub-continent. What distinguishes this book from the earlier theoretical discourses is the author's field-work findings, which he brings together in a sort of '*son et lumiere*' that helps to illuminate their arguments with the voices of the peasants and the sights of their daily living.

In this respect, Anand Chakravarti's book can also be a helpful guide for political and social activists who are working in the countryside, to enable them to understand and conceptualise the different layers of consciousness among the agrarian community in India. How are they coping with the conflict between their traditional religious and caste loyalties born at the elementary level, and the changing existential needs born from the demands made on them by the new political and economic order at the upper level? Although concentrating on the problems of the most deprived section of the agrarian community – Dalit agricultural labourers – Anand also throws his flashlight on other corners of Bihar's rural landscape. He shows us how, in the post-Mandal period, the newly privileged OBC farmers gained economic and political power by dislodging the old feudal Rajput and Bhumihaar landlords, but are now replicating the same feudal oppressive norms of behaviour against their Dalit agricultural labourers as followed by their upper-caste predecessors.

The focus of Anand Chakravarti's account is on the living conditions of Dalit landless agricultural labourers in a particular village in the Rohtas district of south-west Bihar, which he visited over a period from 2001 till 2015 – the duration of the visits ranging from two months in the earlier phase to a week or so in the later phase. He has changed the original

name of the village (renaming it as 'Muktidih'), and also the names of the villagers, with whom he lived and interviewed. Explaining the reason, he states (in a footnote to the first chapter): 'I have . . . designated the persons who feature in the study by fictitious names, to avoid embarrassing them in any way and to safeguard their privacy.' This precautionary note itself indicates the environment of fear and insecurity in which the Dalit peasants have been living in Bihar under the successive regimes of Lalu Yadav and his rival Nitish Kumar. Both these leaders having risen to political prominence through the Jayaprakash (JP) Narayan-led movement of the 1970s, reaped benefits later from the Mandal recommendation-based politics that privileged the OBCs, who constituted the middle and small farmers in Bihar. Once having come to power, these OBC chief ministers turned out to be replicas of their Brahmin, Rajput and other upper-caste predecessors.

The first part of the book is devoted to the livelihood and living conditions in the village as were prevalent in 2001 when the author first visited it. The second part covers the various phases of changes in both respects there over the next fifteen years or so. On the sidelines of these thumbnail sketches of the economic and social conditions of the Dalit villagers, the author informs the readers of the growing political consciousness among them over a decade due to the intervention of a radical Left party. The book thus becomes multi-dimensional – descriptive with its graphic details of the living conditions of the rural poor, theoretical with its analysis of the complex caste–class relations in the countryside, and political with the author's unambiguous indictment of the Indian state for betraying the rural poor of Muktidih and the underclass all over India.

### A Sociologist Fallen among Dalits

Anand Chakravarti, who retired as Professor of Sociology from the University of Delhi in 2006, had his first brush with the caste stranglehold in rural India while doing field-work as a researcher in a village in Rajasthan as far back in 1964. He was thirsty one afternoon, and drank a glass of milk that was offered by a Dalit family. 'To my surprise,' Anand writes in the Preface, 'what I imagined to be a simple gesture actually triggered a storm in the village. Leading members of the dominant caste chastised the Dalits who had been in conversation with me.' Anand escaped censure perhaps because they regarded him as 'a guest from the city, ignorant of village norms'. Perhaps, also, these village elders were aware of Anand's upper-caste background? As Anand acknowledges while describing that experience: 'the significance of class somehow escaped my attention. . . . I failed to give due importance to the phenomenon.' It was only later in the mid-1970s, while doing field-work in rural Bihar, that he became cognizant of the intermeshing of 'caste oppression and class exploitation' that deprived the Dalits of their rights, and made him realise that the 'promise

of social, economic and political justice to all, which is at the heart of the Constitution, exists only in word, but not in deed.'

During his first visit to the village in 2001, Anand Chakravarti found that the underclass belonged largely to the landless Paswan and Bhuiya communities, some among whom were designated as *banihaars* (who were bonded to the landlords because of the debts that they owed to them), and some as casual labourers who were free to choose to work for a range of employers, designated as *azaad*. Explaining the difference between the psyches of the two groups, Anand says: 'in subjective terms, casual labourers emphatically evaluated themselves as superior to *banihaars* because they were *azaad* (free), and not subject to the arbitrary will of their employers.'

When reading Anand's description of the contrast between the two life-experiences among the rural poor, I remembered a similar encounter that I had watched as a Naxalite activist in a village in Birbhum in Bengal in 1974. I was attending a meeting of our peasant comrades. One of them belonged to the category of bonded labourers, known as *bandha-munish* in Bengal (the equivalent of *banihaar* of Bihar), who was attached to the local landlord. The others who were casual agricultural labourers (known as '*khetmajoors*') with uncertain and irregular earnings, asked him whether he did not feel better off with the assurance of daily meals provided by his landlord in exchange for his labour. He turned back to them with an angry face, and shouted: 'But what about my *izzat* (self-respect)? Can you imagine how I feel when he throws his half-smoked *beedi* at me, expecting me to finish it, as a show of my homage to him for the daily meals that he provides me? And then, he also demands the company of my wife in his bedroom!'

It is this acute sense of self-respect and the need to assert it that were revived among the rural poor by the activists of the CPI(M-L) Liberation group in Bihar during the period of the survey carried out by the author, who, drawing from the testimonies of the Dalit labourers, found that the group's interventions at various levels from public demonstrations to panchayat elections 'enhanced the material and social status of the underclass'. Anand highlights the role of such political interventions in two important chapters: the first entitled 'Notes on Education and Politics' in Part One of the book, which covers the year 2001, and the second entitled 'Fragments on Education and Politics' in Part Two, which covers the period from 2009 to 2015. He reserves his own views on such political actions by these groups, as well as on the alternative political recipes suggested by liberal intellectuals, till he reaches the end of the book – the chapter entitled 'Conclusions'.

### **Principal Causes of Indebtedness among the Rural Poor**

But before we reach the end, let me examine some of the challenging problems that Anand has revealed in the course of his decades-long survey. One is the issue of the principal causes of indebtedness among the rural

poor. The need for medical care (which involves both travelling to distant hospitals and expenditure on treatment) is one cause that compels them to borrow from moneylenders at high interest rates. But there is another compelling cause – the social compulsion of carrying out rituals that involve payment of dowries and expensive ceremonies and feasts, which Anand describes as ‘The Crushing Obligations of Marriage and Death Rituals’ in a chapter in Part Two of the book. It is sad that these oppressive socio-religious customs continue to thrive under the patronage of moneylenders in twenty-first-century India.

Nothing had changed in rural Bihar during the fifteen years from 2000 to 2015 – the period covered by the author. Anand Chakravarti found in 2001, when examining marriages among the underclass, that ‘the expenses were enormously disproportionate to their earnings; and it was impossible to cope with the massive expenses without incurring huge debts’. But a decade later, he found that the ‘same pattern of expenditure has continued over the years’, as evident from his interviews with the villagers. How do we emancipate the rural poor – whether Dalits or other castes – from traditional beliefs that drive them to indulge in expensive rituals that compel them to borrow money from upper-caste usurers? Even the CPI(M-L) Liberation group, which has helped them to improve their material existence and assert their political rights to some extent, has not apparently fought this oppressive burden of traditional socio-cultural customs like dowry and obligatory expenditure accompanying rites of passage. There is, however, another line of thinking among some sociologists, who argue that the habit of the poor to spend a lot on ceremonies, like marriages and festivals, may seem irrational behaviour to outsiders, but there lies an underlying rationality to this behaviour. Living in miserable conditions all through the year, they find a breath of fresh air once in a while in opportunities like these gatherings where they indulge in some extravagant outlay to fulfil their collective emotional needs. Such expenditure could also reflect their desire to be well-regarded within their social group and to maintain their self-esteem. (See Maithreyi Krishnaraj’s letter on ‘Rationale and Culture’ in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2 March 2019.)

The CPI(M-L) Liberation (which, incidentally, is fighting in a constituency in Bihar in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls as a part of the united opposition, ‘Mahagathbandhan’) can persuade the Dalit villagers to reduce the expenditure on such ceremonies even when carrying out the rituals. It can be done by collective pooling of resources (money and food items) from among all the villagers to help the individual and his/her family, so that they are not forced to borrow from moneylenders. It can also be done through mass marriages – a single-day ceremony – where all the parents of the brides and bridegrooms agree on a common date, and with the help of the neighbours, host the feast. This practice is gaining recognition in certain parts of the country in north India and elsewhere – mainly due

to the intervention of a few enlightened young district magistrates or sub-divisional officers in collaboration with local religious and panchayat leaders. This is an experiment worth examining.

### Changing Patterns of Livelihood

During the gap between 2001 and 2015, the Dalit villagers (whom Anand Chakravarti had known) had changed dramatically – shifting from one occupation to another. When describing and explaining their compulsions and choices (through their own voices), Anand throws light on the economic rationality of peasants in their response to commercialization of agriculture. Following interviews with his old acquaintances among them, after almost a decade, he makes an important observation: ‘A significant change in the technology of ploughing . . . has also affected the practice of “banihaari” . . . mechanized ploughing by tractor had practically replaced the oxen-driven plough for preparing land for cultivation . . . (this) had naturally affected the demand for the traditional “halwaha” by landowners who earlier recruited “banihaars”’.

How are these displaced Dalit labourers coping with the situation? Their sons and daughters are shunning manual wage work, and trying to enter the service sector (thanks to their educational qualifications that they had acquired during the last decade) – like positions as clerks in government offices, agents of private business houses, or as individual entrepreneurs. But even these positions can be acquired at a cost. As one of Anand’s interviewees told him in 2015, only ‘those who bribed the authorities secured employment’. To quote him in full: ‘How can people like us, who have no land, afford to give two or three lakhs of rupees to secure employment? So, in spite of having passed Intermediate or BA, we just sit at home.’ Some among the less-privileged and less-educated are migrating to cities to find work in the urban-industrial milieu. But then, as Anand Chakravarti points out: ‘they are placed at the bottom of the workforce as unskilled casual workers who are liable to be hired and fired arbitrarily’.

### Is This ‘Azaadi’?

The question which forms the title of the book is a challenge thrown by the Dalit peasantry (as well as other oppressed sections) to the Indian state and its privileged and smug citizens. This is their grassroots perception of Independence, at which they sneer – having remained bonded to their oppressors even after seven decades of ‘*azaadi*’. The question harks back to a slogan that was raised by the then Communist Party of India, soon after the declaration of Independence. In 1948, it rejected Independence saying: ‘*Yeh azaadi jhoota hai!*’, and embarked on an armed insurrection which proved to be foolhardy, as the majority of the Indian people at that time were willing to place their faith in the new government’s promise to bring improvements in their life through the democratic process. Over all these

years, the Indian state had failed to keep that promise in relation to the vast masses of Dalit and Adivasi labouring poor, who today feel that they have been let down by the successive governments that ruled India since 1947. Can we blame them if they question 'azaadi' - a term that we have got used to accept unquestionably in our discourse? In their daily existence, they have no 'azaadi' (which actually means 'freedom', if we dissociate it from the political term 'azaadi' that is coterminous with the 1947 Independence), being bonded to the rural landowners, or the mafia of contractors who lure them to the cities for manual jobs, which again never provide them with the choice of freedom for occupations that they would prefer.

#### Changing the 'Cry in the Wilderness' into a 'Hurrah in a Mass Movement'

Anand ends his book on a despondent note. I share his view: 'The organic linkage between caste power, class power, and state power renders any real transformation in the lives of the landless impossible in the present circumstances. . . . In this scenario, the cry of the labourer in Muktidih . . . is indeed a cry in the wilderness.' But I also hear other cries which are reverberating from the slogans of the peasants and farmers from all parts of rural India who march to New Delhi to protest against the present government's anti-people policies. And, Anand Chakravarti's enthralling narration of his experiences reassures us that the oppressed poor of Bihar continue to uphold their historical reputation as courageous and honest fighters for their rights, and revives our faith in them to overthrow the current regime of corrupt and opportunist politicians, who have been ruling Bihar for too long.

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Megan Moodie, *We Were Adivasis: Aspiration in an Indian Scheduled Tribe*, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017, 216 pages, Rs 995 (for sale only in South Asia)

Megan Moodie's ethnographic account of the Dhanka community in Jaipur, Rajasthan takes the reader literally into the complex lived urbanity of the Dhanka Scheduled Tribe. The work astutely underlines the growing precarity of the Scheduled status of Dhankas in the neoliberal era, or what the author succinctly puts as the 'era of contract'. As the very title suggests, the research undertaken captures the paradox of an evolving Adivasi identity in modern times and demonstrates the ambivalent approach of

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Dhankas to their Adivasi past. The paradox here that is looked into is the Dhankas' assertion and claim to their Scheduled status in order to avail state support provided through reservations, while at the same time attempting to live a life far removed from the stereotypical idea of being Adivasis. The historicity of being an Adivasi is considered by the community as something that ties them to a past far removed from their urban reality of modern opportunities. Megan Moodie, through her extensive field research on the community, establishes a plausible idea of this paradox as an ongoing work of 'feminist ethnography', that hooks its readers to the world of how identities in general and that in India particularly engage with the social and the political.

It is here, in the very milieu of the Dhankas' immediate social and political quandary, that the author describes in detail the mythical stories and historical myths anchoring Dhankas in a 'Hindu past'. The work recounts the laboured navigation of the community's identity, its historical location, and focuses on placing the Dhankas as a group that is not just different from but is rooted on a social plane away from caste society. In this Dhanka narrative, the research explains how the community aims at constructing its identity as different from both the upper castes and Dalits, and thereby sees their occupational location within the bracket of 'clean' work. This latter idea of the Dhankas seeing themselves and their occupational work as 'clean' is a clear and visible sign of them constructing a consciousness imbued with Brahmanism – as clean and non-clean or, in other words, purity and pollution, is the well-known gift of Brahmanism to this country. One way to look at this Dhanka invocation of historical distinctiveness and attributing a 'clean' status to their occupations, and at the same time holding on to 'we were Adivasis' in their effort to move towards a more upwardly mobile social class – is that these are actually a signifier of their everyday battle with all-entrenched Brahmanism. However, this hegemony of Brahmanism, somehow, does not get the analytical space in this work as it otherwise merits – especially in a work of tracing and interpreting the origins of identities, Dhanka in this case, in India.

Moving on, Moodie delves further into the psyche of the upwardly mobile 'willingness' of the Dhanka men – ascribing it as a significant characteristic feature of their masculine self. This idea of willingness among the men manifests itself in the community's collective goal of asserting its social cohesiveness, and attempts to secure a protected social and political space for the Dhankas as a whole. The author attributes this masculinity of Dhanka men to 'a sense of identity, collectivity and purpose' – traits that are vital to progress amidst their socio-economic vicissitudes in the precarious age of neoliberalism. This longing for a focused behaviour of Dhanka men to secure a safe and better life becomes all the more crucial in the present time, which is very different from earlier times of government/state protection. The work sees this masculine aspect of Dhanka men not in

isolation from what probably defines being a good Dhanka woman.

And it is here that this ethnographic work breaks away from the popular discourse on tribal women that portrays them, by and large, in their sexual freedom and to an extent somewhat 'liberated' as opposed to the gendered location of non-Adivasi women in India. Contrary to the established feminist norms of confronting patriarchy, Moodie puts Dhanka women's struggles and their individual aspirations – including love, marriage and intimacy – as complementary to the aspirations of the men of the community. Thus, the work sees the social and economic struggles of the Dhankas through the collectivity of its men and women, both. The work understands the patriarchy operating among the Dhankas as being an extension of the world of caste Hindu men – here the author shies away from using Brahmin patriarchy as the overarching ideological structure – which gets reshaped when it comes in contact with the expectations of the Dhanka women. The binding glue between the men and women of the community seen in this way is their collective aspiration for making a better life together. The author underlines that these struggles of the Dhankas aspiring for a better life must not be confused with 'Sanskritisation', but is something that is formed through an assertion of their constitutionally recognised status of being a Scheduled Tribe and hence should be seen as part of the modern social.

One of the most significant social customs of the community that exhibits the negotiating space of the collective aspirations of men and women coming together to make a shared life is the convention of '*samuhik vivah*' or collective weddings. These collective weddings are social events that become central to the construction of the defined modern life of Dhanka community. As the author rightly underlines, these collective weddings fill the gap in the social cohesiveness of the community's social presence and consciously makes a spectacle of their ways, thus attributing them with a political agency which otherwise is wanting in their day-to-day lives. For these annually planned collective weddings, the Dhankas not only ensure the protection and assistance of even further marginalised members of their community, but in the process also make a political statement through the public display of the organised strength of the community. And it is such organised gatherings that give the Dhanka community their political edge in the larger polity of Jaipur, Rajasthan, and firmly establishes them in the ever-struggling and evolving identity of an urban tribal.

This ethnographic research articulates the Dhanka story as a success, and the readers and those who are particularly interested in the ethnography of India's numerous ascriptive identities engaged in their respective social struggles would find themselves in agreement with the findings and analysis presented. The work succinctly captures the uncertainty faced by the Dhanka community deeply immersed in the everyday struggles of redefining their historical identity in order to make more sense of the trials

and tribulations that the modern era throws at them. The struggles of the Dhankas compel us to take cognizance of not only their crisis brought upon by the overarching design of a neoliberal state, but also to acknowledge their everyday struggles which remain unheard and unnoticed.

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Noam Chomsky, *What Kind of Creatures Are We?* Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2018, (xxii+150) 172 pages, Rs 595 (for sale only in South Asia)

The first thing that strikes this lay reader about Noam Chomsky's recent book, *What Kind of Creatures Are We?* – lay to Chomsky's specialized work in linguistics, analytic philosophy and cognitive science – is the movement outward from language, which is the theme of Chapter One ('What is Language?'), but not, as might be expected, towards a world that language refers to or brings to our experience. The author's worldwide celebrity as an opponent of American imperialism and the leading left-wing thinker of that country makes one almost demand, like the 'minimum linear distance' that Chomsky argues to be the most efficient way of making meaning in language but which paradoxically is never observed in actual language use, that the philosophy lead to the world demonstrably.

At a fundamental level, Chomsky's work on the philosophy of language through the science of linguistics questions that language exists to refer to objects or feelings, or that language is communicative in nature. Language distinguishes humans from animals, but this is not something inborn or god-given to the former. Chomsky draws on the model of Darwinian evolution to mark the coming of language at a precise point in human evolution, indeed as an aspect of that evolution. The relation between language and biologism is thus firmed up even before we recognize Chomsky's long-established work at the interface of a science of language and the science of the mind ('I take the mind here to be the brain viewed at a certain level of abstraction'; p. 6). The writer, however, points to and arrests the corollary temptation of thinking that language must be an all-answering key to human experience and existence. Language is key to the processes of cognition, but it cannot be reduced to that. It is therefore no less an object of scientific enquiry than human life processes.

Chomsky's scientism builds not just on the project but the shortcomings of the Cartesian cognitive revolution in the philosophy of mind in seventeenth-century Europe. The main figures of this revolution are Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Locke, Hume and Priestley. The thread that connects these figures and their ideas is the question of matter, or the mind-body

dualism. How does one explain, for example in Newton's case, that bodies (which are matter) attract each other even when situated at a distance? It was Newton who, once and for all, disturbed the concept of physicality through his researches in the laws of physics. These researches were in the domain of thought, gravity being the best example of something we know as acting in the world but cannot perceive as we perceive physical objects. The shortcoming of this project of understanding the world was something the philosophers and scientists themselves acknowledged. The name they gave this failure was 'God' when the concepts available to them could not fully explain the phenomena under observation. This forever-open mystery within a given state of science and research, when concepts cannot explain everything, is what Chomsky recommends as 'mysterianism' (without the theology). One reason for this recommendation is the tendency in linguistic research which insists on treating mental aspects of language on a different footing from aspects of the human body. If we are unable to make a complete theory of how language arises in the mind and exists in tandem with physical processes like digestion (Chomsky refers to the possibility of a 'second' brain in the human gut which has more nerve cells than the entire peripheral nervous system), it is to be weighed as a problem of cognition and not as a problem internal to language.

Chapter 3 ('What is the Common Good?') confronts us with the popular Chomsky we know from his political activism, but this is where the transition between language and world becomes necessary and, to this reader, such a transition is absent. He announces that humans are not just individuals as understood in cognitive theories of language, but are also social animals. (In the previous chapter, a meditation on the semantic uncertainties of the word 'person' leads to a historical reading of the exclusions from that category in the US Constitution.) Here he develops the notion of a 'double universal': a universally desirable idea which in practice is universally rejected. Such a double universal could be democracy or the notion of social equality. Politics begins with these double universals through which a path of action opens to defend precisely that which is rejected even as it is accepted (in language?). The chapter goes on to present a tradition of anarchist thought for which Chomsky announces his preference and affiliation. This turn to ethical questions and a political programme reads like an interlude in an otherwise clear tripartite structure of the book: language, thought and science (Chapter Four, 'The Mysteries of Nature: How Deeply Hidden?'). Could this point to a difficulty in conceiving politics through a theory of language which insists that language is not merely referential or communicative in function? In a work that announces itself as coming together of a life's work in linguistics and cognitive science, does this turn to politics really come about as a turn from within those theoretical fields?

Chomsky's theory of language in the world resists the infinite regress of everything into a linguistic or textual condition. His inspiration is the

Enlightenment project of understanding the world without the guardianship of God or Master (the latter also being an anarchist slogan). It is no surprise then that thought is not secondary to language, and neither is the latter merely the vessel for thought. What then is language, if we want to pose it as a political question? This reduction of language to politics is resisted by the arrangement of ideas in this book. Could this be the anarchist 'solution' to the question of language as both a social phenomenon and an individual cognitive process? It therefore sounds jarring when the book's jacket announces that alongside the anarchist tradition, Chomsky draws on the ideas of Mill and Marx in this book. While Mill is invoked in the context of the liberal view of equality, i.e. from the environs of his own ideas, Marx appears only as a metaphor-giver, the one about the 'Old Mole' from the *Eighteenth Brumaire* quoted twice in the book. This is not to raise simply the spectre of Marx against the eclecticism of the anarchist thinker, but to pose the question of physicality, or matter, this time as a question of the innermost workings of society (as much as of language and science). Value is not born from the soil, as the physiocrats had proclaimed, but the worker produces it through her work, as Marx uncovered. This insight (a 'truism' in the sense Chomsky uses it throughout the book) too goes a long way to explain what kind of creatures we have become.

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## Book Reviews

**Tony Fels, *Switching Sides: How a Generation of Historians Lost Sympathy for the Victims of the Salem Witch Hunt*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. Pp. 262. \$29.95**

Many year ago, as a graduate student, I remember reading David Hackett Fisher's *Historians Fallacies: Towards a Logic of Historical Thought* (1970). My fellow students and I were amazed and terrified by the book – amazed at the numerous flaws Fisher was able to detect in the work of major scholars, and terrified that we might sometime be subject to a similar dissection of our work. Those feelings came back to me as I read Tony Fell's *Switching Sides*. This is a study of how the "Salem witch hunt" (as Fels prefers to call it), has been interpreted by students of the subject from Marion Starkey's 1949 *The Devil in Massachusetts* to the present day. Fels closely investigates what he considers the most influential studies of recent decades – Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum's *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (1974); John Putman Demos's *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (1982); Carol F. Karlsen's *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (1987), and Mary Beth Norton's *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (2002). In the process he offers a detailed analysis of their methodology and use of sources that uncovers flaws and raises important questions about certain aspects of those works. As with Fisher's work, there is much to learn from Fels' in-depth exploration of these books both in the text and in the extensive annotation. It is an important work for anyone teaching historiography and/or Salem witchcraft.

While the detailed dissection of the works examined by Fels are insightful, his own broad interpretation of the historians and their approaches are themselves questionable. Subjecting this work to the same close analysis that he employs leads to

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several issues. The title, *Switching Sides*, conveys his belief that the authors of these books have neglected and in some respects dismissed the sufferings of those tried, convicted, and executed of witchcraft. But to focus attention on the factors which led to those individuals being identified and accused does not mean that one lacks sympathy for the victims. While it is true that Chadwick Hansen (*Witchcraft at Salem* [1969]) suggested that some of the accused might have actually been guilty of seeking to call down harm on others, this view has been an outlier among scholars and not something endured by the four authors whom Fels focuses on. While reading the works of Boyer and Nissenbaum, Demos, Karlsen, and Norton, I never felt that the authors lacked sympathy for the victims.

Fels categorizes the approach of the historians he focuses on as part of a "New Left" perspective. He refers to "a New Left era in Salem scholarship." But I fail to see the sharply politicized perspectives found in the works of scholars who embraced that label such as Howard Zinn and Jesse Lemisch. If by "New Left" merely he means a desire to pay attention to groups in the past who had long been neglected – groups such as women, blacks, and Native Americans – most historians would see this as a salutary development. Fels does give them credit for some of their insights, but the thrust of his categorization is to tar them as extremists, which few would agree with. The labeling distracts from the methodological critique he offers rather than enhancing it.

In the introduction Fels bemoans that recent scholarship on Salem has neglected the religious dimension. I would concur with this, but while recognizing that the author is more focused on critiquing existing scholarship than offering a well-reasoned interpretation of his own, I am not impressed by the references to religion that he does make. He throws out phrases such as "the hyper-strenuous religious ideology of Puritanism," (125) and "Puritanism and its propensity for intolerance" (131) which

suggests little awareness of the extensive reevaluation of the nature of Puritanism that is suggested in but not limited to works on English Puritanism by Patrick Collinson and Petr Lake, and on American Puritanism by Michael Winship. And he does not look at the works on witchcraft by Puritan writers such as William Perkins and John Winthrop's kinsman John Cotta. His analysis would be enhanced by more exploration of what such writers meant by possession and affliction, a critical difference in how the events of 1692 unfolded. This being said, an open-minded reevaluation of the role of religion would be welcome.

This is a book that will stir controversy. But it is also a book that will be a useful tool in introducing students to how history is studied and written.

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**Joshua B. Freeman. *Behemoth: A History of the Factory and the Making of the Modern World*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2018. Pp. 427. \$27.95.**

Joshua Freeman's *Behemoth* is an insightful introductory text for anyone interested in learning more about what he calls "industrial gigantism" and the influence of large factories across the globe since the Industrial Revolution. It is a surprisingly simple summation of 300 years of history spanning three continents that leaves the reader amazed at the enormity of the size and scope of these institutions. From the mills in eighteenth-century England up through the modern giants in Asia, Freeman spends 300 pages illuminating the connection between these wonders and the human spirit, making it clear that what began as an enlarging force now sadly appears to exist only in a diminishing capacity. In this regard, Freeman's book reads almost like a tragedy of human ingenuity, an elegy for a once-great idea now turned on its head without hope for renewal. As he poignantly states in one of the

final chapters, “The giant factory no longer represents a vision of a new and different world a-coming, of a utopian future or a new kind of nightmare existence...The future has already arrived, and we seem to be stuck with it” (313).

*Behemoth* tells the story of giant industrial factories and the towns that emerged with them such as Lowell, Magnitorgorsk, and Foxconn, among a number of others. It is rich in primary source research which provides the reader many opportunities for extended understanding through a simple review of the reference pages. It is and should be read only as a survey of the topic rather than an insightful inquiry about the individuals whose lives came to be dominated by these industrial giants. If one is looking for stories of factory workers and their personal struggles and stories, this is not the book to read. If rather one is interested in the larger picture of how industrial gigantism has helped shape the world in which we live today, particularly as a social force, this is the book. It is, according to the author, “a study of how and why giant factories became carriers of dreams and nightmare associated with industrialization and social change” (xiv). In this regard, it fulfills its aim well.

For history teachers looking to enhance their general knowledge and understanding of industrialism in the United States, the book is valuable and should definitely be considered. For those looking for a historical interpretation to bring into their classroom, it has many excerpts that would enhance lessons on the subject of industrialization. Passages such as the following can be used to help students think more critically about mechanization and the beginnings of industrialism in America:

“The concentration of mechanical marvels and industrial bounty measured how much views of national greatness and progress had changed during the half century since the Lowell mills opened. With little dissent, Americans had come to see machines and mechanical production as central to the

meaning of national experience, as integral to modernity” (82).

Although such general assertions are common throughout the book and can easily accompany multiple choice questions or essay prompts, it is in some of the side stories about historical figures not often taught about that history teachers might find tasty additions to their curriculum. One in particular is Margaret Bourke-White, a photographer who, according to Freeman, “did more than any other to disseminate images of giant industry” (149). Bourke-White was one among many visual artists whose work helped shape public perceptions of global industrialism in the twentieth century. Her story alone is well worth reading the book as she is rarely if ever mentioned in a high school history text. *Behemoth* is a simple yet informative work that should easily make its way into any U.S. history teacher’s library.

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**Matthew F. Delmont. *Why Busing Failed: Race, Media, and the National Resistance to School Desegregation*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016. Pp. 304. \$29.95**

Matthew Delmont’s *Why Busing Failed* corrects the common narratives about the failure to desegregate northern schools in the 1970s. Conventional histories present it as a case study in the limitations of educational and governmental reform, but Delmont marshals the cultural and historical context of desegregation to make the case that this narrative of failure is a false one that excuses complacency and discarding the goal of educational equity. Delmont’s claims hinge on dispelling three myths clouding the memory of busing: First, the crisis was about busing. Second, the North was innocent of segregation. Third, news media was a civil rights ally. In exposing these myths, Delmont argues this is not a historical failure of policy, but of will. The busing crisis

teaches us little about education reform, but illuminates much about American culture.

The first myth Delmont takes on regards the term “busing.” Delmont places “busing” within quotation marks to draw attention to its artificial nature and show how segregationists used the term to draw debate away from its goal, integration, to its method. This semantic change allowed northern White opposition to oppose integration without explicit racism and obscured the fact that there were multiple viable desegregation options being discussed in the 1970s.

The second section deals with Northern segregation. In contrast to *Brown v. Board*, cases like *Swann v. Board* and *Milliken v. Bradley* are not known by the average American, but, Delmont argues, these are the cases that govern schooling today. They limited the scope of *Brown v. Board* and provided a legal basis to oppose school desegregation in the North by reifying a distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* segregation, between segregation enumerated by law and that which occurs without legal imprimatur. Delmont demonstrates this distinction carries two pernicious implications. First, it implies that segregation can occur without being caused. This preposterous notion, which requires ignoring that segregation in Northern cities was underwritten by housing policies, governmental spending, and other legal forces, seems to absolve large swaths of the population from ameliorative social justice work. Second, it implies that segregation is not an inherent evil. Focusing on the cause of segregation suggests that “unintentional” *de facto* segregation is somehow better for people than its articulated *de jure* twin.

The third section of the book takes on the role of news media. The news, particularly televised news, is often credited with being a major contributor to the success of the Civil Rights Movement because it broadcast images of police brutality and affected public opinion. Delmont’s argument is that television broadcasts were driven by ratings, not altruism. He details the working of news stations in the 1970s, when only six cities had permanent TV crews,

all fact-checking was done by a single employee, and production times made it essential to *anticipate* rather than react to the news. In this context, planned protests and marches made for reliably good TV, and cameras were drawn to the spectacle regardless of whether they were for or against segregation. Segregationists knew this and consciously patterned their protests after Martin Luther King’s. Delmont insists we remember TV crews going to Boston with the same zeal and regularity with which they once went to Birmingham.

These three theses offer a much-needed correction to the available narratives surrounding busing. Delmont traces the roots of the movement to and reaction against integrating schools and supports his thorough historical work with engaging portraits of key characters such as Irina McCabe, the anti-busing housewife, and Clay Smothers, the “most conservative Black Man in America.” This story, of the cynical appropriation of Civil Rights tactics for segregationist ends and the broad complicity of Northern White society, ought to be known by all, particularly as America’s public schools continue to resegregate. Delmont persuasively argues that “school officials, politicians, courts, and the news media valued the desires of white parents over the rights of black children” (212).

Unfortunately, Delmont’s tale is not as compelling as it is persuasive. The organization of the book is driven more by Delmont’s argument than by chronology, and the frequent changes in geographic focus sometimes make the narrative hard to track. It is difficult to portray a national phenomenon with both depth and breadth, and the clarity of his theses are occasionally bogged down with detail and repetition. Despite these shortcomings, *Why Busing Failed* is an admirable book that brings historical clarity to an issue too often reduced to a talking point. It is recommended reading for anyone interested in education policy and the modern history of American racism.

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