EDUDOC SERVICES: BOOK REVIEWS

Book Reviews

October - 2018

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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 **October, 2018.**

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

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

We eagerly await to receive your views and comments.

(Prof. Saroj Yadav)

Chairperson, LDD

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Single-screen Delights
Cinema Hall Audiences in India

S V SRINIVAS

BOOK REVIEWS

House Full: Indian Cinema and the Active Audience by Lakshmi Srinivas, *Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016; pp xi + 315, $37.50 | £26.50.*

Lakshmi Srinivas's *House Full* is an anthropological study of film audiences in India. It complements recent work on the intersections between movie star fandom, urban popular culture and religiosity by, among others, Shalini Kakar (2010), Roos Gerritsen (2012) and Constantine Nakassis (2016). While fans make an appearance in *House Full* too, they are not the central focus of the book. The author's object of research, in her words, is

> the voluble cinema hall audience and an in-theater experience marked by spontaneity, improvisation, and performance that is far removed from the silent absorption of film associated with mainstream audiences in Anglo-American and Western European exhibition (multiplex) settings. (p 3)

This "active audience," as she calls it, is typically sighted in single-screen cinema halls in India but, as she notes, is not unique to this part of the world.

House Full has six chapters as well as an introduction and a conclusion. The author draws on multiple spells of fieldwork spread over 15-plus years to provide us a graphic account of cinema halls and film viewing practices in the city of Bangalore (now Bengaluru). The book is well-researched and is accessible to scholars and students alike. It comes with an excellent index.

The author's choice of field site (Bengaluru) and the period of her study (late 1990s) are both noteworthy. Historically, the city has been home to a strikingly diverse film culture. Long before the arrival of the multiplex, movie theatres in Bengaluru screened films in all the four major South Indian languages as well as Hindi and English. Bengaluru has played host to powerful fan organisations that frequently participate in agitations related to Kannada language politics; so much so that fan clubs figure prominently in Janaki Nair's book on the city (Nair 2005). The late 1990s is a fascinating period for students of Indian cinema. This was the moment when Bombay cinema was "Bollywoodised" to fit into an emerging cultural industry that was not about film viewing or the box office any more (Rajadhyaksha 2003). In Bengaluru, like in other Indian cities, stand-alone cinema halls were demolished to build shopping and residential complexes. Those that remained were in a visible state of disrepair.

Sociality of Cinema Spaces

This book is not about the politics of cinema spaces and film viewing. This disclaimer is in order because, from the 1970s, academic writing on film audiences has tended to focus on the political significance of film viewing and allied activities.[1] Earlier anthropological studies too brought the cinema–politics linkage into sharp focus. For instance, Sara Dickey (1993) ends her book on cinema in Madurai with a chapter on "Fan clubs and politics." *House Full* is largely concerned with the sociality of cinema spaces and the activities that it facilitates. In a welcome change from available literature on film audiences and fandom, female viewers figure prominently in Srinivas's account.

In Chapter 2, the author asks the non-trivial question: How does the apparently disjointed popular film make sense? She notes that film-makers in India did not have access to reliable market research and the script itself was a skeleton that had to be fleshed out even as the film went into production. The result was an assemblage of diverse elements whose appeal was largely a matter of guesswork; neither did these components have much to do with the story. This is a familiar point, thanks to M Madhava Prasad's adoption of Marx's "heterogeneous mode of manufacture" to explain how the Bombay film industry assembled movies till the 1990s (Prasad 1998: 42–45). Srinivas complements Prasad's explanation by attempting to show how such loosely assembled films might actually work. She does so by drawing our attention to viewing contexts in which, she argues,

> The film itself becomes a space in which the relationship between audiences and stars is expressed and constructed, making the audience very much a participant in the making of a film, which is both a performance and a contract with the audience. (p 61)

She returns to this claim much later in this book, when she describes actual viewing practices. She points out that some of the viewers are "repeaters" for whom there is no element of surprise. They are likely to consume films in bits and pieces, walking in and out. Moreover, viewers are not always attentive to what is happening on the screen. The issue therefore is not how coherent a film is, or how wonderful its story, but what it facilitates at the audience's end.

In Chapters 3, 4 and 5, she shows that audience composition cannot be taken as a given. It is determined by the locality in which theatres are situated, the spatial organisation of cinema halls, ticket prices, and viewer perception of appropriateness of the film in question. She also notes that the experience of comfort is not such an important consideration for most viewers. On the contrary, viewers watch films in spite of cinema halls being uncomfortable and also places of risk.

Knowing that they are going to be uncomfortable and at risk, why do viewers choose to go to the movies? She proposes three frameworks for understanding the appeal of cinema. Some viewers, she argues, seek "risk, adventure, play" that is more or less guaranteed at certain points of time in the life cycle of a film's run, and in some parts of the city (pp 146–49).

Crowds, touts, chaos, noise and the occasional riot during a film's opening week are not just normal, but a part of the excitement of going to the movies for these viewers. Film-going could be a "treat" for some (pp 150–51) and a family outing for yet others (pp 151–53). The "social experience," as the author puts it, involves negotiating actual or perceived risks from other viewers and creatures too (mosquitos). Reinforcing the finding of earlier researchers, she notes that the value of this space lies in the heterogeneity of the audience.

This diverse group, having arrived at the cinema for very different reasons, engages in a variety of activities from eating and chatting with each other, to dancing and screaming. Chapters 6 and 7 are devoted to eminently readable descriptions of these activities. Chapter 7, on the "first day, first show," has a particularly well-written description of the author's encounter with a group of overenthusiastic fans of the Kannada star Shiva Rajkumar, which is followed only minutes later by an unexpected meeting with the man himself (pp 206–13).

Remarkable Parallels

The author's elaborate descriptions of viewing practices lead us to the problem of interpretation: What do we—as students of cinema and/or society—make of the "active audience"? We can take the cue from the author's statement, which resonates with arguments made by other researchers working on viewing/consumption of film and other media forms: "Reception is *performance* using the film as a backdrop" (p 218; emphasis added). By implication, sites of consumption of cultural commodities are also sites of consumer performances. Although the author does not herself make the connection, we are now in Web 2.0 country as far as consumer behaviour is concerned. Although this book poses the question to performances that unfold against cinema's backdrop, the answer has the potential to throw light on much more recent cultural forms.

In an interesting methodological move, the author draws striking parallels between film viewing and the reception of folk forms (*Tamasha* and *Nautanki*) on the one hand, and practices associated with religious rituals on the other. These parallels allow her to make the case for interactivity, as feature film viewing inherits from much older forms. But she goes on to suggest that film viewing practices are derived from devotion:

> The devotional aesthetic seen in [fan] processions and prerelease ritual shapes viewing and is seen in a range of practices that may be described as "pentecostal" (viewing or) engagement with the film, a crossing over from social respect (of the star) to worship. Similar to the Ram Lila festivities … where the *swarups* are worshipped, audiences respond to stars playing the roles of gods, as if seeing gods on the screen; the experience borrows from *darshan* at the temple. (p 218)

Is film reception devotion by other means? Or does the "borrowing," in fact, lead us away from devotion proper?

Constantine Nakassis, in his book on youth culture in Tamil Nadu, suggests that we read performances by audiences/consumers as citations which bracket the "ontological status, fixity and coherence" of the very categories that are related through acts of citation (Nakassis 2016: 27). As for the performance of devotion by fans—which has been the subject of prime time news television in the past decade—Madhava Prasad goes to the extent of arguing that "fan bhakti" is not about devotion at all. It has to do with "subaltern sovereignty;" politics, not religion, is what the performance is about (Prasad 2009).

I am not suggesting that citationality and subaltern sovereignty are the last words on the subject of mimicry of traditional-religious vocabularies and practices in the domain of mass culture. But, the burden of interpretation has to be owned by those of us who study cultural forms and their consumption. To say the least, turning to religious and traditional practices for understanding audiences devalues our work. If religion is the master key, we should not be wasting our time on cinema, or politics for that matter. I mention politics because festivity is the default mode of electoral mobilisation too.

Even as the book highlights the linkages between acts of devotion and film viewing, it downplays the relationship between films and film viewing. This is in spite of the author's insightful discussion of how disjointed narratives of popular cinema are particularly suited for distracted viewing by noisy viewers (Chapter 2). Some discussion of the textual cues that invite and incite audience activity would have helped demonstrate how films that are routinely dismissed as worthless by reviewers are in fact, interactive.

My disagreements with the author's conclusions notwithstanding, *House Full* is a welcome addition to research on Indian cinema in general and audiences in particular. This is the most detailed record yet of an important moment in the history of cinema and urban cultures in India. The stand-alone cinema hall is already a memory, an object of nostalgia even, for sections of the urban middle class. It is not the preferred space for sociality and leisure any more. We need not be surprised if the next generation of film students discover the cinema hall after reading this book.

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NOTE

1 See Athique and Hill (2010) for a detailed review of literature on cinema halls in the pre-multiplex era.

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Alternative rendering

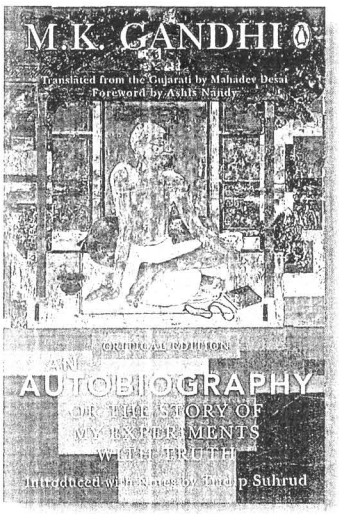
Tridip Suhrud's meticulously produced critical edition of Gandhi's autobiography in English gives readers some of the flavours of the original in Gujarati by polishing and leaving it gleaming with marginal annotations. BY **GOPALKRISHNA GANDHI**

TRANSLATIONS render; they do not reproduce the original.

There they are rather like music. Every time a song is sung or played, it comes just a shade different, depending on the musician's state of being—physical and psychological—external factors like the climate, natural and aesthetic, and the availability of musical aids which change, vary, diversify from age to age. The song stays the same; its singing varies.

A raga composition by Tyagaraja (1767-1847) would have been sung by his contemporaries in one way, a century later in another way, and today, by today's vidwan, with somewhat new inflections. And if, by some H.G. Wells-ian fluxions of time and space, Tyagaraja were to descend on the contemporary scene in a flying chariot, he might well collaborate with the blue-jeaned vidwan in rendering his 150-year-old composition with old fealties intact but new novelties added, the text or lyrics as they are called, of course, remaining the same.

Quite something like this happened with the autobiography of M.K. Gandhi (1869-1948). Written by him in instalments in astonishingly expressive Gujarati over an extended period starting in 1925, it was rendered into classical English by his scholar-secretary and literary alter ego, Mahadev Desai (1892-1942). One can be sure Gandhi went through his own story as it was being done into English line by line, word by word. Navajivan published the English translation in two volumes, in 1927 and 1928, to instant and international acclaim.



An Autobiography Or The Story of My Experiments With Truth
By M.K. Gandhi
Translated from the Gujarati by Mahadev Desai
Penguin Books
Pages: 786
Price: Rs.899

AUTHENTICITY, NOT IDENTICALITY

The fostering words were Gandhi's, the fostered words were Desai's. There was an authenticity in the English version, not an identicality. And the margin between those two was not just "passed" by Gandhi as legit but embraced by him as licit. The Gujarati original had osmosed into the English version. The English was, therefore, less of a translation than a recension of the original. The English translation is Desai's in a literal sense. It is a Gandhi-Desai product in its inner-ness.

Eager to take in Gandhi's life story as told by him, the world absorbed the English translation, with Gandhi witnessing and perhaps wondering at the surge of approval and the tide of appreciation with which it was received. For its readers, the book was what it indeed was, Gandhi's autobiography written by him and published in his lifetime and so as salt-true as true salt can be. They did not, when the translation appeared or even for a long time thereafter, sit down to compare, with the help of bilingual experts or dictionaries, the English with the Gujarati to see if there was any departure from the first. If there was any, it was Gandhi's, not Desai's. They also knew Gandhi's English was of the highest quality as was the translator's and the work, collaborative and conjoined, was for all intents and purposes straight from out of Gandhi's experience and *his* active vocabulary.

And so *Satyana Prayogo athava Atmakatha* in the *aqua pura* of its Gujarati emerged as *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments With Truth* in the *delectamentum aqua* of its English version. A literal translation of the title would have been "Truth's Experiments or An Autobiography". True to the original, yes, but would it have rung true? One wonders.

Two questions arise.

1. Is the difference in

title a significant difference?

2. Did readers note the subtle difference in the title?

The answer to the first has to be: Yes, "Truth's Experiments or an Autobiography" is not the same thing as *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. To the extent that truth as experimenter is different from truth as the experimented-upon, the difference is significant. In the Gujarati, truth is the protagonist, the active agent. In the English, the author is. In fact "My" brings him into the title frontally. Inter-language variations in translation may or may not be intrinsically significant, but whether they are or not, the *fact* of the variation has to be noticed, noted and recorded.

TRUTH AS PROTAGONIST

Why? It has to be noticed and noted for both verisimilitude and veracity. We can be sure that Gandhi and Desai would have discussed the title. Did they find the original somehow wanting, deficient? Did the erudite V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, long-serving president of the Servants of India Society, who went through the draft and, on the condition of anonymity, suggested revisions "from the point of view of language", encourage Gandhi to modify the title? Did the austere "Servant of India" think it presumptuous—arrogating the right to speak on truth's behalf? Perhaps one day a mouldy paper trail will lead to the answer. Be that as it may, Gandhi and Desai modified the title in English to what has now settled into the readers' imagination. But—and this is significant—Gandhi did not proceed to retro-revise the Gujarati title. He kept that as it was. The title of the original work, the autobiography in its first form, therefore, remains and it has truth as the protagonist in Gandhi's life, not Gandhi as the protagonist in truth's terrestrial career.

The answer to the second question is: Not the "ordinary" reader but the fastidious one or the pedant would have noticed. And then saying "Ah yes" moved on to the text.

Rigour requires the reader to note, ponder, consider the nuances of the title change. Respect requires the reader to accept it un-judgmentally for it has come from the author. From another hand, this atrial change would have been regarded as unacceptable.

A combination of rigour and respect actuates Tridip Suhrud's meticulously produced critical edition of the Gandhi-Desai translation. He brings to bear on the entire text—a mammoth task—the kind of reflection I have attempted in the preceding lines on the title alone.

ENTERING THE TRANSLATOR'S MIND

If as his translator literary alter ego and interpreter Desai was, to deploy a cliche, something like Gandhi's Boswell, then Desai has found in Suhrud, his own or Boswell's Boswell or—to be specific—a Peter Martin, Boswell's and, therefore, the biographer's biographer. Not in the sense of one who has written a life of Desai (which, one hopes, he will, some day) but in that of one who has entered the translator's mind to see its working, in the word renderings, the subtle edits, the elisions, occlusions, substitutions and, thereby, helped us see the working of the author's own evolving self-image.

Not just a mastery over Gujarati, his mother tongue, but an unabashed love for that language has spurred Suhrud to match the original autobiography, word for word, with the English version and to put down on the margins of the work, the variations. And he has not done so to demonstrate the superiority of the original but to enrich the reading of the English by this "alongside" method. "Look!", Suhrud seems to say, "Gandhi's was no ordinary Gujarati; it was that of a stylist, an aesthete, an artist in economy and precision but an artist also in expressive picturisation. So that you, dear reader of the great English rendering, do not miss out on the nuances that the Gujarati has, just look at some of those...." And he then proceeds to give, on the margins of page after page, new English renderings of some of the Gujarati words, phrases, references that have dropped off from the English rendering.

This method has, in Urdu writing, both calligraphic and printed, a hallowed word—*hashiya*, meaning literally, the margin. But the word has a wider connotation, signifying the space fringing a page of text in which space the reader, the commentator, may write, with the same care as the author of the page, notes, comments and observations that will be, thereafter, read in conjunction with the central text. The *hashiya* becomes, in effect, a running commentary on the text. And as it is transcribed on the page itself (which provides for *hashiye* by leaving wide margins) it cannot be random, casual not to say frivolous.

Suhrud has used the *hashiya* mode to differential effect. The page stirs

THE HINDU ARCHIVES

JANUARY 1942: Mahatma Gandhi with Mahadev Desai at Sevagram.

with new life, as it were, because of the alternatives that link the chosen word or reference to the original Gujarati and illuminate it. The marginal annotations do not crowd the page, they just about dot it. Typically, they could number three to five per page and then certainly not on every page. Suhrud's marginalia are restrained; spare. So the reader has the Desai rendering and the Suhrud rendition on the same page, not to choose one over the other but to experience both stereophonically. He has fimbriated the text with annotations that fill up the black-and-white charcoal line drawing with the pigments of felt experience.

To consider a few representative examples.

Gandhi's well-known disparaging of his father's three marriages seriatim is followed up-close by his description of his own marriage at the age of 13. The English translation has:

"I was devoted to my parents. But no less was I devoted to the passions that flesh is heir to."

The Gujarati is more direct, like Gandhi. Suhrud shows us that the original had "I was devoted to father" (not "parents") and he renders the original next sentence in his *hashiya* as

"But was I any less devoted to the passions?"

That sentence in the Gujarati has an interrogative ending is just as Gandhi would have said or written it, with a rhyme tucked in it as well: *pitrabhakt* (father-devoted) juxtaposed with *vishaybhakt* (passion-devoted). The rhyme just could not have been transported from one language register to the other, and Desai is right in not having even tried but the deficit suffered in the substitution of "parents" for "father" and the impersonalised reference in "flesh is heir to" is made up for by the *hashiya*.

MORPHING PROVERBS

Desai has, with good reason, sought generally to rub down Gujarati's very "its own" linguistic demarches. This leads to his morphing proverbs into their standard English meaning—a pragmatic solution. Talking about his neglect of cultivating a good handwriting, he writes of his repenting this neglect when he saw the "*beautiful* handwriting of lawyers and young men born and educated in South Africa". This is how it is put in the English. But the original, as Suhrud shows, did not use the generic "beautiful". It had a Gujarati metaphor: *moti na dana jeva aksharo*, which translates as (in Suhrud) "pearl-like" characters. In the same passage on handwriting, the English has "I later tried to improve mine, but *it was too late*." So it was and saying "it was too late" is not wrong, not wrong by far. But it is still not the same as saying it, as Gandhi does in the Gujarati, through a proverb: *pan pake ghade kain kantha charhe?*, which Suhrud renders as "(but) can one add a rim to a perfectly baked clay pot?"

In the passage where Gandhi recounts his confessing to his father the "stealing" of a piece of gold from his brother's armlet, the English sentence reads: "I was afraid of the pain that I should cause him." The Gujarati paints a more graphic scene, which Suhrud provides as "...lest he should be pained and strike his head in anguish".

There are in the English version some rub-down of the scene as it unfolded. When, for instance, Sheth Abdul Karim Jhaveri meets the recently London-returned and despondent Gandhi in Rajkot and offers the assignment in South Africa that was to change everything for Gandhi, the entrepreneur is quoted as saying to him (according to the English version): "You will of course be our guest." The original Gujarati is sharper, as a practical arrangement of this kind has to be. In Suhrud's *hashiya*, Jhaveri tells Gandhi: "[You will] stay in our bungalow." A difference, there.

In the chapter "Near Death's Door", narrating his illness, Gandhi says in the English translation: "I had thought all along that I had an iron frame...." The Gujarati has *patthar jevun*. Suhrud very rightly points out the variation from "a body hard as stone" to "an iron frame".

GUJARATI IDIOM

There is such a thing as idiom. Everyone has one's own. Where does it come from? Language or grammar? Instinct or training? In owning up to his "Himalayan miscalculation" about his compatriots' readiness for civil disobedience, Gandhi says in his inimitable frugal yet picturesque Gujarati idiom: *...savinay bhangnun gadun dharya kartan dhimun chalshe*. He employs the image of the cart—*gadun*. How has Desai rendered it? With fidelity to the spirit of the original and an understanding of the author's disappointment with himself, as: "I realised that the progress of the training in civil disobedience was not going to be as rapid as at first expected" but with the central motif of the cart taken out. And with that out, something of Gandhi's idiom goes out as well.

Are Suhrud's alternative translations of words, expressions and phrases invariably meant to show up the Gujarati over the English? Not so. If most of the alternative examples can make the reader feel that the English version trails behind the original Gujarati, Suhrud also gives clear instances of the opposite, that is, where Desai has kept the spirit of the original but decidedly brought its English version closer to the experience. Talking of the time spent by him as a student in London in front of "a huge mirror watching myself arranging my tie and parting my hair in the correct fashion", Gandhi says in the Gujarati that back home (in Suhrud's construction) "one got to see a mirror on the day one got a shave". Desai has rendered that, with telling effect, as "...the mirror had been a luxury permitted on the days when the family barber gave me a shave". He has vivified the description.

Likewise, when narrating the different ways in which the Indian "coolie" was referred to in South Africa, Gandhi says that "*sami*" being a Tamil suffix occurring after many Tamil names got to be ad-

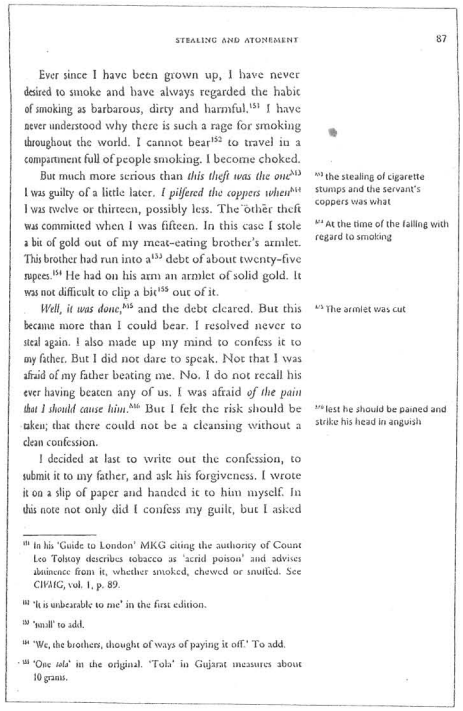
opted by their white masters who routinely called all of them "sami" without realising that "sami" was nothing else than the Sanskrit "swami" meaning, paradoxically, "master". In the Gujarati, Gandhi says: "Whenever therefore an Indian... had enough *courage* in him... he would return the compliment... 'I am not your master!'." Desai has changed "enough *courage*" to "enough *wit*"—a distinct improvement that Gandhi, doubtless, welcomed.

PARALLEL GLIMPSING

Suhrud's alternatives are not suggested replacements but parallel glimpsing, meant to enlarge the reader's options in understanding.

The critical edition cannot be and is not immune from critical study itself.

Suhrud's alternative translations have to be the result of his option-choices. And every alternative being subjective has to have other alternatives to it. Suhrud, being the scholar that he is, will doubtless be the first to acknowledge that. A classic "case" is provided by the description of Gandhi's first meeting with A.W. Baker, an attorney in Pretoria. It is described in the English matter-of-factly with: "He received me very warmly." This seems to be exactly what Gandhi means by the corresponding line in the original: *mane bhavthi bhetya*. Now, *bhet* can be any of the following: "encountering", "meeting", "interviewing", "embracing". Suhrud chooses the most demonstrative—"embracing".



STEALING AND ATONEMENT 87

Ever since I have been grown up, I have never desired to smoke and have always regarded the habit of smoking as barbarous, dirty and harmful.[151] I have never understood why there is such a rage for smoking throughout the world. I cannot bear[152] to travel in a compartment full of people smoking. I become choked.

But much more serious than *this theft was the one*[153] I was guilty of a little later. *I pilfered the coppers when*[154] I was twelve or thirteen, possibly less. The other theft was committed when I was fifteen. In this case I stole a bit of gold out of my meat-eating brother's armlet. This brother had run into a[155] debt of about twenty-five rupees.[156] He had on his arm an armlet of solid gold. It was not difficult to clip a bit[157] out of it.

Well, it was done,[158] and the debt cleared. But this became more than I could bear. I resolved never to steal again. I also made up my mind to confess it to my father. But I did not dare to speak. Not that I was afraid of my father beating me. No. I do not recall his ever having beaten any of us. I was afraid *of the pain that I should cause him.*[159] But I felt the risk should be taken; that there could not be a cleansing without a clean confession.

I decided at last to write out the confession, to submit it to my father, and ask his forgiveness. I wrote it on a slip of paper and handed it to him myself. In this note not only did I confess my guilt, but I asked

[151] In his 'Guide to London' MKG citing the authority of Count Leo Tolstoy describes tobacco as 'acrid poison' and advises abstinence from it, whether smoked, chewed or snuffed. See *CPAHG*, vol. 1, p. 89.

[152] 'It is unbearable to me' in the first edition.

[153] 'small' to add.

[154] 'We, the brothers, thought of ways of paying it off.' To add.

[155] 'One *tola*' in the original. 'Tola' in Gujarat measures about 10 grams.

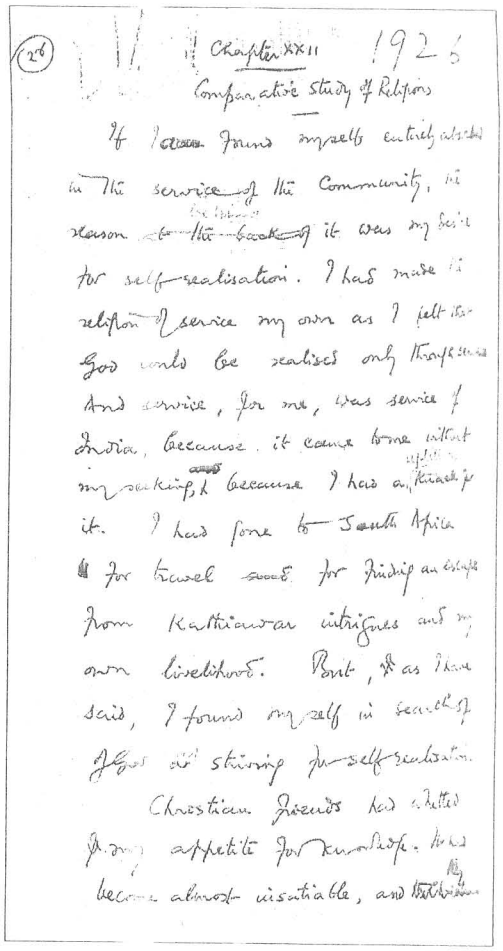
[153] the stealing of cigarette stumps and the servant's coppers was what

[154] At the time of the failing with regard to smoking

[155] The armlet was cut

[159] lest he should be pained and strike his head in anguish

MARGINAL ANNOTATIONS by Tridip Suhrud. The reader has Desai's rendering and Suhrud's rendition on the same page. (Right) A page from Mahadev Desai's manuscript of his translation of "An Autobiography": Chapter XXII, "Comparative Study of Religions", Part II.



Chapter XXII 1926

Comparative Study of Religions

If I ever found myself entirely absorbed in the service of the Community, the reason for the [illegible] it was my desire for self-realisation. I had made it religion & service my own as I felt that God could be realised only through service. And service, for me, was service of India, because it came home without my seeking it, & because I had an [illegible] it. I had gone to South Africa & for travel sake for India an escape from Kathiawar intrigues and my own livelihood. But, as I have said, I found myself in search of God & striving for self-realisation. Christian friends had whetted my appetite for knowledge. It had become almost insatiable, and [illegible]

FROM AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OR THE STORY OF MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH

Did the boss at Baker & Lindsay *embrace* Gandhi at their first meeting? Perhaps he did. But Desai's cautious rendering, approved by Gandhi, did not, it seems to me, need an alternative, and that, too, of "embracing".

Occasionally, Suhrud's alternatives seem to be redundant.

"I must skip many other experiences... and come straight to the Boer War" is how the English chapter titled "The Boer War" starts. Suhrud suggests as an alternative "shall" for "must". If the original had the Gujarati for "shall" and not "must", that would have been only right. But it does not. So? So just this, that Suhrud is most helpful when he is critically, not imaginatively reconstructive.

There should be no doubting that the English version of the autobiography is in Gandhi's Gujarati ink flowing through Desai's English nib. Suhrud's critical edition polishes the nib's point, clears its tines, slit, shoulders and vent-hole of unwanted and unintended substances, to leave it gleaming and free to work the Desai magic.

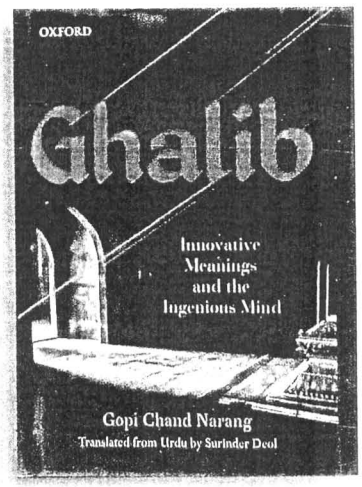
Suhrud's critical edition is not an alternative text but a concordance volume of its own type. And one that must self-correct in its successive editions. Where are these self-corrections needed? In the wording of some of the alternatives where the definite article can play truant—the copy editor's domain. And in the absolutely first class footnotes. These, as a genre, can never reach perfection for there is so much that can be added and so much that can be sharpened. Jairamdas Doulatram is, for instance, described *inter alia* as "...first editor of *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*"—unfairly to the person who was that, Bharatan Kumarappa.

Suhrud's edition will be valued for its *hashiye* alternatives and, no less, for its industrious footnotes. But above all for giving readers of Gandhi's autobiography in English some of the flavours of the original in Gujarati of which Gandhi was as much a master as Premchand was of Hindustani. □

Eternally Ghalib

In this insightful book, the author places before the reader the lived reality of the poet Ghalib's life, the width and acuity of his vision and, of course, the brilliance of his words. BY **ZIYA US SALAM**

THERE was a time when knowing Ghalib (Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib) meant knowing life. No gathering of friends was complete without recourse to a couplet or two of Ghalib's. Those who had experienced love had experienced sorrow. And those who had experienced either had lived Ghalib. A man who knew no Urdu poetry was considered unsuitable for social company.



Ghalib
Innovative Meanings and the Ingenious Mind
By Gopi Chand Narang
Oxford University Press
Price: Rs.1,295

Back in pre-Partition days, it was not uncommon for a leather merchant or an optician to recite Ghalib even as he tended to daily business. Ghalib's couplets descended from the soirees to the street. And students in universities did not tire of quoting Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali and his memoir of Ghalib, *Yadgar-e-Ghalib*, the treasure through which many recovered Ghalib.

The poet though needed no *yadgaar* (memorable) work of Hali. He did not need to bask in reflected glory. He was that fount from which each drank according to his taste. Some revelled in his Persian *divan* (poetry). Those unaccustomed to the depths and width of the language happily drank from the potion of Urdu poetry.

Today, one lives in an age when the common man struggles to even pronounce the word Ghalib. And Hindi cinema lampoons Urdu poets with cheap gimmicks. In these circumstances, Gopi Chand Narang's *Ghalib: Innovative Meanings and the Ingenious Mind* might just have come too late in the day. Or it may have come in the nick of time to bolster young people's sagging understanding of the man who defied the tide of time in his time and yet could not get his contemporaries to understand his mettle.

When Ghalib was at his peak, very few people tried to understand the rhyme and the metre of his poems; few had the profundity to understand their depth, deflection and understatement. As Narang says in the book: "He [Hali] was disappointed that Mirza [Ghalib] failed to gain recognition for his poetry in his lifetime, which he richly deserved. The mood of the times had changed and therefore, *Divan-e-Ghalib*, was not one of those creations that the people needed."

A lasting love affair with posterity and posthumous glory, this was Ghalib's fate. How then did it come about that in the 21st century a person experiencing the ecstasies of life or battling against the agonies of existence could find solace in the work of the same man, Ghalib? Was he an eternal pessimist who managed to mock the vagaries of life? Or was he an optimist who looked in the mirror and wondered aloud at the vicissitudes of life? Ghalib expressed it himself thus: *"Aaiina kiyon na duun ke tamaasha kahein jise/ aisa kahaan se laaun ke tum sa kahein jise"* (Maybe I should give you a mirror/ so that you can watch your own spectacle./ Where can I find another whom people will consider as magnificent?)

Narang realises as much and proceeds, rather meticulously, to give us a book that, according to Nasir Abbas Nayyar, opens "the knot of Ghalib's mysteriously magical creativity that no one was yet able to do". Across 12 chapters and 440-odd pages, Narang builds his narrative, moving from one mystery to the next. The mystery is heightened, the excitement of stumbling upon a fresh discovery palpable.

A personal favourite here is the section on the published *divan* of the poet. As Narang points out, Ghalib's *divan*, often taken to be a uniform, static entity, is dynamic. The first manuscript was ready as early as 1833 though it was published only in 1841. The long lapse between manuscript and publication did not dim the charm of the work. Its 1,093 couplets vied with each other for a date with posterity. Yet there was more to come. The *divan* was published an in-

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Biography -

credible five times, with the fifth edition coming out in 1863, some 30 years after the first manuscript was ready! It was no relaunch of the old. It had an astonishing 1,802 couplets, which tells one how prolific the poet was in the intervening years.

It is here, however, that one senses Narang could have used a fine-toothed comb to select couplets to analyse the poet's mind. He, however, chooses to stay safe by opening with the couplet: "*Milna tera agar nahein aasaan to sahl hai/ dushvaar to yahi hai ke dushvaar bhi nahein*" (Meeting you is not easy, yet it is easy./ Otherwise, I would have given up trying to see you./ The challenge is that there is no challenge). Yes, there has been no challenge to Ghalib for more than a century.

As the couplets continue in the section, Narang's analysis too improves with each *misra* (a line of couplet). Gradually, Narang begins to revel in the poet's paradoxes, the ironies that clouded his work, the mystery that never stopped enveloping him. The author gives ample evidence of the mystery with the couplet "*Havas ko hai nishaat-e-kaar kya kya/ na ho marna to jiine ka maza kya*" (Desire drives us to gain much pleasure before we die/ But if there were no death life would not be as much fun). The couplet, as Narang informs the reader, was composed when the poet was travelling to Kolkata. If in the first line the poet appears to be a prisoner of desire, the second raises metaphysical questions: is pleasure pleasure only because life is ephemeral? Or does death make life more enjoyable?

The section has a Ghalib couplet that has been "done to death" on All India Radio's Urdu programmes where hosts in years gone by almost invariably ended their programmes with it: "*Mehrbaan ho ke bula lo mujhko chaahe jis vaqt/ main gaya vaqt bhi nahin huun ke phir aa bhi na sakuun*" (Call me back in magnanimity whenever you are kind/ I am not the time past or departed that I would fail to show up). Surinder Deol's translation, however, fails to reproduce the magic of the original, though he has otherwise done justice to Ghalib's inimitable genius.

BEDIL'S INFLUENCE

The book endeavours to give credit where it is due. For instance, Narang talks of Bedil's influence on the poet with a couplet. The section "Bedil, Ghalib, Masnavi Irfan, and Indian Thought" opens with Ghalib's words of gratitude: "It is because of deep allegiance to the spirit of Bedil that my own work displays a prophetic quality. As Bedil is my guide like Khizr, I am not afraid of treading unknown paths and being waylaid."

This little submission willy-nilly reveals another facet of Ghalib's life. Not known to be a practising Muslim, he, however, quotes with relish the reference in the Quran to Prophet Musa and Khizr, probably a prophet too. It so happened that Musa became Khizr's companion on a journey on the condition that he would ask no questions. Musa though could not maintain his silence as a series of incidents unfolded when the two entered uncharted territory. Anybody who has grown up with Ghalib's oft-repeated views about drinking in a mosque or at a place where there is no god will be pleasantly surprised with his grasp of the Quran.

It is in such instances that the book rises above similar ventures in the past, and the author deserves credit for this. Through painstaking research allied with a scholar's perceptive mind, Narang is able to bring together in a cohesive manner seemingly intractable incidents in the poet's life.

Narang does not shy away from quoting Hali when it comes to discussing the evolution of Ghalib's language, his use of phrases, indeed, even his unfolding mindscape.

In the section "Dead Leaves, a Romantic Interlude, and a Stricken Heart", Narang writes: "Persian had coloured Mirza's day-to-day speech and his power of imagination from the very beginning. The language was unfamiliar just like the thoughts it expressed. Mirza used Persian's specialities such as the use of infinitives and the word connectors liberally in his Urdu. There were some couplets where if you just changed one word, the whole verse would turn into a Persian couplet. These expressions were special inventions of Mirza that were neither seen before in Urdu nor in Persian."

No wonder, Ghalib's contemporaries failed to gauge his genius. Some found him difficult to comprehend, while others felt he defied the established norms of Urdu poetry. He neither toed the line nor slipped into stereotypes.

The ace poet understood this rather well. Not one to allow silence to rule over speech, he said it all in a Persian couplet (this translation is by Deol): "The vintage wine of my verse/ will gain in its maturity/ because of the famine of customers./ But the ones who taste it in the future/ will surely get the benefit of ageing/ and will thus receive rare flavour and leisure."

Well, we are that posterity, "the future" Ghalib refers to. And we are the fortunate ones to "receive rare flavour and leisure".

This book should be read for two reasons. First, it is about Ghalib. And Ghalib is never out of season or form. Second, Narang bases his Ghalib study on the plurality of the poet's thought, on the Indian aesthetic, and on his deep Persian influences. It is no fan's account. Rather, it is an insightful venture where the author places before the reader the lived reality of the poet's life, the width, even acuity, of his vision and, of course, the brilliance of his words. Even in couplets, he goes beyond the surface and gives one the circumstances that induced them. One may not necessarily agree with Narang's evaluation of the poet, but going through his arguments is an enjoyable exercise in itself. Like life, here too the joy lies in the journey. Narang's book is a fine landmark. □

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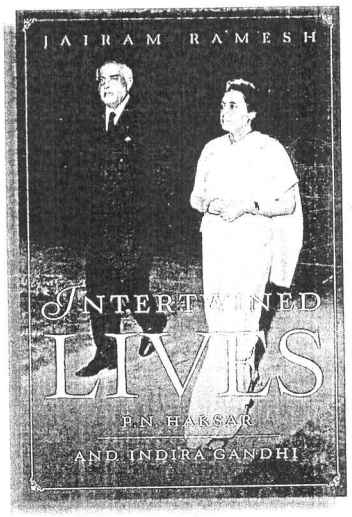
The man Indira trusted

A biography of the diplomat P.N. Haksar, better known as Indira Gandhi's friend, philosopher and guide, this book is a singular contribution to understanding contemporary Indian political history. BY **K.P. FABIAN**



Intertwined Lives
P.N. Haksar and Indira Gandhi
By Jairam Ramesh
Simon & Schuster
Pages: 518
Price: Rs.799

THIS book is easily one of the best that I have read and reviewed recently. The scintillating style, the Teutonic thoroughness of research, the commendable ability of the author to see and explain the big picture, and his keenness to explain matters keeping in mind young readers who might need to be told of the context in some detail set this book apart.

Let us start with the style. Writing about the diplomats P.N. Haksar and G. Parthasarathi, the author contrasts them: "The two were poles apart in temperament: Haksar was voluble, Parthasarathi was taciturn. Haksar reduced everything to writing, Parthasarathi preferred oral conversations. Haksar appeared wise when he spoke, Parthasarathi appeared sagacious even when he remained silent. Haksar was the quintessential intellectual, preferring a life of books, Parthasarathi had also played Ranji Trophy cricket. But both had been rebels in their personal lives when it was not the norm to be so, with Haksar marrying his cousin and Parthasarathi marrying a Parsi. Both had been part of Indira Gandhi's inner circle with Haksar wielding power and Parthasarathi commanding influence."

The chapterisation is commendable. The first chapter, titled "The Katni Kashmiri", narrates Haksar's lineage, and we learn that one of his forebears from his mother's side, Raja Din Nath, played a crucial role in the creation of the kingdom of Jammu and Kashmir. Raja Din Nath was Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Finance Minister and signed the 1846 Treaty of Amritsar that gave birth to the kingdom. On his father's side, Haksar's ancestry can be traced to Swaroop Narain Haksar, who was the Dewan of Bundelkhand of the Central India Agency in the mid 19th century.

Haksar started his formal schooling at 13. Until then he was taught Hindi, Urdu and Sanskrit. He graduated from the municipal high school in Karni in what is now Madhya Pradesh in 1929, with distinction in Sanskrit. In 1987, when he went to China to defreeze the bilateral relations, Ambassador C.V. Ranganathan recalls that Haksar recited verses from Kalidasa's *Meghaduta* at a dinner. Haksar could recite from Shakespeare, too, with equal ease.

Before every chapter, there is a paragraph telling us what to expect. Although the title is *Intertwined Lives*, the book is a fairly detailed biography of Haksar. We see him getting "radicalised" while studying at Allahabad University (1929-35) and getting even more "radicalised" in London (1935-42). The third chapter is appropriately titled "Student Molotov": it was in London that Haksar came under the spell of V.K. Krishna Menon and made friends with Feroze and Indira Gandhi. Haksar embraced Marxism with boundless enthusiasm. On his return from London, where he studied anthropology and law, Haksar spent about a year in Nagpur as a full-time office-bearer of the undivided Communist Party of India. He then moved to Allahabad and practised at the Allahabad High Court for four years before joining the newly created Indian Foreign Service in 1947.

When Haksar was Deputy High Commissioner in London (1965-67), Indira Gandhi, who took over as Prime Minis-

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ter in January 1966, wrote to him asking him to keep an eye on her sons, Rajiv and Sanjay, then in England. Haksar succeeded in building up a cordial rapport with Rajiv Gandhi but not with Sanjay Gandhi, who was undergoing training at Rolls Royce and was unhappy; he wanted to return to India and start something of his own. Haksar advised him to complete his training. Sanjay Gandhi disliked both the advice and the adviser, a dislike that would lead, years later, to Haksar's decision to resign from his job as Principal Secretary as Sanjay Gandhi's star rose in the political firmament of pre-Emergency India.

HAKSAR'S 'IMPRIMATUR'

Haksar took over as Secretary to Prime Minister in 1967 and left office in January 1973. The author devotes 210 pages to this chapter, felicitously titled "A Prime Minister's Alter Ego (1967-1972)", the most interesting part of the book.

When Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sent greetings to North Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh on his 77th birthday (May 14, 1967), United States Ambassador Chester Bowles lodged a formal protest with the Ministry of External Affairs. When Bowles met Haksar, the latter stood his ground, firm but inoffensive, a characteristic pose of this superb diplomat.

Haksar was deeply involved with policymaking in the Congress party. Between June 1967 and January 1973, no important resolution was adopted by the Congress without his "imprimatur".

In July 1968, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) decided to sell arms to Pakistan. Naturally, India was upset and Indira Gandhi wrote to Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin expressing India's protest. Both the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party used the occasion to mount a scathing attack on Indira Gandhi's foreign policy. On Haksar's advice, Indira Gandhi invited Atal Bihari Vajpayee for a discussion. We are not told whether they met or how the meeting turned out, if they did. All that we can say is that if they met, neither knew that it was a meeting between the incumbent Prime Minister and a future one.

At times, Haksar moderated the overreaction of the Ministry of External Affairs. When the USSR published maps that inaccurately showed the boundary between India and China, the Ministry prepared a note verbale. Haksar, with the Prime Minister's approval, replaced the words "hereby register their protest" with "once again draws attention". When the Soviet Union led Warsaw Pact troops in the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Haksar carefully avoided "condemning" it in the Prime Minister's statement in Parliament. He wanted to do his utmost to avoid friction with Moscow, taking into account India's larger interests.

On June 17, 1967, China exploded its first hydrogen bomb. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as jointly drafted by the two superpowers, was coming up before the United Nations for adoption in April 1968. Haksar's position, as reflected in the instructions to the Indian delegation, specified that while opposing the treaty, India should not do anything to delay its adoption. However, by 1970, Haksar and Indira Gandhi had come to the conclusion that India should keep open its options about the bomb. A decision was taken to set up nuclear power plants even if they were financially unviable as the country needed enriched fuel.

The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) was set up in 1968. Acting on its founder Rameshwar Nath Kao's complaint, Haksar saw to it that he (Kao) had full powers. When former director of the Intelligence Bureau, B.N. Mullick, published a book titled *The Chinese Betrayal* after his retirement, the Home Minister wanted to prosecute him for violating the Official Secrets Act. Haksar agreed that there was a case for prosecution but advised against it as in any trial the government would look foolish, having provided the author all the facilities by way of house and telephone to write the book. The Prime Minister concurred.

DIFFERENCES WITH INDIRA GANDHI

Indira Gandhi did not always follow Haksar's advice. Despite Haksar's strong opposition, Sanjay Gandhi was given a licence in 1970 to make passenger cars. Haksar preferred to use the scarce industrial resources for a mass rapid transport system. Readers in Delhi and other metro cities who daily negotiate traffic jams can come to their own conclusions as to whether Haksar was right or not.

Another policy matter where Haksar did not have his way was about taxing agricultural income. Although he had a case from a purely economic point of view, the Prime Minister saw the political risks which he failed to notice.

Even Haksar could lose his sense of proportion. He wanted G. Parthasarathi to be appointed as the first Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University. There was much opposition from Education Minister V.K.R.V. Rao, who wanted an academic as Vice Chancellor. A number of eminent persons who were approached, including the astrophysicist S. Chandra, retired Chief Justice P.B. Gajendragadkar, Dr S. Gopal and Professor P.N. Dhar, declined. Rao maintained his opposition even after the Prime Minister proposed the name of Parthasarathi.

Haksar put up a note saying that if the Prime Minister herself spoke, Rao might relent. The note ended by suggesting that if the Prime Minister did not wish to speak, then in order to respect the "commitment" to Parthasarathi, Haksar would be glad to resign so that Parthasarathi could replace him. Indira Gandhi was not amused. She noted with some acerbity: "Secretary evidently enjoys writing these notes. He may like to write such things but I am not amused. The suggestion at the end cannot be taken seriously nor is it amusing." She spoke to Rao the next day, and Parthas-

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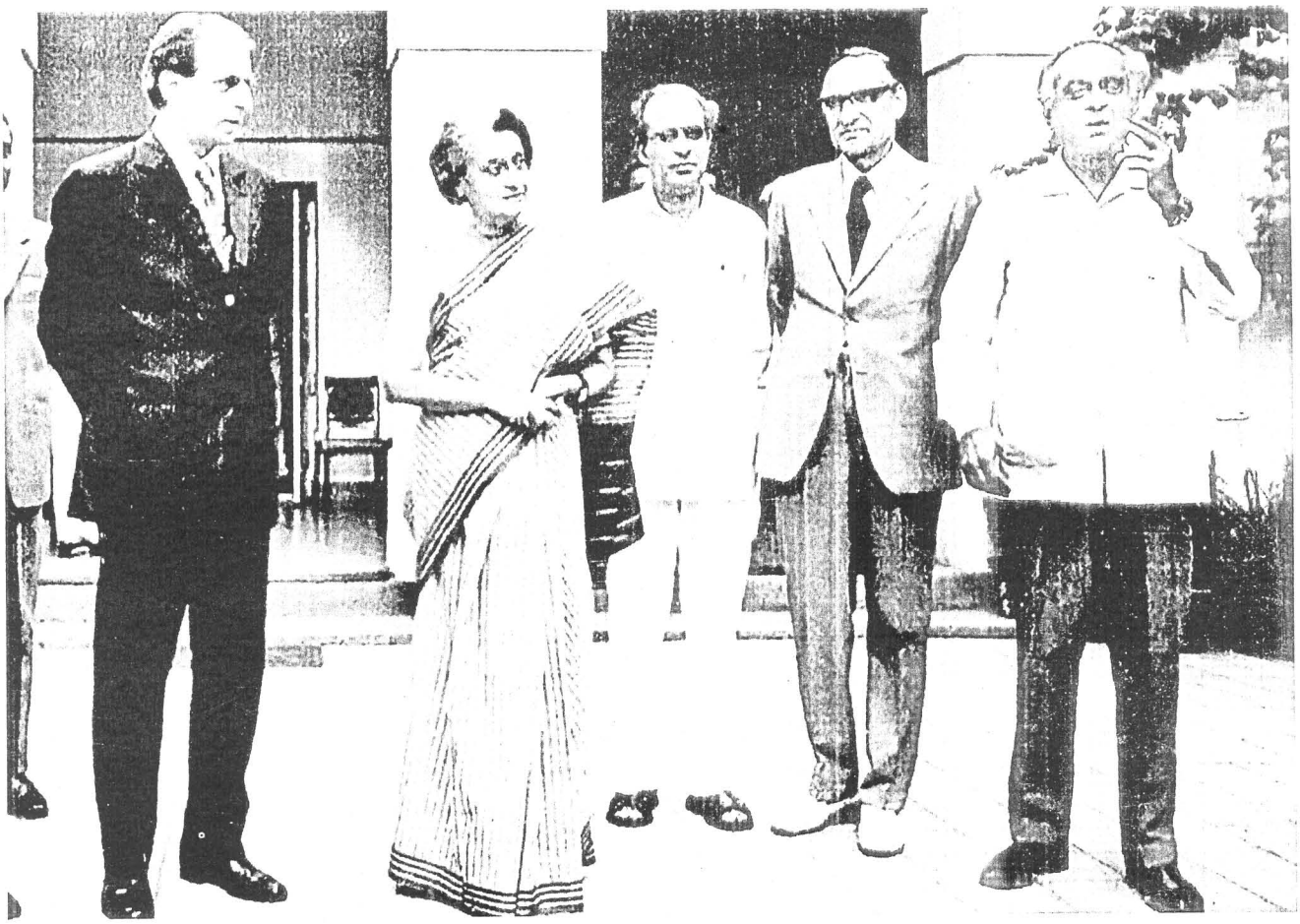

THE HINDU ARCHIVES

NEW DELHI, 1973: Indira Gandhi with Pakistani diplomat Aziz Ahmed (left) and (from right to left) P.N. Haksar, Foreign Secretary Kewal Singh and P.N. Dhar, at the Nehru Memorial Museum Library.

arathi was appointed.

The author's narration, based on documents, combined with his ability to connect the dots, does correct some incorrect popular impressions. We shall mention only one or two.

First, there is an impression that the Soviet Union had proposed a treaty a long time ago and India had kept it in the freezer; and that only when the tension with Pakistan escalated over the atrocities committed in East Pakistan and there was a clear sign that Pakistan, China and the U.S. were ganged up against India, did Indira Gandhi decide to take the file out of the freezer and sign the treaty (Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation) in August 1971.

As a matter of fact, Indira Gandhi told the visiting Soviet Premier, Alexei Kosygin, on May 6, 1969, that India wanted to sign such a treaty. It was decided that in view of the allergy entertained by some influential sections in India, it would be better to conduct the negotiations in Moscow. However, the Ministry of External Affairs wanted to go slow and instructed Ambassador D.P. Dhar to continue talking "without any finality".

In effect, Dhar was to listen and not react. Dhar shared his frustration with Haksar, who told Indira Gandhi that the Ministry's instructions did not make sense. Haksar put it in his inimitable style: "The Ambassador has done tight rope-walking with great finesse. However, he will soon topple over, unless he is steadied by some clear instructions so as to how he should proceed and the extent to which he can respond concretely and constructively." The Prime Minister agreed but still wanted more time before signing the treaty. The author speculates that she might have been hoping for improvement in relations with the U.S.

Within days of Indira Gandhi's spectacular electoral victory in March 1971, Pakistan began a military crackdown in the east. India started training Bangladeshi freedom fighters. The decision to speed up the signing of the treaty with the Soviet Union was taken only after and perhaps because of U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's path-breaking visit to China in July 1971. It was signed the next month.

On September 4, 1971, Haksar turned 58 and retired. There was some understanding that he might be re-employed. While he was in Paris, enjoying a well-deserved holiday, Indira Gandhi had it conveyed to him that she wanted him to join her in her forthcoming visits to important Western capitals, including Washington, in the context of the Bangladesh crisis. Haksar agreed and joined her in Vienna, from where she

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SIMLA, JUNE 28, 1972: Indira Gandhi welcoming Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for the talks before the signing of the Simla Agreement. Also present is Bhutto's daughter Benazir.

went to Washington. He also arranged for a medical check-up for her in Vienna. This reviewer, then the First Secretary in Vienna, had seen the diagnosis by the famous Dr Karl Fellinger mentioning high blood pressure as a matter of concern.

P.N. Dhar, who replaced Haksar, found the task of filling his shoes too overwhelming, and soon it was found necessary to bring Haksar back. It was Moni Malhoutra, Deputy Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, who coined the term "Principal Secretary to PM", with Haksar occupying that position and Dhar continuing as Secretary.

The second wrong popular impression is that Indira Gandhi asked the Army chief General Sam Manekshaw to prepare for military intervention in East Pakistan and that he told her that he needed more time. The story came from Manekshaw. The author has found no documentary evidence of such a conversation between the Army chief and the Prime Minister.

The key question is, What would Indira Gandhi have done if Pakistan had not unwittingly helped her by attacking India on December 3, 1971? This is a contrafactual question that is difficult to answer. But the fact remains that Indira Gandhi, on Haksar's advice, had taken into account the potential need to intervene militarily in the east and acted on it months before the event.

SIMLA ACCORD

The reader, who admires the author's Teutonic thoroughness in giving a holistic and in-depth account of major events, gets a slight shock when it comes to the 1972 Simla Accord. We are given a detailed account of the origins of the accord, starting with the diplomatic pressure from Moscow, reinforced by similar pressure from London.

President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan was behind it as he told the USSR that he would approach the Security Council. In any case, the decision to invite Bhutto was a sound one. The key question is what happened in Simla and why.

It was the Indian side that proposed the use of the phrase "a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir". It is rather puzzling why Haksar agreed to it. To balance the account, we need to mention three points not mentioned in the book.

One, Piloo Modi, a friend of Bhutto, was in Simla with his wife Vina, and Modi had advised Bhutto to seek a one-to-one meeting with Indira Gandhi in case of a deadlock. Bhutto followed the advice and was able to get concessions from Indira Gandhi.

Two, P.N. Dhar, with the advantage of hindsight, concluded that India was outwitted in Simla. In 1975, the Pakistani diplomat Aziz Ahmed and P.N. Dhar were flying back from a conference in Paris. Dhar complimented Aziz Ahmed on the diplomatic skills he displayed in Paris and Simla. "At the mention of Simla," Dhar writes, "his expression suddenly changed. With an undisguised sneer that distorted his face, he said it was not Pakistan's skills but India's strong desire for positive results that had made the summit a success. I would have taken this for a compliment but for the sarcasm in his tone, which made a strong impression on my mind at the time."

Three, Bhutto had agreed with Indira Gandhi that he would agree to eventually convert the ceasefire line of December 17, 1971, but he could not include it in the agreement because of the political risks in Pakistan.

The fact of the matter is that he had no intention of doing so and had successfully cheated his interlocutor. In short, Indira Gandhi, who acted as the granddaughter of Chanakya in the 1971 war, ceased to be that in Simla.

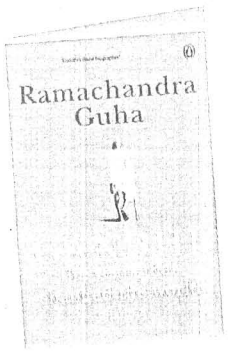
"Cleopatra's nose," the 17th century French philosopher Blaise Pascal wrote, "had it been shorter, the whole face of the world would have been changed." Had there been no Haksar, it can be reasonably argued that the course of India's history would have been different. Indira Gandhi would not have achieved all that she did without this true "friend, philosopher, and guide".

After Rajiv Gandhi's funeral, his wife, Sonia Gandhi, was asked to choose the successor. She consulted Haksar, who suggested Vice President Shankar Dayal Sharma, who declined. Then Haksar suggested P.V. Narasimha Rao, who agreed with some alacrity.

Haksar can be said to have influenced the career of another Prime Minister as well. Dr Manmohan Singh was appointed Secretary (Economic Affairs) in 1972 on Haksar's advice. A pre-Haksar Indira Gandhi chose to devalue the rupee. A post-Haksar Indira Gandhi ordered Operation Blue Star. Both were wrong decisions. Suppose he had been there?

"The history of the world," Thomas Carlyle wrote, "is but the biography of great men." The reader will agree. This book is a singular contribution to understanding contemporary history and will be of keen interest not only to scholars but also to the general public. The young should read it. □

K.P. Fabian is the author of Diplomacy: Indian Style.



books Ramachandra Guha

Gandhi 1914-1948: The Years That Changed The World | Penguin Allen Lane | 1,152 pages | Rs 999

Lengthening Shadow

Accessible, humane, unsparingly critical—this is a clear-headed

BY P.A. KRISHNAN

THE Indian freedom movement did not take place on a smooth plain. Its terrain was rough, full of ups and downs and twists and turns. Many of those who travelled in that terrain were of an uncommon calibre. Still, a great number of them stumbled and fell by the wayside. A few managed to survive and reach the destination. And Gandhi led them all. His is easily among the most extra-ordinary stories ever told and he easily the most widely known modern Indian anywhere in the world. I had been asked about him by ordinary people in countries as far away as Costa Rica. They were amazed, as Einstein rightly predicted, that such a man could really exist. Nearer home, there are a few who revile him and attribute to him diabolic qualities which, if he had been told that he had had them, would have induced a smile from him. Just a few days ago, I saw a poster carrying a huge picture of a Southern politician (with an inset of Modi) and rather triumphantly calling him the Godse of South India.

It did not elucidate which modern Gandhi he was zeroing on. Seventy years after his martyrdom, Gandhi is many things to many people. Still, there is a quintessential Gandhi, as seen by his adulating, friendly, critical and contemptuous contemporaries and as may be distilled from his life and writings. It is this Gandhi that Guha presents in his book in an easy and a graceful style. The book runs into over eleven hundred pages, but its flow would mesmerise even persons who hate huge tomes, like me. It is said of some masterpieces of painting that whoever is assessing them is being assessed in turn. This is true of Gandhi too. In my assessment, Guha will be counted among the great biographers of the world.

Guha's is a narrative biography, chronologically told as far as practicable. Amazingly, for a book of its girth, it doesn't digress much, hewing close to its subject.

In the first hundred pages, Gandhi searches for solutions to some of the unique problems of India. The Gandhi of the last few pages is still searching for solutions to almost the same problems. In the intervening years, he himself changed into a different person and transformed millions of Indians into better human beings. Many more remained unchanged, but that was not his fault. It is rarely given to one to depart from this world at the most glorious moment of one's life—Gandhi died when he was the exemplar of an astonishing iridescence of love and compassion when the world around him was dissolving in a miasma of hate. Guha covers these heady years with aplomb. He also deals with the human Gandhi. He is unsparing in his criticism about Gandhi's wooden-headedness in dealing with his children, especially his eldest son. He speaks about his infatuation with Tagore's niece and, thankfully, is very brief on his infamous experiments on Brahmacharya.

> Gandhi's problematic relation with modernity is barely covered, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan makes only a late entry and the hugely significant 1931 Karachi Resolution is not mentioned.

Guha's coverage of the Poona Pact is fair and there is some substance in his assertion that Ambedkar had a far greater impact on Gandhi than he was sometimes willing to acknowledge. But Gandhi was right when he says, "Nobody has opposed untouchability in such strong language as I." Gandhi was targeted by fanatical Hindus for two reasons. One was that he spoke for Hindu-Muslim unity. The other was that he consistently spoke for Dalits (Harijans in his words). We know Gandhi gave his life for Hindu-Muslim unity. Many of us do not know that he almost gave his life for Dalits. A bomb was thrown at him in Pune on June 25, 1934, while he was on a tour preaching the eradication of untouchability. He escaped unhurt, but five persons were injured. Gandhi said, "I am not acting for martyrdom, but if it comes in my way...I shall have earned it, and it will be possible for the historian of the future to say that the vow I had taken before Harijans that I would, if need be, die in the attempt to remove untouchability was literally fulfilled."

This is the first book on Gandhi which tells in some length the almost untold story of Mahadev Desai, the self-effacing and brilliant secretary of Gandhi who died in 1942, just a few days after he was imprisoned along with Gandhi. It was he who protected Gandhi, advised him, gently fought with him and even made him change his views. It was only Gandhi who would have attracted such a personality. It was only a person of Mahadev's calibre and integrity who would have endured Gandhi for so long, which ultimately killed him at a relatively young age of fifty. Gandhi remembered Desai almost every day until his own death. The other personality who comes out beautifully in the book is Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, the Sikh princess. It was she who was instrumental in bringing Dr Ambedkar to Nehru's first cabinet. When madness was unfolding in Punjab, she wrote to Gandhi: "The tragedy is that most of us inwardly rejoice when our community gets its back on the other...I am filled with fear as to where we are drifting." It was Gandhi and mostly Gandhi who convinced all those who

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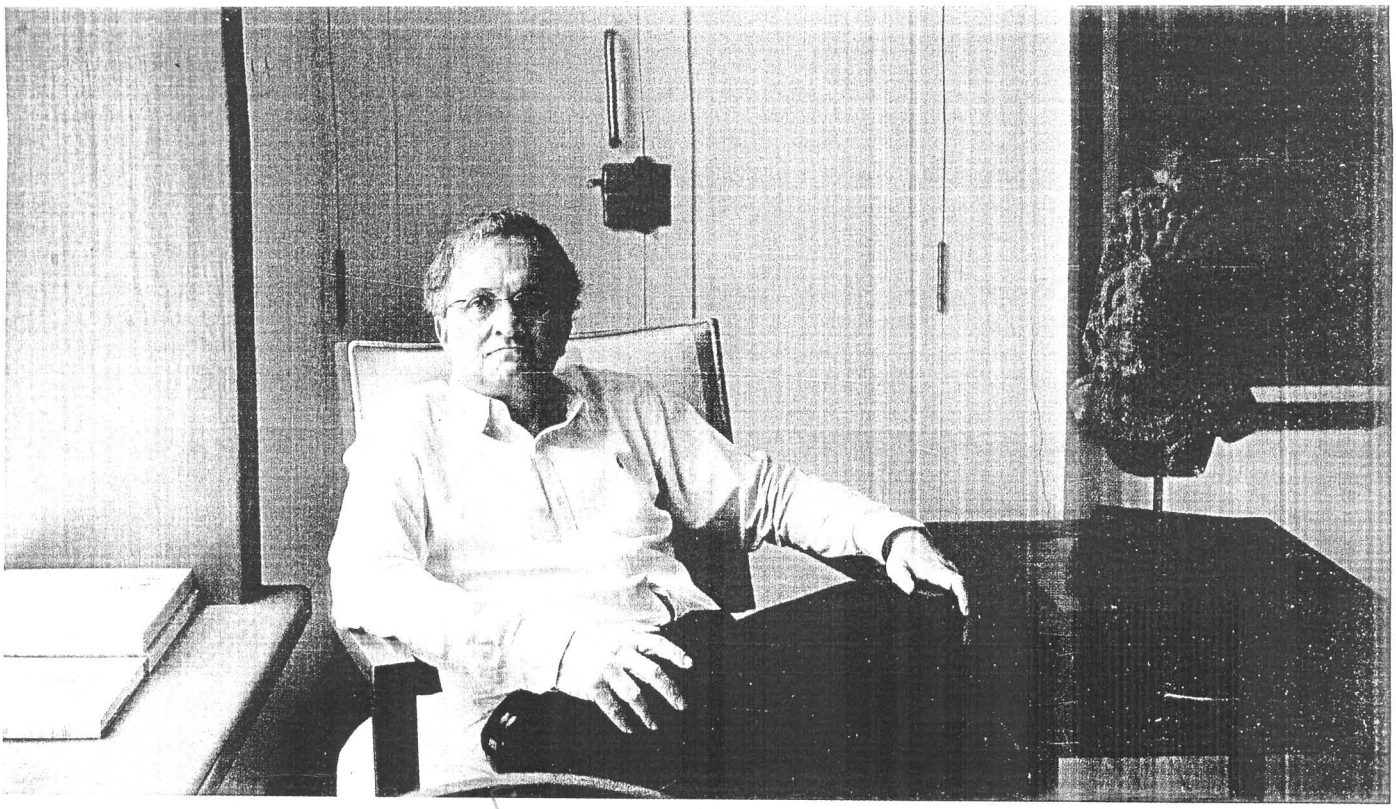
Of The Lifelong Quester

ount of the years that made the Mahatma, with a few curious absences

TRIBHUVAN TIWARI



DESK-BOUND Ramachandra Guha has written an excellent narrative biography, not digressing much from his subject

were sane at that time that it was wrong to rejoice at the suffering of others, just because they belonged to a different community. Ultimately, it was his martyrdom that arrested the drift.

GUHA also makes a short work of the canard that Gandhi did not do his best to prevent Bhagat Singh and his comrades from being sent to the gallows. He points out that Gandhi wrote a letter to the Viceroy on March 23, 1931, pleading with him to postpone the execution, but they were executed on March 24.

I have a few problems with the book. Gandhi had very different views on science, technology, industrialisation, medicine and many things that were then considered modern. Guha scarcely covers that ground. Gandhi, after coming out of prison in 1944, exchanged a series of letters with P.C. Joshi, the Communist leader, which were discussed at some length when they were compiled into a book. Guha is silent on them. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan does not appear in the narrative after page 550. I am also disappointed that he does not mention the 1931 Karachi Resolution of the Congress, which demanded, among other things, a living wage for industrial workers, suppression of slavery, protection of working women, prohibition of child labour, progressive income tax on agricultural incomes and legacies, adult suffrage, freedom of worship, trade union rights and equal rights for all citizens. It was Gandhi who piloted the resolution through the Subjects Committee, if I am not wrong, and ensured that it was passed unanimously.

Gandhi said this in 1928: "It would be on the question of Hindu-Muslim unity that my Ahimsa would be put to its severest test, and that question presented the widest field for my experiments in Ahimsa. The conviction is still there. Every moment of my life I realise that God is putting me on my trial." He could not have been more explicit than this. He tried many such experiments. All through his life he was groping for answers and died without really getting them. I am not sure about God, but a few haughty humans tried him and found him wanting. For the humble others, it is his search that engages them even now and makes them realise that he was one of the most glorious personalities ever to grace the earth. Guha has brought this Gandhi to them.

Characterising the Culture of the Mughal Era
Chronicles of a Munshi

VIKAS RATHEE

BOOK REVIEWS

Writing Self, Writing Empire: Chandar Bhan Brahman and the Cultural World of the Indo-Persian State Secretary by Rajeev Kinra, *Delhi: Primus Books (by arrangement with University of California Press), 2016; pp xix+369, ₹1,250.*

Writing Self, Writing Empire by Rajeev Kinra is a biography of Chandar Bhan Brahman, a 17th-century Mughal munshi. (He died in the 1660s, Brahman was his caste and also his *takhallus* or pen name.) Simultaneously, *Writing Self, Writing Empire* is also a history of the political and administrative culture of the Mughal empire during Shah Jahan's reign (1627–58), and a contribution to the literary history of Persian in India. The book is part of a larger trend of writing Mughal and medieval Indo–Islamic history (also referred to as "early modern") that has focused largely on cultural history of the Indo–Islamic milieu and shown how this was a "cosmopolitan" venture comparable to other similar "early modern" polities in West Asia and Europe (Breckenbridge et al 2002; Lefèvre et al 2015). Theoretically, "cosmopolitan-ism" has been expounded by academic figures based in the West such as Kwame Anthony Appiah. Appiah sees cosmopolitan-ism as "a rejection of the conventional view that every civilized person belonged to a community among communities," and as "regard[ing] all the peoples of the earth as so many branches of a single family, and the universe as a state" (Appiah 2006).[1] However, cosmopolitan-ism does not convincingly explain why a human being should feel belonging towards all of humanity more than towards any other community. In fact, is it possible to transcend cultural moorings and become "universal," and would not any such transcendence not inaugurate yet another cultural formation that would with time become "particular"? The history of all ideologies, for example, Christianity, Islam, Marxism, Democracy or Arya Samaj, suggests so.

Methodologically, this research output is based on close philological engagement with a variety of original sources. Kinra applies the model of "cosmopolitan-ism" to the Mughal cultural world and Chandar Bhan Brahman is his test case. The book derives from a close reading of two texts from Chandar Bhan's literary oeuvre, namely the *Chahar Chaman* (Four Gardens) and the *Munsha'at-i Brahman* (Epistles of Brahman). This is supplemented by data from a variety of contemporary and subsequent histories and commentaries that discuss Chandar Bhan's life and career as a poet and administrator.

The Munshi

In the 20th century, the Persian munshi is already a relatively forgotten figure. However, as late as the early 19th century, colonial officials were made to read English translations of the *Chahar Chaman*. Ethnically, the munshi could be a Hindu or a Muslim from South Asia, or a Muslim or Zoroastrian from Iran and Central Asia. Amongst Hindus, certain castes traditionally associated with literacy, such as Khatris, Kayasthas and Brahmins, formed the bulk of munshis. Using the biographical framework, Kinra documents the sociocultural processes through which Indian Muslims and Hindus became munshis, and acquired Persian as a language of poetry and bureaucracy. This description gives reasons behind the acceptance and success of the Mughal rule. Kinra suggests that the Mughal rule was part of a wider "cosmopolitan" world of Persian language, literature and culture that included the Ottoman and Safavid empires, and other political formations in Central and South Asia. Kinra foregrounds forgotten evidence, and provides a detailed description of active and willing Hindu presence in the Mughal empire. He shows how dominant stereotypes of the present-day do not fit the evidence from the 17th-century Mughal realm. The strength of Kinra's work lies in the attention provided to the figure of the munshi, his social background, his acculturation and training into Persianate bureaucracy, and his relevance in the Indo–Persian state system. Kinra's book is also applicable to the political and bureaucratic world in Central and West Asia from Sarajevo to Samarqand where munshis and Persian language were equally relevant. Ethnically, these munshis may or may not have been born in families speaking Persian or kin languages. Chandar Bhan, the munshi chronicled in this book, was not a Persian-speaker by birth. He acquired the language and its culture to forge a successful career as a bureaucrat, and to a lesser extent as a poet.

The introduction to the book tells us why *Writing Self, Writing Empire* is important, and provides a theoretical framework and a synopsis of the chapters. It correctly points out that Chandar Bhan was a direct observer and participant in a Mughal bureaucracy that was "streamlined and rationalized to levels unprecedented in the history of the subcontinent and unsurpassed in ... the world" (p 3). Kinra tells us how Mughal bureaucracy was staffed by individuals moving in circuits of international commercial and intellectual exchange. Especially, his study zooms in on the Persian and Indo–Persian literary and intellectual traditions. Chapter 1 charts the intellectual world of Chandar Bhan. Kinra suggests that present-day academic understandings of the Mughal world, especially of the post-Akbar era, posit it to be a period dominated by a strident Islam that marginalised other traditions. This is a hasty observation. Kinra is very selective in his readings of academic opinions on the issue. He discusses the

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works of J F Richards and Stanley Lane-Poole, but skips a vibrant tradition of "secular" historiography, including works of Irfan Habib, Bikram Jit Hasrat, M Athar Ali, Satish Chandra, Harbans Mukhia and others whose arguments are not dissimilar to those of Kinra. He sees the life and literary output of Chandar Bhan and those around him as evidence of an Islam that was more accommodating, and a Hindu culture that was at ease with it. Chandar Bhan approvingly cites verses from the Quran in his work, and writes poetry such as *lazim aamad bar sar-i ma khidmat-i but barhaman/mahw kai gardad har aan naqshi ki dar dil-ha nishast* (It is incumbent upon us to serve the idol, Brahmin/How can any image that resides in the heart be erased?) (p 23). Not only did Chandar Bhan's family get him schooled in Persian literary and accounting traditions, Chandar Bhan got his son Tej Bhan schooled in the same. He attests to the presence of Shudra scribes and draftsmen at the lower levels of bureaucracy. The chapter has detailed notes on Muslim and Hindu patrons of Hindus and Hindu learning at the Mughal court, such as Afzal Khan, Asaf Khan, Inayat Khan, Sadullah Khan and others. The chapter also has extended sections on medical science and literary culture at the Mughal court.

Chapter 2 focuses on the training and cultivation of secretaries or *ashab-i qalam* (gentlemen of the pen; scribes) in 17th-century northern India. Other than training in reading and composing poetry, the road to munshi-hood also passed through disciplines such as statecraft, diplomacy, ethics (*akhlaq*), writing letters and documents (*insha*), and accounting (*siyaq*). Kinra suggests that "mystical civility" was essential to the training of a munshi. In the *nasihat-nama* (book of advice) named *Chahar Chaman* that includes letters to his son Tej Bhan, Chandar Bhan writes that acquiring detachment (*bi-talluqi*) was essential for him, as was visiting recluses, hermits and mystics (*munzawiyan, gosha-nashinan*, and *darwesan*), and keeping secrets (*razdar bashad*). To varying degrees, this curriculum was also part of the education of political figures, including sultans. The *Chahar Chaman* also includes accounts of the careers of past munshis such as Raja Todar Mal, and other political, military and administrative figures of the 17th century, and cites letters written by some.

Shah Jahan and His Court

Chapter 3 is a gleaning of Chandar Bhan's observations of Mughal sovereignty, especially as ensconced in the figure of Shah Jahan *padshah*. In his *Tārīkh-i Rajahā-yi Dihlī*, Chandar Bhan places Shah Jahan *padshah* at the end of a list of kings of Delhi, including real, mythical and obscure Hindu predecessor "rajas" such as Yudhishthira, Janamejaya, Jiwan Jit and Anand Pal. In the *Chahar Chaman*, Chandar Bhan eulogises Shah Jahan with epithets, terming him a premier political, legal, military and spiritual entity. These eulogies were penned in prose and verse. The court of Shah Jahan was a highly formalised entity and attracted visitors from as far as China, Arabia and Europe, and from various religious and class backgrounds. Chandar Bhan's writings serve as a valuable source of Shah Jahan's and his court's daily life, routine and rituals. On the basis of these intercultural cultural changes, Kinra describes the court as "cosmopolitan."

Chapter 4 highlights the autobiographical aspects of Chandar Bhan's writings which say that he was a believing Hindu from the Punjab. In Kinra's reading, Chandar Bhan's writings display no tension between his Hindu and Persianised/Islamised selves, and is an ethical Mughal subject. Kinra suggests that Chandar Bhan was more a "spiritual" being than a mere Sikh, Hindu or Muslim. This usage of "spiritual" as separate from "religious" needs more explaining. Kinra uses Chandar Bhan to argue that Brahmins were a distinct caste not because of their occupation or mastery of Hindu rituals, but because of their spiritual and textual pursuits. Chapter 5 addresses the seemingly fraught relations between Persian literary worlds of India and Iran that existed in the period. He argues that poets writing in Persian in India were keen to stake their own presence and did so not by formulating the *sabk-i hindi* (Indian style), but by being part of a literary movement of *taza-gui* (fresh manner of telling). Sabk-i hindi was a term coined by modern Iranian literary critics that mapped boundaries of modern nations on past Persian literary worlds. These critics often saw most of Indian writing in Persian as second grade. On the other hand, taza-gui refers more to the search for new themes and meanings in the period. Chandar Bhan was one of the participants in this literary movement across the Persian literary world that had counterparts in Europe, such as the Mannerism movement. In the final chapter, Kinra discusses the memory of Chandar Bhan after his death during the first decade of Aurangzeb's reign (1658–1707). A surprising aspect of this memory is its portrayal of a deep association between Chandar Bhan and Dara Shikoh that is not corroborated by scrutiny of historical evidence. Kinra also charts how some of the subsequent efforts to create a memory of Chandar Bhan painted him as a heretical upstart.

The book is rich in data and anecdotes based on hitherto underutilised sources, and a previous reviewer has rightly suggested that *Writing Self, Writing Empire* shall be indispensable to the teaching of Mughal India (Robinson 2018). Nevertheless, the book does have shortcomings. There is a disregard of previous writings pertaining to the cultural life of Mughal India. One wonders what was the political and economic basis behind the acceptance of the Persian-style *adab* and *akhlaq* (literature, bureaucracy and polity) by participants hailing from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Did India's historical experience with Persian as an elite language of culture and bureaucracy prepare it for English? Does the democratisation and "devolution" of Persian into Urdu hold some lessons for the fate of English?

Methodologically, as Kinra himself acknowledges, the book is based on the

life and ouevre of a single person which is less than adequate to reach the rather broad-stroke conclusions he advances. The book shows examples that negate present-day stereotypes of Hindus and Muslims that dominate the historiography of Mughal India. Kinra portrays a picture of a cosmopolitan world defined more by "spirituality" than religions, such as Hinduism or Islam, and a taste for poetry over politics. His book is replete with data displaying instances of friendly relations amongst Hindus and Muslims. However, such data may easily be matched by someone else parading instances of discord amongst Hindus and Muslims during the same period. This data can easily make Kinra's framework redundant. There is a need to develop a theoretical framework to study Mughal India that goes beyond the present-day stereotypes of Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and secular (reinvented as "cosmopolitan" in Kinra's book).

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NOTE

1 See introduction in Appiah (2006), attributing the latter quote to Christoph Martin Weiland who was also known as the German Voltaire.

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Towards Political Power, Social Equality and Justice

Trajectories of Dalit Mobilisations

RAJ SEKHAR BASU

Dalit Politics in Contemporary India by Sambaiah Gundimeda, *Oxon, New York, Routledge, 2016; pp 32 + 298, ₹995.*

Dalit Politics in Contemporary India is essentially a study on Dalit politics from three principal "axes" as interpreted by the author, Sambaiah Gundimeda. The first relates to the historical context in which the anti-caste and Dalit protests took their origins in the later part of the 19th century in present-day Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Second, it has been authored in the context of contemporary debates, especially when the space of democracy is expanding in India, with increasing instances of the lower-caste assertions which have challenged the cultural hegemony and the political domination of the upper-caste Hindus. Finally, it concerns itself in terms of a comparison of political developments in North and South India. Although not the first attempt at comprehending the historical underpinnings that have informed Dalit politics, it seems more engaged in understanding the contours that shape contemporary Indian political realities.

The author is interested in unearthing the validity of the comparative political framework that narrativises the politics of North India in terms of the Hindu–Muslim divide, quite in contrast to South Indian politics, which are much influenced by caste divisions. Despite, taking cues from these lines of thinking, the author at the very outset clarifies that he will also bring in the Ambedkarite perspective to cull out the complexities behind the political developments. It has been asserted that despite pioneering research on B R Ambedkar and Dalit movements, such intellectual initiatives suffer from limitations because of their propensity to confine their scholarly interests to developments that took place in the colonial period. Gundimeda prefers to examine the strategies of Dalit mobilisation and the political trajectories, somewhat in continuum with the colonial past and the postcolonial present. These efforts undoubtedly keep the reader's imagination open to the deconstructivist imperatives of the binaries like the "theoretical–personal," "empirical–theoretical," "objective–subjective," "scholarly–non-scholarly," and last but not the least, "personal becoming the political." Gundimeda also seeks to find an answer to the raging academic aspersions, which continually berate Dalit cultural assertions and activisms for their inadequacies in developing a theoretical understanding of their own. Academics often fail to notice that Dalit assertions, which epitomise the quotidian narratives of struggle and victimhood, are not simply empirical and thin in terms of theory.

Caste–Politics Linkages

The Hindu institution of caste has been the bane of hierarchised social structures, enabling the privileged to occupy the upper rungs, and relegating the "lower" castes to the depths of squalor and deprivation. The Dalits or Scheduled Castes (SCs) are at the bottom of the social scale, rarely giving the expression of a homogeneous category, but of a disparate grouping of heterogeneous castes. The problematic essentially arises from the British colonial legislation which introduced terms such as Depressed Classes and SCs, without considering the inner cultural and social divisions that pervaded these caste groups. The politico–bureaucratic systems of both the colonial and the postcolonial periods had little realisation that SCs differed in their standings within the caste hierarchy, with regard to socio-economic advancements, educational attainments and political behaviour. While there are disagreements over the

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The Many Lives of Cotton
A Political History of Cotton in India

NEETA DESHPANDE

A Frayed History: The Journey of Cotton in India
by Meena Menon and Uzramma, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2017; pp xxxiv + 384, ₹750.

The history of cotton in India spanning five millennia is, in many ways, the story of Indian civilisation itself. Each distinct phase of Indian history, seen through the lens of cotton, is rich, insightful and indeed a representative story of our past. Cotton also occupies a significant place in our economy today, and millions of producers—farmers, handloom weavers and textile workers—are dependent on it for their livelihood. It is, thus, a fascinating and important topic of study for an understanding of today's realities, which is also informed by the commodity's complex history.

Meena Menon and Uzramma, the authors of *A Frayed History: The Journey of Cotton in India*, have worked on cotton in India in different capacities for years. While Uzramma has devoted many decades to the cause of the cotton handloom industry, Menon has written extensively on sociopolitical issues, including the cotton-farming scenario. Their combined efforts are reflected in this book on the history of and the contemporary issues involved in the Indian cotton economy. Extensive in scope, across themes and time, Menon and Uzramma's volume is an important addition to the contemporary literature on Indian cotton.

The book covers the history of cotton in precolonial and colonial India, the contemporary agrarian crisis in Maharashtra, its roots in government policy, the issues related to genetically modified (GM) Bt cotton, an anecdotal exploration of handloom weaving in the contemporary period, and an intervention, led by Uzramma, to decentralise cotton yarn spinning in select centres. It makes a normative statement about the benefits of a cotton-farming economy based on indigenous cotton, and the decentralisation of the spinning component of the textile economy. Crucially, a recurrent motif throughout the book is the authors' advocacy of decentralised yarn spinning to rescue handloom weavers from the yarn crisis, and cotton farmers from the capricious and unjust dynamics of the global market. This is coupled with the authors putting their weight behind indigenous cotton varieties, which require fewer inputs and, thus, reduced costs, and are also hardier, resistant to pests, and suitable for Indian climatic conditions.

Precolonial and Colonial Past

A Frayed History begins with a vivid description of the centrality of India in the world of cotton textiles in precolonial times. The thick description of India's superlative cotton textiles and their worldwide trade paints an evocative picture. Though this history is broadly known, its detailed exploration in the first two chapters of the book is fascinating. However, while we get a ringside view of the superiority of the Indian textile industry, several important analytic aspects of this history are missing. Of the elements that do not appear in the book, key themes include the volume and value of India's textile trade, the commercialisation of the domestic cotton textile industry from the 13th century, and the boom in Indian cotton textile industry in the three centuries after 1500.

The long and complex history of Indian cotton in the colonial period has been extensively studied by scholars. It is well known that the British rule destroyed the famed Indian handloom industry and impoverished artisans. The fate of farmers in cotton-growing regions was no different. The stranglehold of imperialist policies of exploitation and neglect left them with no choice but to switch to cash crops like cotton, which undermined food security, enmeshed them in a vortex of debt, and dealt them the final blow in a series of famines.

In their exploration of the colonial history of cotton in India, Menon and Uzramma describe the transformation of the subcontinent from a world leader in manufacturing, to a supplier of raw material for British mills and a vast market for industrial yarn and textiles. The authors point out, by way of a quote, that India's share of the world's total manufacturing output fell in the 19th century, not only because of industrial production by the West, but also because of an absolute decline in the per capita Indian manufacturing output itself (p 35). Handloom weavers fell back on the land, working as cultivators or landless labourers. The agrarian economy was debilitated by little agricultural investment and the displacement of food crops to grow cotton. However, the value of the author's treatment of the colonial period is marred by the use of frequent quotes from multiple scholarly sources, while their own commentary and interpretation would have enriched the discussion.

Significantly, important dimensions of the colonial history of Indian cotton are mentioned in passing. A crucial gap is the elision of the history of the Gandhian khadi movement during the freedom struggle. In their narrative of the distress in the chief cotton-growing region of Berar, the direct domination of cotton production by European capitalists without several intermediary merchants in the last third of the 19th century, which is an important element of this history, is not mentioned. The authors also fail to consider the critical 20th-century textile history, including the impact of India's own cotton mills on the handloom industry.

Distress in Cotton Farming

Moving on to contemporary realities, Menon and Uzramma choose to focus on the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra—the epicentre of farmers' suicides—to investigate the agrarian distress convulsing the Indian countryside. Their comprehensive treatment of Vidarbha's agrarian crisis and the Bt cotton story is useful to understand the current situation. The authors point out that

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there is evidence that cotton farmers are the most affected by the agrarian crisis (p 102). The genesis of the problem in the rain-fed suicide hotspots is high-yielding, hybrid cotton, the spread of which was followed by that of hybrid Bt cotton, both of which require intensive water and fertiliser inputs (p 94).

The authors provide a thorough survey of various aspects of state policy on agriculture, especially in the post-liberalisation period, to establish that the Indian government has indeed failed the farmer. They also explore the journey of Bt cotton in India in detail and the numerous studies arguing for or against the GM crop. Their position on the acute polarisation in the Bt cotton debate is reasonable and balanced, and does justice to the complexity involved in gauging its impacts. "Polarising the issue as being pro or anti Bt cotton has got us nowhere," write the authors (p 221). At the same time, they emphasise that the GM seed comes with an array of serious problems: stagnating productivity, new pests, resistant bollworms, unsuitability for rain-fed conditions, a loss of biodiversity, and a vulnerable farming community faced with increased expenditure (pp 257–58).

The profound distress in Indian agriculture can be blamed on a plethora of complex and persistent issues. Political scientist-turned-politician Yogendra Yadav, who is deeply involved in farmer's issues, has elegantly framed the causes of the crisis as "economic, ecological and existential." It is relevant to observe that Menon and Uzramma's investigation of the state of affairs in cotton farming would have benefited from a more comprehensive treatment of its various environmental dimensions, though the impact of pesticides is covered. For one, the cancer crisis in the cotton-growing Malwa belt of Punjab owing to high pesticide usage does not find a mention. On a similar note, the environmental cost of industrial textile manufacture is also not detailed in the book.

The Cotton Handloom Industry

A well-written chapter on "stories of cotton weaving" (pp 268–95) discusses the diversity of handloom traditions across the country, including various sari designs, which will interest the handloom enthusiast and lay reader alike. This chapter also informs us about some of the important innovations and steps in the manufacturing process. Uzramma's narrative of her involvement with handloom weavers in Chinnur in Adilabad district of Telangana, who wove cloth for local consumption, also offers significant insights. However, this chapter suffers from several serious analytic and historical limitations. It does not engage with the various dimensions of the handloom industry in an analytic sense, nor does it do justice to its post-independence history. The historical narrative of the fate of the handloom sector in independent India is entirely missing, except for a brief mention of the important national textile policies of 1985 and 2000. Neither the content nor the impact of either of these policies is presented.

It is of relevance here that the limited literature on the policy origins of the troubles of the handloom sector has almost exclusively focused on the impact of the 1985 textile policy, which is an important policy statement in the textile history of independent India which emphasised productivity. In turn, this policy neglected the huge employment potential of the handloom industry, which is mentioned by the authors cursorily by way of a quote. Crucially, the authors fail to address the historical reality that this policy was, in fact, a continuation and logical extension of the policy bias of the Nehruvian state and its successors against the handloom industry. The authors quote from a journalistic report that policies, since independence, recognised the employment potential of the handloom industry and provided it adequate safeguards from the mill and power loom sectors (p 293). However, this interpretation does not find support in the historical record. The fact of the matter is that successive governments of independent India encouraged and fully supported the phenomenal growth of the power loom sector, which led to a massive displacement of handloom weavers. Each job created in the power loom sector displaces 14 handloom weavers.

In fact, the policy bias against the handloom sector began very early in independent India. The critical 1954 Textile Enquiry Committee chaired by Nityanand Kanungo legitimised the power loom sector in state policy and decisively pushed for its explosive growth. The Kanungo report advocated an almost complete shift from handlooms to power looms, supposedly to benefit the handloom weaver. Government spokespersons, including the then Union Minister for Commerce and Industry T T Krishnamachari, made several references in this period that the textile policy of the country would take its cue from this report. That such a policy would entail the extensive displacement of handloom weavers was not a consideration. However, Menon and Uzramma's volume neither mentions nor analyses the Kanungo report, in addition to the other important textile policy statements in the decades that followed.

While the authors mention the takeover of handloom markets by power loom fabrics, an exploration and analysis of the spectacular growth of the power loom sector in independent India, which is the most significant development in our textile history since 1947, is missing in the book. Independent researcher Siddharth Joshi has analysed the growth of power looms in independent India. According to him, while the organised mill sector accounted for more than three-quarters of cotton cloth production in 1951 and the decentralised sector—which

was then constituted almost exclusively by handlooms—produced the remainder, this distribution stood reversed by the early 1980s. Since the mid-1960s, almost all of the increase in production in the decentralised sector was provided by power looms. This rapid mushrooming of power looms has dealt the most decisive blow to the handloom sector.

The penultimate chapter of the book is an engaging narrative about the Malkha initiative, founded and led by Uzramma, which decentralises cotton yarn production to enable weavers and textile workers to become autonomous participants in the economy. The Malkha endeavour has crafted a blueprint to address the yarn crisis which is at the heart of today's state of affairs in the handloom sector. Uzramma's chapter on Malkha helps us comprehend the knotty complexity and ever-present difficulties in implementing a model of socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and decentralised handloom textile production in today's world.

In their commentary and analysis throughout the book, Menon and Uzramma point to the colonial period as the origin of the distress in cotton. While the crisis in cotton farming and the handloom industry today can indeed be traced back to the colonial period, the current situation is in large part also an outcome of policy choices made in independent India. This history of cotton in independent India has largely been neglected in the wider body of literature on the topic. While the authors explore this policy history after 1947 with regard to cotton farming, the policy choices made in independent India with regard to the cotton textile industry, which led to the phenomenal growth of power looms in India, are not investigated. An excessive focus on the colonial period has skewed this history of Indian cotton away from a study of the fundamental transformations after 1947. Covering this aspect would have made the book more meaningful and complete. The book would also have been helped by careful copy-editing, given the numerous typos and errors one encounters.

Decentralised Approach

At the heart of Menon and Uzramma's volume is their important normative statement about

> a decentralised approach towards the manufacture and weaving of cotton, in addition to growing [indigenous] varieties that require fewer inputs and reduce the cost of cultivation. (p 341)

They forcefully advocate this approach to pull cotton weavers and farmers out of their current predicament. While this normative statement lends the book a strong central thesis, a wider consideration of other critical dimensions of the cotton story would have provided a more comprehensive understanding.

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BOOK REVIEW

Using Randomised Controlled Trials in Education, by Paul Connolly, Andy Biggart, Sarah Miller, Liam O'Hare and Allen Thurston, London, BERA SAGE, 2017 £25.99 for paperback ISBN 978-1-4739-0283-1

The transformation in the education research funding landscape that has occurred in the UK and elsewhere over the last decade has extensive coverage in this Special Issue. Although there has been a huge increase in the volume and quality of randomised experiments operating in schools, the provision of methodological training for researchers outside of the USA has not kept up with demand. The Education Endowment Foundation in England has had to turn to American research organisations to supplement its panel of evaluators to keep up. A text suitable for postgraduate and more experienced researchers on how to run randomised controlled trials (RCTs) in education is therefore not before time. Indeed, the only two relevant explanatory texts produced by English researchers available before this book were the more general but essential 'Designing Randomised Trials in Health, Education and the Social Sciences' (Torgerson and Torgerson 2008) and the brief 'A guide to running randomised controlled trials for educational researchers' (Hutchison and Styles 2010).

The book starts by devoting an entire chapter to the ongoing controversies that surround the use of RCTs in education and provides a balanced account of these. In the introduction, the authors make the point made elsewhere in this Special Issue that teachers, pupils, parents and other key stakeholders seem to understand the fairness of randomisation and routinely sign up to be part of an experiment. The landscape of fashions and fads within which experimentation is called upon to provide robust evidence is described well. The idea that RCTs are linked with a neo-liberal audit culture is challenged, just as it is also challenged indirectly by the observation within this Special Issue that governments of different political persuasions have initiated experimentation in schools. Furthermore, the authors cover the paradigm war between positivism and interpretivism in a refreshing way, explicitly debunking the notion of a hierarchy of evidence where RCTs sit at the top, and ending with a pitch for RCTs being compatible with critical realism.

The book then goes on to cover all the essential features of education RCTs starting with the importance of logic models. The three pages on the selection of outcome measures, whilst setting the scene well, acknowledge that psychometric theory concerning validity and reliability are beyond the scope of the book. This area still needs development in education trials: the ability of research teams to select or develop valid and reliable measures. A chapter on research designs includes a useful section on determining sample size and gives way to the highlight of the book. Two lengthy chapters on the fundamentals of analysing RCT data provide a level of clarity and explanation that is unprecedented in a text of this type. They navigate the often-unchartered territory between statistical justification and interpretation in a way that will help any experimental researcher who intends to embark on the analysis of an education RCT. The book concludes with a useful chapter on the reporting and synthesis of RCT results. The inclusion of synthesis here is important as the results of any education RCT need to be reported in such a way that a meta-analyst can use them. Reading this chapter will help researchers to include the necessary results and parameters in their report; important points too for replicability of their research.

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The book is therefore an ideal introduction to the method for researchers, teachers and educationalists. It embraces ongoing criticism of RCTs, demystifies the fundamentals of design and analysis and clarifies reporting requirements. It does this in a way that will be attractive to anyone observing the rise of this method from the sidelines or for those already fully committed to it and feeling a moral imperative to test new programmes rigorously.

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MAHESH RANGARAJAN and K. SIVARAMAKRISHNAN, eds, *Shifting Ground: People, Animals and Mobility in India's Environmental History*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014, 310 pp.; and MAHESH RANGARAJAN, *Nature and Nation: Essays on Environmental History*, Ranikhet: Permanent Black in association with Ashoka University, 2015, 346 pp.

DOI: 10.1177/0019464618782216

In the era where interdisciplinary studies have become the norm of the day, it is perplexing to note the growing reinforcement of disciplinary boundaries in publications in India; there are a few welcome exceptions like the books under review here. A cursory glance at the contents of the two volumes draws the attention of readers to the importance of interdisciplinary research when it comes to issues of nature and nature–society interactions and contemporary politics. Rangarajan's *Nature and Nation* showcases the significance of *longue durée* in the world of 'instant coffee' and irrelevance of temporal categorisations in studies of the environment. The inherent variability of nature makes its study more and more complex, often defying any easy location within a particular discipline. The complexity of human–nature interaction, especially in India, may in part be due to the fact that 'India has over 25,000 species of flowering plants, 500 species of mammals, and 1,200 species of birds in about 2 per cent of the world's land area' (*Shifting Ground*, p. 11).

Acknowledging the interdisciplinary nature of environmental history and therefore necessity of interactions with other disciplines, Rangarajan notes, 'inevitably, as one's horizons broaden, the ground surveyed grows less familiar, the trails all seems strange and to whom can one turn but those who know the way—and know it far better than I ever can?' (*Nature and Nation*, p. xi). It is difficult to define and restrict the list of disciplines engaged with issues of environment and environmental history. What is equally important is to recognise that human ingenuity has been relentless in identifying the economic value of even the most mundane component of nature. Once economic value of any component of nature became visible, exploitation, contestation and conflict were imminent. Generally, uncontrolled exploitation of resources resulted in unexpected and/or unwarranted, changes in the profile of the region at both the micro- and macro-levels.

Socio-religious practices also played an important role in determining the pattern of human–nature interactions and their negotiations, but these cannot be insulated from the inherently dynamic character of nature. Similarly, developments in 'modern science' over the last couple of centuries have provided a comprehensive understanding of nature and natural processes, but their location in the politics of empire and nation-building is critical in understanding the 'politics of development' itself. Such an expanding, nuanced domain of environmental history has been very aptly captured in the diversity of themes addressed in both the volumes under review.

Edited by Rangarajan and Sivaramakrishnan, the collection of articles in *Shifting Ground* break through rigid disciplinarian and historiographic divisions. Kathleen

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Morrison challenges the standard environmental trope of a harmonious relationship between past societies and nature. Shibani Bose explores the 'margins' by moving away from an account of the 'awesome felines' to the great one-horned rhino cast in the larger context of changing access to landscapes and waterscapes negotiated not just with humans but with a more extensive flora and fauna as well. The modern fallacy of reducing human interaction with the natural world to cattle, horses, elephants and 'wild beasts' in the zoo is lucidly challenged in the articles of Divyabhanusinh, Julie E. Hughes and Brian P. Caton. By reducing human interactions with a few select animals, a very important part of our human past is lost, and ahistorical relationships grafted with the natural world. This theme has been valuably developed by Radhika Govindrajan in her study of animal sacrifice in Himalayas. A rampant 'cultural nationalism' has so appropriated our cultural heritage that nuanced interventions such as Govindrajan's are really the need of the day.

The nine essays and long introduction in *Nature and Nation* written between 1998 and 2012 dwell upon the ever-increasing conflict between requirements of conservation, the consumption needs of the human population and the role of the colonial and postcolonial state. British colonial notions of territoriality often visible in the conflicting claims by forest and revenue departments continued well into independent India. Although 'modern' management practices of natural resources in general and forests and water were fraught with contradictions, the sections on the margins remained the ultimate victims. The third section of *Nature and Nation* extends the investigations on forests and examines concerns for wildlife and its future in the emerging nation.

Although our intellectual elite often see democratic governance as a protector of the natural world, they ignore the dictates of pragmatic governance and its toll on nature. Although a running thread through Rangarajan's assessment of colonial and postcolonial environmental issues concerns contemporary political discourse and capitalist exploitation, his essays remain circumspect, rarely developing and addressing the issue head-on. Merely reflecting on the politics without explicitly contextualising its location in the larger political economy of the world chips away from the full significance of his contributions. It is equally important to explore the contradictory aspirations of the citizens of independent India; reducing them to spectators or recipients of the policies of the ruling class undermines the historical agency possessed by both people and nature. Despite its many contributions, *Nature and Nation* does not sufficiently challenge the dominant faith in democratic governance and the state as owner and, therefore, the provider of resources.

There is no gainsaying the fact that significant writings on environmental history find it difficult even today to secure a place in the 'essential readings' in bibliographies on the history of a nation or even a region. We will find them, for the most part, in the section on 'suggested readings' only. Reflecting on this state of affairs, Rangarajan and Sivaramakrisnan point out that

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> Despite the major insights that existing scholarship has delivered..., it is still necessary to promote more sustained and engaged dialogue that straddles different eras..., all the more so because many historians and sociologists of modern India often view the past as a kind of *tabula rasa*. (*Shifting Ground*, p. 7)

It is not merely an inability to contextualise nature and environmental concerns in human experience that is a problem, the issue concerns the myopia of inherited disciplinary boundaries where the tools and methodologies of other disciplines appear alien. Not deterred by prevalent lack of appreciation at a general level, the domain of environmental research is getting larger and interdisciplinary research is flourishing, even if it is sporadic and within the domain of select institutions. It is in this context that we need to appreciate both these volumes and their collection of essays which lucidly enunciate different dimensions of the debates occupying contemporary environmental discourse. Despite the fact that a few of these articles were written for a specialist audience, such efforts are salutary. They stress the ever-growing requirements of mapping the shifting ground(s) of nature and nation.

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TIRTHANKAR ROY and ANAND V. SWAMY, *Law and the Economy in Colonial India*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016. 256 pp.

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Along with the railways, the rule of law is often cited as one of the 'gifts' that the British Empire bestowed upon India. However, the legal system inherited from the British Raj is far from an unmixed blessing. If there is a 'rule of law' in twenty-first century India, it is a rule by attrition and frustration. In *Law and the Economy in Colonial India*, Tirthankar Roy and Anand Swamy set out to evaluate whether the colonial legacy can be held responsible for the notoriously cumbersome legal system that entangles commercial flows in the subcontinent today.

The scholarship here is situated within the field of New Institutional Economics, which has engaged substantively with the long-run economic impacts of colonialism and colonial legal systems in particular. Roy and Swamy, quite rightly, find the influential dichotomies of settler versus extractive colonialism or civil versus common law to be overly simplistic in explaining the Indian case. Instead, they argue that the colonial legal system incorporated all of these different characteristics and as importantly, it evolved over time and in reaction to political exigencies. The book persuasively demonstrates how a contingent and scattershot process of legislation produced overlapping legal codes that impeded rather than fostered economic growth.

Victims of development

Adivasi women bear not only the brunt of development's violence but also the adverse impact of that on gender relations. BY **AJIT MENON**

MUCH has been written about development and its inequalities. One only has to travel through Indian cities or visit rural India to have it stare one in the face. Poverty and inequality are prevalent and part of the everyday reality that one negotiates, often without even batting an eyelid. *A History of Adivasi Women in Post-Independence Eastern India: The Margins of the Marginals* tells the story of one of India's most marginalised social groups.

A History of Adivasi Women in Post-Independence Eastern India

The Margins of the Marginals

By Debasree De

Sage Publications, New Delhi

Pages: 293

Price: Rs.995

Whether the author, Debasree De, is correct or not in pointing out that little has been written about Adivasi women, her book provides important insights into how development has impacted them in that part of the country.

The story of Adivasi dispossession in the colonial and postcolonial period, often in the name of development and the greater public good, is fairly well known. Adivasi women are doubly "disadvantaged" as Adivasis and as women. They bear not only the brunt of development's violence but also the adverse impact of that on gender relations. By drawing on short case studies from across West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha, Debasree De offers glimpses of the hazardous work conditions that Adivasi women face as the project of development steamrolls ahead. She narrates how the Oraon, Munda and Santhal women who work in tea estates in West Bengal were hit by the crisis in the tea industry in the early 2000s, many losing their jobs and dying of starvation.

She also details the exploitative conditions of Adivasi labour in the brick and construction industries of Bihar and the mining industries of Jharkhand and Odisha. Many of these stories of development and dispossession, notably those of the industrial town of Kalinganagar, and POSCO and Vedanta, all in Odisha, are familiar, but what Debasree De does well is illustrate how such examples are ubiquitous across the landscape.

Her analysis of the political economy of development must be seen in the context of what was promised. Jawaharlal Nehru's panchsheel, or five principles, spoke about the need for people to develop according to their own genius and for development not to be imposed. It also spoke of respecting Adivasi rights to forests and land. The reality is a far cry from this: Adivasi land alienation has been the order of the day and relocation and rehabilitation an almost complete failure. Forest-based livelihoods have been undermined with increasing state control over forests and common agricultural practices such as shifting cultivation have been made illegal. While the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Rights to Forest) Act, 2006, goes some way in redressing land alienation, implementation has been slow in many States.

What comes across from Debasree De's narrative is that the state has tried but failed to cushion the impact of this dispossession. On the one hand, the state does not want to stymie capital accumulation; on the other, it is aware that it must cater to the needs of all its citizens. The vast bureaucratic machinery for tribal development in the country is testimony to the latter, as are government schemes such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme and programmes targeted at women such as the Mahila Samridhi Yojana, which have had a fairly large presence in Adivasi areas.

Tribal development can be seen, therefore, as a form of governmentality that seeks to create new subjects who on paper are increasingly provided for by the state but more im-

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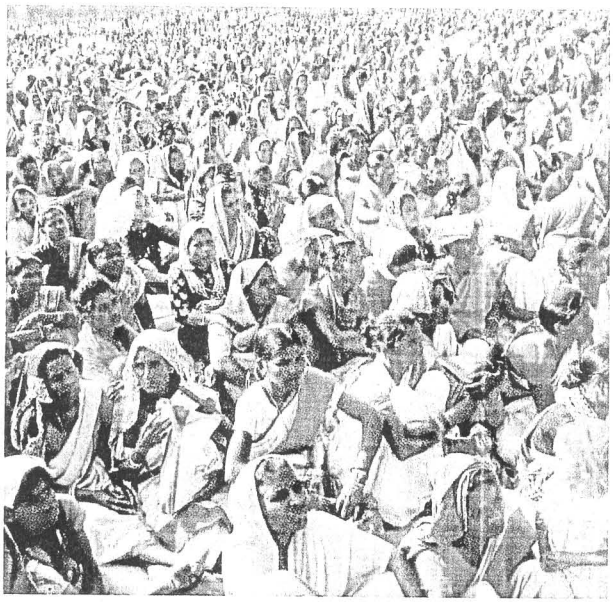
portantly perhaps do not get in the way of the development juggernaut. In practice, it is questionable as to whether the state has actually provided adequate welfare.

Debasree De illustrates how tribal development agencies established throughout the Adivasi belt of eastern India have to a large extent been dysfunctional. She also depicts how the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and the Indira Awaas Yojana amongst other schemes have not delivered, opening up the playing field for non-governmental organisations, which must now do what the state cannot. She points out that progressive land-related laws such as the Chhota Nagpur Tenancy Act, 1908, and the Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act, 1876, have been watered down to take away agricultural land for industrial and commercial purposes.

Debasree De is careful not to essentialise either Adivasis or Adivasi women while capturing the violence of development. She illustrates the huge diversity of Adivasi communities—differences in the realm of culture (folk traditions, crafts, marriage ceremonies, etc.) and economy (settled agriculture versus minor forest produce-based).

GENDER RELATIONS

She also does not hesitate to point out that gender relations in Adivasi communities should not be romanticised. While it is true that many Adivasi communities have a bride price instead of dowry and that the *ghotul* (youth dormitory) is a common institution that improves gender relations at a young age, Debasree De suggests that Adivasi women are often denied inheritance, especially of property. Having said this, she reiterates that development is the main culprit in the worsening plight of women and the increasing objectification and commercialisation of the Adivasi woman's body.



MANOB CHOWDHURY

TRIBAL PEOPLE protesting against the dilution of the Chhota Nagpur Tenancy Act and the Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act, in Ranchi, Jharkhand, in October 2016.

While much of the book's focus is on "the discursive and material contexts that have historically produced tribal women as victimised, invisible and mute" (page xiv), the author also alludes to how Adivasi women have been central to Adivasi struggles: be it the Bhutia women in the Chipko movement or the Dhulia and Santhal women in the fight against land alienation in Maharashtra and Jharkhand respectively or Adivasi women more generally in armed resistance to the Indian state.

Moreover, the everyday stories that Debasree De narrates of women working in mines, tea estates and construction sites are testimony to the resilience of women under extremely adverse circumstances. One cannot help wonder, however, despite the strength and perseverance of Adivasi women, whether their struggles, everyday and long-term, can roll back the development that continues to marginalise them and have an adverse impact on gender relations within their communities. Debasree De suggests the same in her chapter on cultural silencing, making the case that Adivasi voices to a large extent have been drowned out in the process of development.

This book is worth reading if only to get a glimpse of the other side of development. To be honest, if one is looking for a positive spin on things, one will not find it in this book. My own feeling is that one must take cognisance of what is happening in the nooks and crannies of India that rarely catch the eye. One must also understand how the Indian economy is able to grow at 7 per cent and at whose expense that happens. These are fundamental questions about development that continue to haunt one and for which struggle seems the only option.

Is it possible to provide basic health and good education to Adivasi communities without displacing them and making them footloose labour? Neither Debasree De nor I for that matter would suggest that Adivasis are not interested in improvements to their lives, but surely it should be on their terms.

Although the story told is important, it is not always reader friendly. At times the book is too laborious. It has a somewhat long-winded conceptual discussion around what it means to be Adivasi, the difference between terms such as Adivasi and tribal, and how gender must be understood in the context of development. Important as these concerns are, they detract from the story the author wants to tell. Moreover, the anecdotal case study approach the author has taken, while revealing, only touches the surface of issues that require much more detailed enquiry. If one is to come to terms with the violence that development often brings, it is necessary to document much more systematically how it operates. □

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Books

GANDHI'S TRUTH: On the Origin of Militant Nonviolence by Erik H. Erikson, W.W. Norton, New York, 1969.

IN a 'letter' addressed to the dead Gandhi and included in the book, Erikson explains the purpose his book. 'My task in this book,' he writes, 'is to confront the spiritual truth as you have formulated and lived it with the psychological truth which I have learned and practised. This truth, I believe, must supplement your work as it spreads, in many unforeseen ways, beyond India and into the future. To do this, I will first apply clinical insights to your work, then compare your kind of insight to ours – a task which I can complete only at the end of the book.' Beyond a clinical study, the book is an attempt at rearticulation in secular language of the lessons of Gandhi's experiments with truth.

Erikson is Freud's messenger to Gandhi. An original contribution of his work is the occasional juxtaposition of events from Freud's life, as told by him in *Interpretation of Dreams*, with those of Gandhi's life as narrated in the autobiographical writings and supplemented by research conducted by Erikson in India, particularly Ahmedabad. Less original but clearly more successful is the author's reconstruction of Gandhi's early life, from childhood to middle age. This takes us to what he considers the culminating event of Gandhi's political life – his leadership of the Ahmedabad textile workers' strike in March, 1918. Gandhi was then in his forty-ninth year. What intrigued Erikson was that the strike, which he terms 'the Event', is played down in Gandhi's autobiographical writings as in those of his biographers. A conviction took shape gradually in Erikson's mind that 'what was described by him (Gandhi) and by some biographers as a mere episode in his life – and in Indian history – was, in fact, an event of vital importance in his advent as a national leader and as the originator of militant non-violence.'

The psychoanalyst sensed that the Event was a traumatic experience repressed by Gandhi and the others involved in it, for a certain embarrassment seems to govern later accounts – as though the Event itself had not proved quite worthy of the Mahatma's subsequent career. Records of the day-to-day progress of the strike seem mostly to have been lost. For these very reasons unravelling the Event may be a key to understanding Gandhi's later public life and elaboration of satyagraha.

'The year 1918, important in Gandhi's life and in Indian history, was also the year of massive mechanized slaughter on the (battle) front in France, the year when empires collapsed and new world alliances were formed, the year of Wilson and above all of Lenin.' It was a psycho-historical conjuncture which shaped social and political patterns (or traumata) that dominate our lives to this day. Erikson seems to assume that an important source of our present afflictions as well as of their cure is to be found by returning to that period of time in the closing year of the First World War 'when historical actuality had quickened to a rare intensity and pace' (61). There is a hint in Erikson's writing that the political problems which the leaders who gathered in Versailles failed to meet, and probably aggravated, might be resolved by methods that Gandhi was developing at about the same time in Ahmedabad.

To history, as to analysis of personality development, Erikson applies the psychoanalytical method to traumatology. As he explains, 'The psychiatric origins

* From *Seminar* 122; 'Gandhi', October 1969, pp. 34-39.

of our approach have trained us to think in traumatological terms, that is, to discern not only origins but traumatic ones at that – trauma meaning an experience characterized by impressions so sudden, or so powerful, or strange that they cannot be assimilated at the time and, therefore, persist stage to stage as a foreign body seeking outlet or absorption and imposing on all development a certain irritation causing stereotype and repetitiveness' (98). We may expect then that psychoanalytical historiography ('psychohistory' as Erikson terms it) would analyse the interrelation of social and historic 'traumata' and the psychological ones. There are only hints of this more complex analysis in Erikson's book, as when he writes that 'with all his mood swings and confessions, Mahatma Gandhi could, for a moment, in history, make his inner voice consonant with the trend of human history and evolution' (401).

The trauma that Gandhi sought to overcome throughout his life, according to Erikson, was compounded of two encounters with his father. The first was when young Gandhi confessed to his father that he had stolen some gold from his brother's armband to pay for 'a small debt of the latter.' Gandhi wrote out the confession in the form of a letter in which 'not only did I confess my guilt, but I asked adequate punishment for it, and closed with a request to him not to punish himself for my offence. I also pledged myself never to steal in future.' The father, as Gandhi recalled, 'read it through and pearl drops trickled down his cheeks, wetting the paper. For a moment he closed his eyes in thought and then tore up the note. He had sat up to read it. He again lay down. I also cried. I could see my father's agony. If I were a painter, I could draw a picture of the whole scene today. This encounter, as Erikson sees it, 'has a certain typical ring – a resonance with the lives of other leading individuals with a premature conscience development and an early assumption of moral responsibility for a parent – a responsibility which they subsequently extended to mankind itself' (125).

There were echoes of this event in Gandhi's later life, as when he dreamt that his son had stolen something. This could mean not the fear that his sons might be thieves (as Erikson interprets it) but his yearning that they would be as frank and open with him as he was with his father. Gandhi repeatedly implored his children to open up to him. To his eldest son he wrote: 'If you cannot give vent to your feelings before me, before whom else can you do so? I shall be a true friend to you. What would it matter if there could be any difference of opinion between us about any scheme of yours? We shall have a quiet talk. The final decision will rest with you.' Undoubtedly, Gandhi was disappointed that none of his sons confided in him.

A more haunting encounter between Gandhi and his father occurred when the latter lay on his death bed. Gandhi was nursing him but left for a while to spend time with his pregnant wife. Where he returned, the father was dead. To have forsaken the father at the moment of his death in order to spend time with his wife turned into a blot on his life which Gandhi was 'never…able to efface or forget.' Erikson compares this blot 'in Gandhi's life (to) what following Kierkegaard I have come to call "the curse" in the lives of spiritual innovators with a similarly precocious and relentless conscience' (128).

The central problem of Gandhi's moral self may thus be formulated in Erikson's language as follows: 'This curse, clinical theory would suggest, must be heir to the Oedipus conflict. In Gandhi's case the "feminine" service to his father would have served to deny the boyish wish to replace the (aging) father in the possession of the (young) mother and the youthful intention to outdo him as a leader in later life. Thus, the pattern would be set for a style of leadership which can defeat a superior adversary only non-violently and with the express intent of saving him as well as those whom he oppressed…The question is…why certain men of genius can do no less than take upon themselves an evolutionary curse shared by all, and why other men will be only too eager to ascribe to such a man a god-given greatness surpassing that of all others' (12).

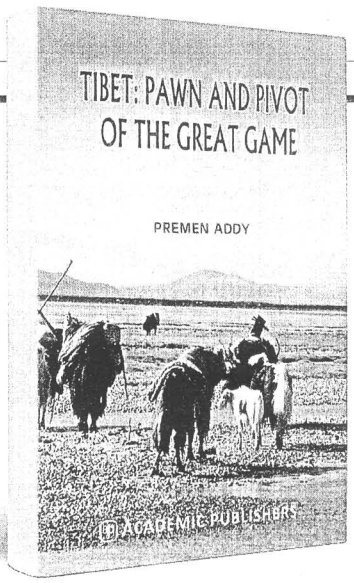
Erikson adds: 'But I believe that just because Mohandas [Gandhi] was early (if only darkly) aware of the unlimited horizon of his aspiration, his failure to preside mercifully over his father's death and thus to receive a lasting sanction for his superior gifts was, indeed, the curse of his life. But this, as we saw, is (typically) a shared curse, for if "carnal weakness" was to blame, it was the father's weakness which had become the son's.' That this was the central trauma of Gandhi's life or, in psychoanalytical terminology, the 'ontogenetic version of his childhood curse…the theme of nursing a stricken (and ambivalently loved) superior adversary reappears in Gandhi's later life both literally and symbolically… One would not wish to overdo the parallel, but it is thought-provoking that in Freud's reported dreams the conviction of having been of medical assistance to his dying father looms large as a dream-wish counteracting his medical ambitions' (130).

The difference between neurotic 'repetition compulsion' of childhood trauma in ordinary patients and 'creative re-enactment of a curse' is that in the latter

BOOKS

TIBET ON A CHESSBOARD

By Shyam Saran



TIBET: Pawn and Pivot of the Great Game
By Premen Addy
Academic Publishers
₹795; 380 pages

Premen Addy has written a well-researched book on Tibet and its changing fortunes in Central Asia, lying at the intersection of competing ambitions of the British empire in India, the Russian empire in Central Asia and the fading power of the Manchu empire in China. The story unfolds over the 19th and 20th centuries, culminating in the occupation of Tibet in 1950 by China, asserting absolute sovereignty over a country that had survived—in relative independence—in its vast and forbidding geography through political ambiguities about its status. The persistent fiction of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, a vague and elastic term, would never have been sufficient to sustain Tibet's autonomy whenever the Chinese power was in a position to extinguish it. China had always rejected the notion of suzerainty as diminishing its untrammelled jurisdiction over territories claimed as part of its historic empires. This was the case with Chinese Turkistan and later in Tibet. And it is evident more recently in the South China Sea.

The writer produces a wealth of documentary material to expose the different perspectives on the Tibet issue between those charged with safeguarding Britain's worldwide empire and those primarily concerned with the interests of its Indian empire. The latter recognised that "it is the Tibetan plateau, not the Himalayas which forms the real northern frontier of India" and, therefore, looked favourably on Tibet's emergence as an independent entity friendly to, and supported by, India. However, for London, the policy towards Tibet had to be aligned with its European and global compulsions. The myth of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was maintained because China was viewed as "a possible ally against Russian expansionism and it was because of this that London had put a brake on the Indian government". Later, when Britain and Russia became allies in 1907, Britain was loath to taking any action in Tibet that might raise Russian suspicions. The author also presents evidence of the US taking on an early role as a self-appointed guardian to China, upholding its claims over Tibet as inherited from the Manchu empire.

The book draws a parallel between the evolution of Outer Mongolia as an independent state under Russian tutelage and what could have been a similar process of Tibet emerging as juridically independent under the British aegis. Both Mongolia and Tibet were territories recognised as being under Chinese suzerainty, but the Russians ensured that China had to eventually recognise the Mongolian Republic as an independent entity. The Russians had even proposed to Britain that in return for the latter recognising a Russian sphere of influence in Mongolia they would accept British primacy in Tibet. But this offer was not accepted even though the Russians were able to get Japanese acquiescence to Mongolian independence in return for recognising Japanese interests in Manchuria.

It is the Tibetan plateau, not the Himalayas, which forms the real northern frontier of India

Despite their weakened state, successor republican regimes in China continued to lay claim over territories which, according to them, had paid tribute to the Manchu empire. These included Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. This finally convinced the British to seek a defined border between Tibet and the territories south of the Himalayas. The result was the McMahon Line drawn up at the Simla Conference in 1914 where China, Tibet and the British were represented. The Chinese representative initialled the agreement, but later repudiated it, thus sowing the seeds of the border dispute between India and China.

The author has drawn attention to the events leading up to India acquiescing in Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950. The implications of Chinese control over Tibet were well understood by the leaders of independent India and its diplomats. In a 1948 report, K.M. Panikkar, who later served as India's ambassador to Mao's China, argued

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Himalayan Borderlands and India–China Relations

PAUL McGARR

BOOK REVIEWS

Shadow States: India, China and the Himalayas, 1910-62 by Bérénice Guyot-Réchard, *Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017; pp 321; ₹550.*

The contested Himalayan border between India and the People's Republic of China (PRC) has acted as a catalyst for one military confrontation between Asia's two largest states, in late 1962, and threatened many more. Over the years, commentators have repeatedly speculated that a settlement of the long and enervating border dispute is most likely to emerge from official recognition by both sides of the de facto territorial frontier.

Such a pragmatic accommodation has, however, proved elusive. Indeed, in many respects India and China have more reason than ever to maintain their respective, and conflicting, cartographic claims. The abundant natural resources in India's north-eastern border state of Arunachal Pradesh, part of which China claims as "South Tibet," represent a valuable commodity to the booming economies of both countries. Moreover, as Indian and Chinese consumption increases apace, growing water shortages have seen New Delhi and Beijing covet the considerable hydraulic resources in the Himalayas. All of which makes Bérénice Guyot–Réchard's innovative and compelling examination of the history of Sino–Indian border friction both timely and important.

In *Shadow States*, Guyot-Réchard interrogates Sino–Indian rivalry from the perspective of state building. More particularly, emphasis is placed upon the attempts made by Indian and Chinese administrations to secure the loyalty and win the support of people straddling the Himalayan borderlands. The book argues that over the course of the 20th-century, as India and China sought to expand and consolidate state power in the Himalayas, the region's strong tradition of autonomy, and its nebulous border, fostered Sino–Indian competition. In effect, absent any sense of fidelity to New Delhi or Beijing, inhabitants of the borderlands were well-positioned to assess, and potentially to select, between alternative states. The distinct physical; and human geography of the region, Guyot-Réchard asserts, prompted India and China to become each other's "shadow states."

Established Narratives

At its heart, *Shadow States* sets out a case for interpreting competing approaches to nation building in the Himalayas as a necessary adjunct to any comprehensive understanding of Sino–Indian enmity. Existing studies of India's territorial quarrel with China are framed predominantly in terms of geopolitics, or approach the question in terms of national security, regional power projection, domestic politics, and national prestige. Guyot–Réchard breaks valuable new ground by tracing the processes and consequences of state making at a local level in the Himalayas. Ranging over the period between 1910 and 1962, the impact of Indian and Chinese policymaking on the borderland populations is considered from an early imperial genesis and through numerous postcolonial incarnations.

Under the pressure imposed by two expanding and competing states, the fears and hopes, and the accommodations made and benefits accrued by tribal groups, on both sides of the disputed border, are sketched out in forensic detail. *Shadow States* moves debates surrounding the roots of Sino–Indian tension beyond naked power politics or crude cartographic claims, and illuminates "the fact that India and the PRC both seek to consolidate their presence in the regions east of Bhutan by achieving exclusive authority and legitimacy over the local people" (p 3). By highlighting the agency exercised by Himalayan populations in shaping Sino–Indian relations and, by extension, the elided influence of border peoples across the globe in state formation and foreign relations, Guyot–Réchard makes a seminal contribution not only to South Asian studies but also to wider international history.

Moreover, *Shadow States* offers a salient corrective to established narratives on the origins of the Sino–Indian border war of 1962 and its legacies. The book concedes that in purely military terms, or when viewed from a strictly territorial standpoint, China emerged triumphant from its clash with India. Yet, in questioning the extent to which the People's Republic has subsequently elected to "forget" or ignore the border war, Guyot–Réchard suggests that Beijing may have come to interpret the results of its military entanglement with New Delhi as somewhat bittersweet. It is pointed out that the border war did not produce a workable modus vivendi between China and India. It did not induce Himalayan inhabitants to seek Chinese sovereignty and support, quite the opposite. Resistance to Chinese rule in Tibet continued unbated. In short, when surveyed from a different angle, China's victory appears less absolute and more contingent.

The book's efforts to recalibrate orthodox approaches to the border war is welcome, although the qualification applied to Chinese successes and Indian failures in 1962 does underplay some important points. The impact of national politics on the border war is rather glossed over. In this area it is hard to conclude that the Chinese Communist Party's leadership did not derive anything other than substantial benefit from the clash with India, while the Congress party and Nehru, above all, were severely weakened. Likewise, the broader propaganda and information battle that the war spawned across the developing world largely redounded to India's disadvantage.

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Still, in more local terms, Guyot–Réchard is surely correct in maintaining that once the border fighting had stopped, India fared much better than one might have expected in securing the allegiance of populations on both sides of the line of control. Paradoxically, but entirely convincingly, this outcome is ascribed not to the power or efficiency of the Indian state vis-à-vis China, but to precisely the opposite. The performative dimension of the border war, the book submits, demonstrated to "*the people living on either side of the McMahon Line* ... [the] story ... of China's greater capacity and potential, and of India's corresponding weakness" (p 240). It was the Indian state's appearance of vulnerability, above all, that made it more attractive to Himalayan peoples seeking to retain "agency in accepting or manipulating when, how, and how far state penetration could go" (p 249). Or, in other words, the image and substance of efficiency and power projected by China was too convincing and intimidating for its own good.

It is a little churlish to expect more from such an enterprising and compelling study of Sino–Indian interaction, but critical engagement with any work of scholarship demands some reflection on issues of emphasis and omission. *Shadow States* draws upon an impressive array of Indian archival sources, at national, state and local levels. The coverage of Chinese sources, which, in fairness, are far less accessible, is much more limited. There are a wide range of Chinese published primary sources and newspaper records, however, which could have been consulted, and that would have addressed some imbalance in the narrative. In essence, we learn an awful lot that is new and intriguing about the Indian side of the border issue. The Chinese vantage point, in contrast, remains largely opaque and subject to inference and conjecture.

Still, the fact that Guyot–Réchard's authoritative and timely examination of competitive state building on the part of India and China illuminates important directions for further scholarship, merely underscores its significance and path-breaking originality. *Shadow States* is certain to become an indispensable work of reference for academics and a general readership interested in efforts undertaken by New Delhi and Beijing to win the hearts and minds of the Himalayan peoples. In recovering and reimagining fault lines in Sino–Indian relations from the bottom-up, and privileging the hitherto marginalised agency of border constituencies, *Shadow States* challenges readers to reflect upon and revise accepted interpretations of Sino–Indian relations.

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State Policy and Adivasi Resistance in Contemporary India

INDRA MUNSHI

First Citizens: Studies on Adivasis, Tribals, and Indigenous Peoples in India edited by Meena Radhakrishna, *New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016; p ix +444, ₹995.*

As its title suggests, the book uses the nomenclature First Citizen, in preference to terms like Tribal, Adivasi, Scheduled Tribe (ST), or Indigenous People for a number of reasons. In the introduction, Meena Radhakrishna, editor of the volume, explicates the historical-political context of each of these terms, from colonial to contemporary, on global but especially the Indian scene. Bringing together discussions among colonial and postcolonial administrators, anthropologists, sociologists, and political activists concerned with Adivasi communities, she argues in favour of using the term which is somewhat new in the discourse on Adivasis. Radhakrishna observes,

> The phrase "first citizen" derives from the understanding that all such communities, including in India, are amongst the world's *first, original people,* and so by definition, the world's first citizens. Terms like "tribe," "adivasi," and "indigenous" have genealogies which arise from specific historical-political Indian contexts. (p 2)

However, as the studies in the volume show, these communities may prefer one term over another, for different cultural or political reasons, to best identify themselves at any particular time. Of course, they are neither uncontested nor unchanging.

The volume brings together studies by well-known scholars, and scholar activists seriously engaged with questions of Adivasi identity, livelihood, right to resources, gender issues, impact of "development," state action and growing discontent and its articulation among them. Fifteen articles are organised into three sections titled "Categories and Identities as Historical Process"; "Destruction, Loss, Dislocation"; and "Negotiations and Redressals." The introduction and the concluding paper titled "Epilogue: Violence of 'Development' and Adivasi Resistance: An Overview," are written by Radhakrishna, providing a context and an overview of the assault on the existence of these communities in rapidly changing India, and the emergence of new alliances to assert their democratic and human rights.

Ethnicity and Conversion

In the first section, Virginius Xaxa highlights the implications of the use of different terms, reminding us that "the label used often becomes an issue in the politics of identity." He elaborates on the question of indigenous, its usage in international and Indian situation, the controversy surrounding its applicability in many countries, including India and China. In India, Xaxa points out, the complexities of regional diversity make the use of the term problematic. So that communities which are indigenous to the country as a whole may not be indigenous to the region/territory of their

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Teaching and Researching Language Learning Strategies

Rebecca L. Oxford

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Research on language learning strategies started in the 1970s with the exploration of the question of how successful language learners learn (Rubin 1975). Since then, researchers and practitioners (e.g. O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Cohen 1998; Griffiths 2013) have been defining and describing language learning strategies and making a case for integrating strategy training in the language classroom. However, due to the complex nature of learning strategies, definitions in the literature are controversial, making it difficult for both researchers and practitioners to come to a common understanding of language learning strategies.

The second edition of Rebecca Oxford's *Teaching and Researching Language Learning Strategies* (first published in 2011) offers, in my opinion, even more riches to its readers than the first edition. Oxford is well recognized as a pioneer in researching and classifying language learning strategies who has devoted her teaching and research career to the study of this field: her Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford 1990) has been used worldwide by teachers and researchers. This thoroughly revised volume brings clarity to the field, offering a comprehensive content analysis of the existing strategy definitions in the field of language learning and beyond, eliciting their main features and redefining their traditional categorization. In addition, it advocates a completely new approach to the field, explicitly integrating the research on language learning strategies within the theoretical frameworks of self-regulated learning theory, autonomy, identity and complexity theory. By taking into account individual factors as well as contextual factors, the book sheds new light on language learning strategies, and elaborates on a Strategic Self-Regulation Model (S^2R Model) which encompasses the research on, and the teaching of, language learning strategies.

The book consists of ten chapters, organized into four sections. Section A focuses on clarifying definitions and features of language learning strategies (Chapter 1) and redefining an approach to strategies such as the S^2R Model mentioned above, within the theoretical frame of self-regulation, agency, autonomy and complexity theory (Chapters 2 and 3). Section B deepens our understanding of language learning strategies, taking into account the contexts in which they are used and the different roles strategies may take according to situations and stages in the learning process (Chapter 4). It thus comes to a new definition of strategies, superseding traditional categorizations and advocating instead for flexible use of strategies. In addition, it turns our attention to the learner's 'inner context', a complex dynamic system constituted by cognitive and affective aspects (Mercer 2016) and to self-regulation strategies in the cognitive, motivational, social and emotional domains (Chapters 5 and 6). Section C collates and discusses the findings of worldwide research on strategies for grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing, listening and speaking, pronunciation, oral communication and pragmatics (Chapters 7–9). Finally, Section D opens up discussion of innovations in strategy instruction, assessment and research (Chapter 10).

The first main strength of the book is the way it provides a new comprehensive definition of language learning strategies based on a critical analysis of existing definitions. The content analysis in Chapter 1 is the most extensive and accurate analysis of existing definitions of language learning strategies available. Thirty-three definitions in the field of language learning and beyond are taken into account, meticulously examined and coded through a grounded theory approach. In this analysis, emergent, recurrent themes are identified and later regrouped under eight major categories, 'master themes', which constitute the core of language learning strategies: the learners' consciousness of strategies, the different forms strategies may take, their purposefulness, the particular purposes they can serve (e.g. learning, self-regulation or task accomplishment), their various uses in different contexts, their teachability and the titles they are given in the literature. Based on the results of this analysis, a new, encompassing definition of strategies is first formulated, and then illustrated throughout the book. Since this definition is groundbreaking, it is worth quoting in its entirety:

> *L2 learning strategies* are complex, dynamic thoughts and actions selected and used by learners with some degree of consciousness in specific contexts in order to regulate multiple aspects of themselves (such as cognitive, emotional, and social) for the purpose of (a) accomplishing language tasks; (b) improving language performance or use; and/or (c) enhancing long-term proficiency. Strategies are mentally guided but may also have physical and therefore observable manifestations. Learners often use strategies flexibly and creatively; combine them in various ways, such as strategy clusters and strategy chains; and orchestrate them to meet learning needs. Strategies are teachable. Learners in their context decide which strategies to use.

> Appropriateness of strategies depends on multiple personal and contextual factors. (48)

This definition not only brings order and sets the basis for a consensus on strategy definition in the literature, but also focuses on new perspectives on language learning strategies, among which are: (1) the flexibility of the roles of language learning strategies; (2) the possibility of combining them in clusters and/or chains; and (3) the dependence of strategy use on personal (internal) and contextual (external) factors.

In particular, asserting the flexibility of language learning strategies means looking at the roles or functions strategies have, not at categories: for example, the strategy of analysing may be used for cognitive purposes (analysing linguistic information), for self-regulation of emotions (analysing one's own feelings), or for sociocultural purposes (analysing cultural elements in a communication).

The second merit of the book lies in the fact that it systematically integrates language learning strategies within a theoretical framework including self-regulation, autonomy, agency and the theory of complex dynamic systems. This allows a broader and more solid perspective on language learning strategies than before, and explicitly links the research on language learning strategies to other relevant fields of research on second-language acquisition.

The third merit of the book is that it re-elaborates the S²R Model, supporting it with findings from the fields of cognitive psychology, sociocultural theory and language learning psychology. The S²R Model is the backbone of Oxford's strategy theory and illustrates the complex processes through which learners self-regulate their use of strategies for the purposes of language learning and use. Among the innovations in this volume, compared to the first edition of the book (Oxford 2011), a strong case is made for reinforcing the wide theoretical background of the S²R Model, discussing, beside the constructs of agency and autonomy, sociocultural and psychological self-regulated learning theories. In addition, links to themes such as mindsets, resilience and hope enrich this holistic approach to strategic self-regulation. This strategic self-regulation of language learning processes is illustrated through different phases of task performance: the forethought phase, the performance phase, the self-reflection phase and an additional, more general self-reflection phase. While illustrating strategic self-regulation processes, the author addresses a wide range of factors related to the 'soul of learning strategies', such as the learner's prior knowledge, cognitive style, self beliefs, agency, autonomy, mindset, resilience and hope. In addition, in order to deepen the understanding of strategy use, the S²R Model also takes into account both the learner's external, sociocultural context (relationships with teachers, peers, family, friends, institutions, cultural beliefs and values, etc.) and their 'inner context' (Mercer 2016).

As a further new insight into the analysis of language learning strategies, the book revises the traditional notion of metacognition, replacing it with the more complete/differentiated notion of metastrategies. In the literature, metacognition is traditionally referred to as the 'executive-control and management function' (155) of strategy use, regulating the planning, monitoring and evaluation of strategy use. Oxford redefines this notion, specifying that this regulating function is performed by a set of different metastrategies, corresponding to the main domains of the S²R Model: metacognitive, metasocial, meta-affective and metamotivational strategies, respectively regulating the use of cognitive, social, affective and motivational strategies.

In this work, Oxford provides a crystal-clear description of strategy uses, illustrating their variety, flexibility and complexity by means of manifold narratives from her own or other research, thus giving substance and concreteness to her statements. These narratives bring real learners to the foreground and honour their unique stories. In addition, they make a case for the necessity of adopting an ecological perspective, a 'person-in-context relational view' (Ushioda 2009) to understand how strategies are used by learners in different situations, contexts and phases of their life and/or learning process.

This book itself is an illuminating example of research and metaresearch, for not only does it show the author's deep and up-to-date knowledge of the subject-matter, but it also provides a lucid overview of a vast range of publications in the fields of second language learning, cognitive psychology, psychology and sociocultural theory. It is also an outstanding example of the author's profound intellectual honesty and strong research ethics, in the way she acknowledges the accomplishments of other researchers even when she disagrees with some of their findings. In addition, it provides insights into metaresearch, all the while reflecting on (and inviting the reader to reflect on) cognitive styles, mindsets and other factors that may influence researchers. Thus, this book not only provides a new perspective on language learning strategies, but also serves as a role model for researchers. In the spirit of a teacher, Oxford gives explicit recommendations to the reader and researcher for dealing with other researchers: seek

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some consensus; demonstrate basic respect; notice complexity; recognize change; understand cognitive style disparities among experts; and build on prior efforts of positive communication.

Similarly to the other publications in the Teaching and Researching Series, the book addresses teachers, student teachers, and researchers who want to gain insight into the multifaceted and complex universe of how language learning works. The structure of each chapter is transparent and reader friendly. Several reminders and cross-references help the reader to orientate themselves within the book. The tables and figures are particularly helpful for the reader to visualize the most complex concepts and their relationships. Each chapter contains a large bibliography for further reading, and questions, tasks and projects for readers, encouraging them to further explore different aspects brought to light.

Alongside these manifold questions, tasks and projects at the end of each chapter, there is the invitation to join Oxford's ongoing research project on emotions in language learning. Taken together, Oxford's new perspective on language learning strategies, the fascinating narratives and her recommendations to researchers resonate in the reader's mind and encourage us all to move forward in these complex, but fascinating fields.

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Early Language Learning: Complexity and Mixed Methods

J. Enever and E. Lindgren (eds.)

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Early Language Learning: Complexity and Mixed Methods is presented by the editors Enever and Lindgren as the first collection of mixed methods research (MMR) studies in the field of early language learning (ELL) in an instructed context. The publication of this volume is timely: as Riazi and Candlin (2014) point out, MMR is experiencing a rise in numerous academic disciplines, including language teaching and learning, with studies posing research questions that increasingly are suited to inclusive approaches applying both qualitative and quantitative methods. Enever and Lindgren stress the importance of MMR in strengthening the validity and contributing to the depth and scope of a study. In addition, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data contributes to enhancing the credibility of the study and is common practice for case study research (Dörnyei, 2007). The volume focuses predominantly on recent, world-wide MMR studies on the learning of English as an additional, foreign and second language, and their mixed methodologies. The studies originate in Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America, representing countries that have experienced growth in early English language learning. In their closing chapter, Enever and Lindgren reflect on the recent growth of MMR in the field of ELL and suggest that an international journal devoted to ELL would be a 'natural home for discussions of research methodologies' (306).

Part 1 is titled 'Overview of Research Findings' and lays a solid foundation for the various international studies which follow. It consists of three chapters that, unlike the chapters in parts 2, 3 and 4, focus on the contexts of ELL in primary education, offer general insights and thus pave the way for the studies to come. Van Ginkel's study is the first chapter in Part 1 and looks at different models of language education currently implemented in a number of African countries (Kenya, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana) to facilitate the move from minority to majority language and finally to English as a classroom language. However, as van Ginkel shows, there is a mismatch between policies and observed classroom practices, which influences children's achievement. She argues that a better approach to supporting children would be a shift from minority to majority classroom language and then, from the age of nine, teaching English first as a subject before making it the medium of instruction. This conclusion is not surprising and in fact van Ginkel refers to numerous studies showing that children learn languages faster at an older age. In chapter 3, one of the few chapters that do not deal with English, Driscoll focuses on the teaching of intercultural understanding in foreign language education at primary level in the UK. She claims that current provision must move from a foreign culture emphasis towards a child-centred approach which focuses on developing and sharing children's realizations and self-reflections. Chapter 4, by Murphy, looks at the existing literacy skills gap of young English as an additional language (EAL) learners. Murphy argues that good literacy skills of EAL learners are a sign of good integration and of successful educational policies. She asserts that greater attention must be paid to the low literacy skills of primary aged EAL learners, as the young age of these learners cannot in itself guarantee successful language learning, and discusses possible solutions such as immersion and translanguaging.

Part 2 consists of five studies gathered under the rather general title of 'Empirical Studies Using Mixed Methods'. Chapter 5, by Porter, investigates the link between verbal working memory (VWM) and foreign language learning (proficiency and literacy) of young language learners learning French. The study concludes that VWM plays a significant role in language learning, although Porter found that even if VWM is high, young language learners perceive foreign language learning as a challenge. Chapter 6, by Jiang, Zhang, Liang, Yuan and Xie, discusses a study that combined elicited metaphor analysis and a questionnaire to investigate the motivation of young language learners in China. The results indicate that the participating 7- to 10-year-old children have a positive attitude and strong intrinsic motivation towards English language learning. Children were aware of the importance of English for their present and future. Moreover, parents believed in learning English, a factor that positively influenced young learner motivation. Jiang *et al.* consider that the underlying dynamics justify further creative MMR studies into young learner foreign language learning motivation.

Chapter 7, by Buendgens-Kosten, Hardy and Elsner, looks at receptive code-switching which, unlike productive code-switching, is a 'language practice often overlooked' (111). Underpinned by research in story-based teaching and the use of stories in foreign language teaching, Buendgens-Kosten *et al.* studied German primary classrooms with children fluent in Turkish and German learning English, using multilingual digital storybook software (English, German and Turkish) to study the link between receptive code-switching and comprehension. The

results show that although multilingual books might aid comprehension, it is not clear what specific aspect supports this positive development. Hilton (chapter 8) describes a study researching first- and third-grade children who were part of a new national English programme in France. The study sought to establish the possible advantages of such a programme and the contextual characteristics that might influence the language-learning process. Hilton concludes that primary English is a complex process with multiple variables interacting in 'unexpected ways' (141). Hilton also briefly reports on findings from a longitudinal follow-up study, which interestingly results in her questioning the significance of the functional syllabus for young English learners as proposed by the Council of Europe, if the allocated teaching time is below two hours per week. In chapter 9, Pižorn investigates three CLIL-related questions: how a CLIL approach can enhance young Slovenian children's English language proficiency, how it can impact on their attitudes, and how young learners' perceive CLIL teaching. Based on her results, she comments that CLIL will not automatically result in improved proficiency across all skills. Furthermore, she notes that although content-related and cognitive activities were more appreciated by students than regular language-learning activities, unexpectedly students' least-favoured activities included revising other subject matters in English. Pižorn stresses the importance of this finding as it questions the development of young learner's 'meta-abilities and their learning of learning processes' (160).

Part 3 is titled 'Longitudinal Perspectives Using Mixed Methods'. Butler (chapter 10) takes the reader out of Europe and once more a study centres on motivation of young English language learners in China. Butler offers a detailed and convincing account of how and why young learners' motivation, self-confidence and anxiety change, considering factors such as time and socioeconomic status. The next three chapters will be of great interest to readers and researchers familiar with Enever's (2011) pioneering Early Language Learning in Europe (ELLiE) study, with chapter 11 by Lopriore and chapter 12 by Lindgren and Enever expanding directly on research undertaken during this project. Lopriore looks at the language-learning development of Italian young English learners from a longitudinal perspective. Lindgren and Enever focus on the use of mixed methods for the construction of thick descriptions of ELL. They offer insights into the contexts and attitudes of three young English language learners in Sweden, showing that even if the school context is the same, the home context can play an influencing role on children's interest in language learning and on their progress. Lindgren and Enever state that their two lower-level students remain positive towards language learning over the years but the more advanced student encountered boredom. Although not a direct follow-up study, chapter 13 (by Mihaljević Djigunović) is also rooted in the ELLiE study and focuses on motivation, self-concept and achievement of the young English language learner. Eighty-one Croatian 10- to 11-year-old children participated in this study, which combined instruments used in the ELLiE study with newly designed test instruments. Mihaljević Djigunović concludes that unlike previous findings, factors such as changes in teaching methodologies or the addition of new subjects might contribute to a reduced learner motivation but it would be oversimplifying to call it a permanent development. Thus in such cases young language learners do not have decreasing but rather fluctuating levels of motivation and self-concept. The combination of these three European ELLiE-based studies and Butler's diverse study from China ultimately offers a very cohesive unit.

Part 4 presents three chapters gathered under the title of 'Evaluating Early Language Learning Programmes'. Chapter 14 returns to the topic of CLIL. García Mayo and Agirre aim to assess whether conversational strategies of children learning English in a mainstream or CLIL context are affected by the learner's age and learning context and if these conversational strategies vary over time. Sponsored by the Mexican Ministry of Education, chapter 15 by Sayer, Ban and López de Anda has a clear focus on evaluating the educational outcomes of an EFL programme in Mexico. Although the programme is implemented state-wide, challenges have resulted in only 25 per cent of elementary children receiving English education. This impact study documents findings in various areas, including learning and educational outcomes, social impact, and level of satisfaction. It provides insights into how, for example, English teachers are less aware of creating cross-curricular links in their lessons or how the sociocultural approach based on social practices in the curriculum remained predominantly an 'academic exercise' (283). Finally, the study by Porsch and Wilden (chapter 16) is based in Germany and centres on the C-Test (Klein-Braley, 1985), which, although well established, is still controversial: according to Dörnyei and Katona (1992), who confirmed both the reliability and validity of the C-Test, the controversy stems from the lack of clarity regarding the construct this test is intended to measure. Porsch and Wilden studied the validity and quality of the C-Test in order to establish whether it could become a tool for primary teachers to establish and individually foster young learners' competences. After testing 201 primary English learners, Porsch and Wilden

conclude that the C-Test offers a 'reliable and valid measurement of English proficiency' (300).

In their concluding chapter, Enever and Lindgren summarize the importance of mixed methods in early language learning research and then briefly review all studies. Their short analysis of applied research methods and the researchers' reasons for choosing MMR offers not only a comprehensive final overview but also additional or overlooked points referring to scale, process and design.

Overall, the varied studies gathered in this book make an excellent beginning to a discussion of the importance of the MMR in ELL. In current times of migration, Murphy's outstanding chapter 4 is most timely and will hopefully instigate future MMR research in the field of EAL. Also noteworthy is the value of this book for researchers and educators in primary English teacher education. Studies such as van Ginkel (chapter 2), Jiang *et al.* (chapter 6) and Hilton (chapter 8) highlight the significance and role of the teacher, teaching methodologies and materials. Undoubtedly, these areas merit future attention in order to continue the push forward within ELL.

Ultimately, Enever and Lindgren's choices of contributions support their view of the importance of sharing MMR expertise and the possible benefits of multidisciplinary research teams. Another strength is the way in which some studies overlap in their field of research, contributing to a nuanced view of the field. Having said that, not all chapters are equally strong, for varying reasons, as so often with edited books. More importantly, the subtitle—*Complexity and Mixed Methods*—raises a number of issues. Whereas the volume has much to offer in terms of mixed methods, it is not immediately obvious what the term 'complexity' refers to. Although the editors briefly refer to work by Larsen-Freeman (2), it looks as if they use the word 'complexity' not necessarily as a theoretical construct, but as evidence that the study of complex systems in second-language research requires a variety of methodologies. A number of chapters illustrate this complexity and by doing so also challenge current assumptions. Murphy (chapter 4) illustrates that young age cannot be considered a guarantee for successful language learning; Pižorn (chapter 9) shows that CLIL does not inevitably develop all language skills; and Mihaljević Djigunović (chapter 13) provides interesting corrections to our view of the motivation and self-concept of young learners. Thus it soon becomes clear that complexity can also refer to the complexity, in an everyday sense, of the research design, the results, the analysis, the limitations. Indeed, this complexity may well be the source of the unexpected inconclusiveness of some chapters.

Another issue is the accessibility of information, especially taking into account the broad readership indicated on the back cover, which includes trainee teachers, in-service teachers, graduate TESOL students, educators, researchers and policymakers. Not all the data in some of the studies is presented accessibly, and at times the shortness or the density of the account might leave one or the other readership wondering. A simple chart with an overview of the studies' themes, countries, participants, methods used, key findings, limitations and future research suggestions would have been a welcome addition. Not only would it support the various readerships by offering organizational alternatives, it would also illustrate, for example, frequent themes and MMR designs.

Ultimately, though, this publication is an exciting development and the importance of this book and its value for future MMR and researchers in ELL and primary English teacher education must be stressed. Enever and Lindgren have created the necessary stepping stone to finding a 'natural home' (306) for this research field so that expertise can not only be shared but also further developed.

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The reviewer

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The Non-Native Teacher

Péter Medgyes

Swan Communication, 2017, 172 pp., £21.95

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When I undertook the writing of this review, I was excited and fully aware of the challenge involved in reviewing a new edition of a volume that was originally published 25 years ago. The first edition of this book had a major influence on teacher-based research in applied linguistics and, from a more personal standpoint, it also significantly influenced my own career and research trajectory. So, I feel emotionally close and attached to this book. Nevertheless, I will attempt to give an objective overview of the most remarkable aspects of the book, including both its strengths and those elements that may now look dated.

The current edition is the third: the book was originally published by Macmillan in 1994, and a second edition was produced by Max Hueber Verlag in 1999. In the preface of this third edition, the publisher justifies the need for making it again available to the public on the basis of the current relevance of the questions raised in the earlier editions of the book, and I agree. It is still useful to see what the predominant patterns of classroom behaviour among native and non-native teachers are, and we still need to reflect on how to help raise the self-esteem of non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), who are often affected by a pervasive complex of inferiority. Those questions still need to be dealt with and the debate is more necessary than ever.

The movement studying and supporting NNESTs owes a great deal to the original version of Medgyes' book, which greatly contributed to the visibility of teachers who, in spite of being the majority of language teachers in the world, remained ignored in the professional literature as though they were affected by some kind of embarrassing disease that required them to remain hidden or keep a low public profile. Medgyes was a pioneer in bringing these teachers out from under their cloak of invisibility to claim a role for NNESTs in the language teaching profession. And no doubt, this has also had a significant impact on the work of teachers of languages other than English, who, following suit, have also realized how they can contribute and stand on equal ground with their native-speaker colleagues.

Yet Medgyes' stance is clearly different from that of many other researchers who have devoted their attention to the study of NNESTs, such as Braine, Kamhi-Stein, Selvi, or myself, to mention just a few. As already pointed out by Samimy (1997) in a review of the first edition of this book, Medgyes places a great emphasis on NNESTs' linguistic deficit, an emphasis which 'could perpetuate a sense of marginalization among nonnative professionals rather than promote a sense of empowerment' (ibid: 816). These words are rather critical and they bear some truth, since Medgyes seems to be committed to the idealized native model, which in some places he seems to question but in others seems to unconsciously regard as the ultimate aspiration of NNESTs. However, we must emphasize as well that Medgyes's pioneering work has awakened many NNESTs' awareness of their identities and helped them raise their self-esteem, and his contribution outweighs the potential marginalization highlighted by Samimy.

The current edition of *The Non-Native Teacher* differs from the previous two in the addition of comments in the margins of the original text and a list of suggested readings at the end of each chapter. The inclusion of marginalia is certainly an original idea. The reader has access to the original source and can read it as it was written in the 1990s, but their attention is also directed to more recent publications that are referenced alongside the text and at the end of each chapter. The visual design of the book makes this very clear. The original text is printed in black and the added reflective questions and comments in blue. One little visual handicap is that the many examples in the original text have been printed in grey, to enable the reader to easily differentiate the main text from the anecdotal examples. Yet the colour is so light that it is not very easy to read.

In essence, the book brightly renders a 25-year-old text in a renewed shape and format that makes it still attractive to modern eyes. It nicely combines the old and the new in a way that the reader can either benefit from both or simply stick to the original version. However, as I read the book, I increasingly had the feeling that the added comments fell short of what they could have been. They could be more informative and offer more insights into current discussions, and they could have introduced some of the several new ideas and concepts that have developed in the last 25 years of research on NNESTs. An example of this is when Medgyes is discussing the stress to which NNESTs are subject and, on p. 47, adds the following comment: 'Characteristically, Park (2012) gave her paper with this title: "I am never afraid of being recognised as an NNEST". How about you?' No further attempt is made to connect the original text with Park's ideas. One is left with the impression that

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the author limited the updating to adding relevant questions that may justify the use of the text for a teacher training course, but did not really engage in connecting with the current understanding of NNESTs in language teaching. The product is still satisfactory and enjoyable, but an extraordinary opportunity was missed to bring together the old and the new to a greater extent, tying the foundations of NNEST research with the diversity of topics and approaches in contemporary work on this topic. Examples of topics that have been widely discussed in the NNEST literature—and therefore could have been given more space in the side comments—are professional discrimination, self-perceptions and identity, ownership of the language, and the multilingual pedagogical resources available to NNESTs, to name just a few.

Another aspect I would like to deal with is the relevance of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in discussing the role of NNESTs in ELT. I contend that we need to look at both realities (ELF and NNESTs) together, because of the strong interaction between these two. Indeed, I have argued elsewhere (Llurda 2016, 2018) that ELF has brought a paradigm shift in ELT. Considering English the property of all its users, including those non-native speakers who communicate in ELF regularly in international contexts, brings a new perspective to the teaching of the language and to the status of NNESTs. Yet, there are NNESTs who choose to act as ambassadors for native speakers, whom they consider the 'true owners' of the language, and are sceptical of ELF and the relevance this may have in language teaching. Medgyes seems to be within that group, and this is not something to be criticized, as we are purely on ideological terrain when we come to these terms in the discussion. It simply must be pointed out. He seems to believe firmly in the importance of accuracy as defined by prescriptivist visions of standard language as the main goal in ELT. Whereas this was possibly a reasonable position back in the 1990s, one may nowadays wonder whether there hasn't yet been sufficient empirical evidence to conclude that ELF is changing the paradigm and the storyline of ELT in a dramatic way, and that language teachers who ignore the role of English as the universal lingua franca are falling into the trap of the native-speaker myth.

My favourite part in the book, since I first read it in the 1990s, has always been the section devoted to the dark and bright sides of being a NNEST (Part III: 'The two sides of the coin'). Here is where Medgyes displays his original views and findings, and especially in the chapter on 'the bright side of being a non-native' he offers information and tools that may help teachers overcome their inferiority complex and start establishing their own identity as professionally competent non-native teachers of English.

This latest edition of the book ends with two chapters that did not appear in the original version. Both were originally published elsewhere and were written in collaboration with co-authors. Chapter 11 reprints a joint paper with Valéria Árva (Árva and Medgyes 2000). It is a study in which five NESTs and five NNESTs were observed and interviewed. Chapter 12 reprints a study written with Eszter Benke (Benke and Medgyes 2005), in which they analyse data obtained from a questionnaire given to a large number of Hungarian students. These two chapters are quite different to and separate from the main text, as they were intended as independent pieces of research to be separately published, but they offer a more complete view of Medgyes' research contributions to the study of NNESTs.

Overall, this book is still an excellent introduction to the study of non-native teachers. It offers excellent material for discussion in teacher education programmes, and it can be taken as the starting point from which to construct knowledge and interpret current thinking on the topic, much in the same way as the original edition of *The Non-Native Teacher* was the starting point on which the current debates regarding NNESTs were established. It is not the ultimate source of reference, and it clearly does not intend to be so, and yet it is a valuable resource, worth reading and discussing among teachers and teachers-in-training. I personally feel indebted to the work of Medgyes and I thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity to re-read his witty and fresh style of writing. I recommend this volume to language teachers and teacher educators who have an interest in understanding the non-native teacher complexity.

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Educating Second Language Teachers ✓

D. Freeman

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Donald Freeman is one of three main scholars in the field of TESOL who have had a large influence on how I have come to understand the field (the other two are Jack Richards and David Nunan). Freeman has always approached his work from his perspective as a teacher as well as his development as a language teacher educator over the years and was one of the few scholars at the time to put the 'T' back in TESOL. In other words, he looked at applied linguistics and TESOL from the other side of the desk than most others at the time, who saw 'classroom-based research' as what the learners do, to the exclusion of the teacher. Arguably, he (along with Richards and Nunan) really introduced the field of TESOL for the first time to what we now know as second-language teacher education (SLTE).

Now he has presented a window into his thinking about SLTE with his new book: *Educating Second Language Teachers*. The book presents his perspective on his own journey and is illuminated with wonderful personal narratives that keep reminding us that 'teachers matter', although he does not use these words. But this is more than a book that takes a wonderful journey down SLTE memory lane. It also presents us with a new doorway at the end of the journey, through which we are invited to enter Freeman's vision of the future of SLTE. This doorway is Freeman's 'Design Theory', which he says 'ought to provide a reasoned basis on which to evaluate, to reform, and to innovate in educating second language (as well as other) teachers' (p. 252). It does.

Freeman presents his new theory in the final section of the book (chapters 12 and 13) and uses his reflection on his own journey, grounded in personal narratives, to get there. This is both good and not so good; the reason for my latter comment is that this could be seen as cherry-picking landmarks that only align with *his* particular journey. But then again, much of his journey has coincided with the actual development of SLTE as an emerging field. Indeed, my own journey was somewhat similar (albeit it a few years behind Freeman's); he was the trailblazer (along with Richards and Nunan), which is why I found this book so intriguing, enlightening, illuminating, and delightful.

The book is divided into four main sections and each begins with an orientation of what Freeman will discuss (reflection-*for*-action) and each also ends with what was discussed (reflection-*on*-action). This is a necessary feature of the book because at times the content was a bit dense and so I had to stop to reflect as I read some of the sections (reflect-*in*-action) of the text.

Part One of the book, 'How people use what they know to do what they do in the language classroom', lays the foundation for the other parts and suggests that educating language teachers is not the same as educating teachers for other content areas. This point is very important because it gave birth to the field of SLTE in its own right. Chapter 1, 'Teaching (language) teaching', makes the case for learning to teach as a social practice, a point that is central to Freeman's new 'Design Theory', presented in the final chapters. Chapter 2 is entitled 'The central challenges in second language teacher education', three of which are highlighted: (1) how language in the world relates to language as content in the classroom; (2) how the classroom, with its social structures and expectations, defines language teaching as a particular form of pedagogical activity; and (3) how people, who are users of language and have been students in classrooms, learn to teach language. There is also an excellent discussion on language teacher identity in this chapter.

Part Two has four chapters that outline how learning to be a language teacher has been conceptualized. Chapter 3, 'How people become language teachers: defining background knowledge', examines the often discussed dichotomy of 'native' and 'non-native speaker' teachers, or the 'born expertise' of so-called 'native speaker' teachers versus the formal training of teachers regardless of their origin of birth. The question Freeman then raises is: '[A]re teachers born or are they made over time?' (p. 44). Freeman says that in the 'born' position, background knowledge is seen as 'something individuals have and bring to the classroom to make them successful as teachers' (p. 44). Freeman points out that 'in the 'made' position, the knowledge has to be developed over time with training and support" (p. 44). Interestingly enough, Freeman says that when applied to language teaching, 'the "born" position embodies "nativeness" and caring as attributes of teachers' background knowledge, while the "made" position counters that teacher preparation and development are critical' (p. 44). The 'nativeness' position is still rampant in the ELT 'industry' where unscrupulous language school owners and national programmes (e.g. the JET in Japan or the EPIK programme in South Korea)

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try to hire so-called native English language speaker teachers who have, as Freeman says, 'the right genes' (p. 45) rather than hiring what I would term qualified teachers who have made a personal commitment to obtaining skills through education over time. If one is hired because he or she can speak the language, then this hiring should be termed 'conversation partner' but not a teacher (for more on this, see Farrell, 2015a).

Chapter 4, 'Disciplinary transmission in second language teacher education', examines two aspects of language teacher education: how disciplinary terms are set (the role of academic disciplines in setting/defining content) and how those terms are put in circulation or how the professional communities that articulate and use these ideas come about. For the latter, Freeman outlines two main language conferences, the Georgetown University Roundtables on Languages and Linguistics (GURT) and the Hong Kong Conferences on Second Language Teacher Education, as examples of how terms were put in circulation. Chapter 5, 'Learning-in-place: situating content and professional learning in language teacher education', examines how learning to teach combines knowing and doing in context, which Freeman calls the 'Haycraft dilemma' (p. 73) after John Haycraft and his work with the International House group of language schools. The dilemma examined here is whether language teachers are prepared by knowing certain things or by doing particular activities such as practice teaching (learning-in-place). Chapter 6, 'Socio-cultural views: understanding sense making and what travels in learning to teach languages', explores the idea of transfer of ideas or learning something for later use.

Part Three, 'Core processes of second language teacher education', is the part of the book that I really connected with given my own work on reflective practice in second-language education (Farrell, 2015b, 2018a,b). It comprises five chapters related to thinking, knowing and reflecting in SLTE. Chapter 7, 'How teacher thinking got to be part of language teaching', examines how this happened through different generations from zero (behaviourism), to first generation thinking of methodology, to second generation of thinking synthetically, to third generation of thinking heuristically. Chapter 8 outlines 'Four representations of teacher thinking': decisions and decision-making; teachers' thought processes; an ethno-cognitive model of teachers' decision-making; and language teacher cognition(s). Chapter 9 discusses four 'knowledge generations' where the focus shifted from *what* (first), to *how* (second), to *who* and *where* (third), and *why* (fourth). Chapter 10, 'Knowledge-geographies: a socio-professional view of what is worth knowing in ELT', examines the idea of *knowledge* as something that is learned and held to, knowing that is something enacted from the perspective of how that knowledge is formed and socio-professionally promoted.

Chapter 11, 'Reflecting: thinking and knowing in teaching situations', outlines and discusses the concept of reflection in SLTE, or as Freeman puts it, the 'mental activity that teachers do as they think in teaching situations' (p. 207). This chapter was of particular interest given my own work on reflective practice over the years and I was pleased to see that Freeman gives particular attention to the problems of translating this concept into SLTE. In particular, Freeman notes how reflection in SLTE has been seen almost exclusively as a problem-solving activity (or 'reflection-as-repair' as he calls it) aimed at improvement in teaching methods. However, as Freeman suggests, if we recognize reflection as a process of perceiving, and thus triggered by problem-posing, we can introduce the notion of 'where to look' so that the practitioner can begin to figure out what is happening rather than what activities are not working in the classroom. I agree with Freeman and suggest that second-language teacher educators avoid reducing reflection to recipe-following checklists that lead to a sole focus of 'reflection-as-repair', but I feel he does not go far enough. For example, I would caution against hasty referencing (e.g. to Dewey or Schon, as Freeman does frequently in this chapter) to legitimize an approach without a full understanding of that approach and its theoretical grounding. This is because many of the popular approaches (e.g. Dewey) are ends-based, in that reflection must be initiated by a teaching problem and that problem must be solved. I believe in a broader, more holistic approach to reflection in SLTE that is grounded in the belief that teachers are whole persons and thus should include consideration of each individual teacher's personal histories, beliefs, theories and expectations as well as their teaching practices (Farrell, 2015b).

Part Four, 'A design theory', is the culmination of the previous chapters, where Freeman proposes a design theory with socio-culture as its central premise. The key elements of the theory are presented in two parts. In chapter 12, 'Social facts and communities', Freeman outlines the tools and opportunities to learn that are based in social practice theory. He notes both that these social facts come from social and political discourses, and thus the social facts function in two phases, *professional languages* and *local language*, and also how social facts circulate through what he calls 'communities of practice'. Chapter 13, 'Renaming experience to reconstruct practice', continues the discussion outlined

in the previous chapter by examining how individuals participate in the activity in two ways joining the group and being a full member of the group. The seeds of this chapter can, in my opinion, be traced back to some of Freeman's earlier work [e.g. his wonderful review article of the hidden side of teacher's work (Freeman, 2001), but see also his narrative 13.2 (p. 251) where he notes seeds planted in even earlier work].

These chapters are followed by three appendices that explain how to use the theory in language teacher education activities (appendix A), language teacher education programmes (appendix B), and how the theory can be used in teacher assessment (appendix, C). These appendices serve to operationalize Freeman's Design Theory somewhat but I was a bit surprised at this 'ending' and perhaps these could also have been chapters in their own right but with more content that language teacher educators could implement in their own contexts. Perhaps we need another book called 'Design Theory in Second Language Teacher Education' as I feel Freeman tried to accomplish too much in this one volume.

Another important aspect of this book is that there is a website that accompanies it, with some interesting resources such as extracts, a personal note from the author, a guide to using the book, discussion questions, suggested further reading, and weblinks to related content on other websites (www.oup.com/elt/teacher/eslt). Of all of these I found the discussion questions for Part Three, 'Core processes of second language teacher education', most intriguing but I think they should have been included in the book itself to help orient readers given the density of some of the writing. For example, the first discussion question for chapter 7 is: 'Why is it "pointless" to ask teachers about what they are thinking about as they teach?' This is an excellent question and I wonder now if Freeman agrees or disagrees with this question; is it 'pointless'? If so, why is it 'pointless'? If not, why not? Another excellent question is: 'List some of the things you do on a regular basis as a language teacher. Using Table 7.5, identify where these practices might have originated.' I think readers would have been better served to have questions such as these directly after the text they had just read as they can help trigger reflections of their own.

In his personal note as author on the book's website Freeman talks about the 'donut problem in language teaching and teacher education' or as he explained:

> This outside—the public work of classroom teaching—was going on, like the circumference of the donut, with little or no understanding of what was the center, in the hole.

This is probably a reaction to his own entry into language teaching without any formal training or professional preparation, and as a result, he noted that he 'winged it' a lot in those formative years. Indeed, the problem in those early years was that there were no real guides for second-language teachers and especially so for SLTE (as a result of which he is a founder). *Educating Second Language Teachers* has now filled in the centre of the doughnut and can be used as a guide for future second-language teachers, teachers in training, academics and administrators so that they can enjoy the delicious jelly in the middle of the full 'jelly doughnut' that Donald Freeman has produced. *Educating Second Language Teachers* is a must-read as it more than helps to map out the terrain, and thus contributes to elaborating our understanding of teaching language teaching.

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Book Review

K. G. SUDHIER: Informetric Studies on Physics Theses of Indian Institute of Science. B. R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 2017, ISBN 9789386223548, Hardbound, 240 pages, Rs. 1250.00

The book under review is an extension of the author's PhD thesis in Library & Information Science entitled "Informetric studies on Physics theses of Indian Institute of Science". It discusses evolution of metrics studies starting from statistical bibliography through other facets of the informetrics including bibliometrics, scientometrics, webometrics and altmetrics. The book has been divided in ten different chapters. These chapters deal with evolution of metric studies, informetrics, citation analysis, authorship studies, aging and obsolescence studies, ranking of journals, core books study, application of Bradfords's law of scattering and Lotka's law of author productivity. Last chapter of the book is about new trends in informetrics and altmetrics.

In chapter-1 "Evolution of Metric Studies", the evolution of several terms in metric studies has been described. These include terms like bibliometrics, scientometrics, informetrics, webometrics and altmetrics. In chapter -2 entitled "Informetrics", the author has discussed several milestones of the evolution of informetrics starting from 1896 to 2016. The author has discussed various informetric laws including Bradford's law of scattering, Lotka's law of scientific productivity, Zipf's law of word frequency distribution in details. Author has also mentioned about some quantitative analysis and reference management software which can be used by researchers and librarians to analyze data. In chapter-3, the author discusses about citation analysis. This includes co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, literature mapping, obsolescence, co-word analysis, etc. Indicators derived using citation counts like h- index, g-index, p-index, etc. have been discussed. It also describes ranking of journals based on impact factor (IF) and immediacy index. The various citation databases or indexes such as Web of Science, Scopus, CiteSeer X, Google Scholar, etc., have also been described. In addition to the theoretical framework, the book also gives several examples based on the data taken from the author's thesis. The chapter also mentions limitations and even objections to the use of citations.

Chapter 4 deals with Authorship Studies in which the author has explained the collaborative research trends in physics literature cited in doctoral theses of Indian Institute of Science (IISc). Authorship pattern in physics journals, degree of author collaboration, authorship pattern of books, etc., are given. However, under the introduction author mentions that authorship pattern is one of the prime aspects of citation analysis is wrong. Under this chapter author has not discussed the latest indicators used for measuring co-authorship like co-authorship index suggested by Garg and Padhi as well as collaborative coefficient suggested by Ajiferuke, Burell and Tauge. In the chapter-5, the author has described the application of aging and obsolescence studies which helps the library professionals and knowledge scientists to maintain a need-based collection in libraries. Ranking of journals is the subject of chapter-6. The ranking of journals presented in this chapter is based on journals used by physicists of the Indian Institute of science. It also provides ranked list of Indian journals based on Journal Citation Reports, geographical distribution of journals, publishers of journals, etc. In chapter-7, the importance of studies on core books and ranking of books has been discussed with examples. An attempt to test the applicability of Bradford's law of scattering on journal citations of doctoral theses of IISc has been made in chapter-8. How to test the validity of Lotka's law to author productivity distribution in the field of physics literature has been described in chapter-9. The discussion on testing the validity of Lotka's law is quite illustrative. The last chapter-10 discusses new trends such as altmetrics that are emerging, has been discussed. Altmetrics is a new approach that can determine the quality and popularity of research more quickly than ever before based on the social web for analyzing and informing scholarship.

Since the book is based on the PhD thesis of the author, it lacks discussion on several new developments in the field of scientometrics and informetrics like activity index, attractivity index, normalization of impact factor and domestic and international collaboration etc. Some topics have also been repeated in different chapters. However, still the book may serve some useful purpose for library professionals and researchers of LIS.

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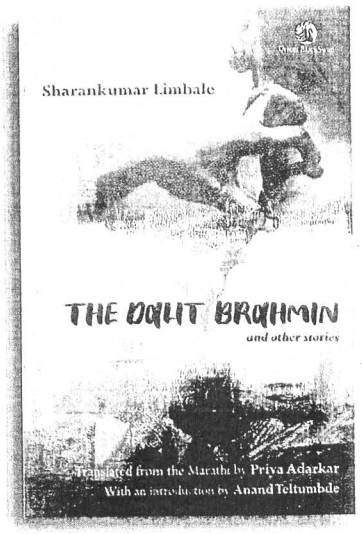
Holding up a mirror

In his latest book of short fiction, Sharankumar Limbale, a formidable voice of Dalit literature, mirrors the reality that Dalits live with even today.

BY **LYLA BAVADAM**

SHARANKUMAR Limbale is among the most acclaimed writers of contemporary Dalit literature in India. His latest book, a collection of 28 short stories titled *The Dalit Brahmin and Other Stories*, further cements his reputation as the voice of Dalit literature.

The son of a Patil father and a Mahar mother, Limbale realised that he was considered *akkarmashi*, or one of impure blood. His grandmother had a live-in relationship with a Muslim. Limbale embraced this as his social, genetic and emotional heritage. He named his autobiography *Akkarmashi* (*The Outcaste*), and when it was published in 1982, it was hailed as a landmark in Marathi literature.



The Dalit Brahmin and Other Stories
By Sharankumar Limbale
Translated from the Marathi by Priya Adarkar
Orient BlackSwan
Pages: 206
Price: Rs.450

EXPERIENTIAL WRITING

Dalit writing is largely experiential. There is not much fiction. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that until recently Dalits did not write or, more accurately, were not allowed to write. Until 50 years ago, literature in India was the stronghold of the upper castes.

The stories and traditions of Dalits were oral until B.R. Ambedkar emphasised the need for Dalits to declare themselves through literature and disprove the accepted wisdom that writing and literature were meant only for the upper castes. Hence the experiential writing that now largely characterises Dalit literature.

The writer Anand Teltumbde writes in his introduction to the book that it is this intensive recounting of their lives and all that has been forcefully ingrained in Dalits that has made Dalit writing "occupy a central place in literary discourse today". Teltumbde places Dalit writing in context, saying: "The history of Dalit writings, as the experiential narrative of Dalit lives by Dalits themselves in writing, goes back to the Tamil Siddhas (6th to 13th centuries C.E.) and Bhakti saints; since many of them were Dalits, it is probable that their oral verses were committed to writing for their aesthetic and spiritual value by others.... Modern Dalit writing, a product of the consciousness created by the Ambedkarite Dalit movement and the spread of education among Dalits, adopted the natural genre of short story."

Teltumbde goes on to trace the rise of this literature through the growth of certain publications that "brought forth a new generation of writers who were dissatisfied with the established Marathi literature, which they saw as bourgeois, Brahminic, moribund and orthodox. It [the Ambedkarite Dalit movement] ushered in modernism in Marathi literature and significantly became one of the catalysts of the Dalit literature movement."

The short stories in the collection are a glimpse into the lives of Dalits. The framework is the Ambedkarite movement. The characters are Mahars who have converted to Buddhism. They include the young and the old, men, women, children and young adults with raging hormones. They either bow to cruel tradition or challenge institutionalised oppression. The settings are both urban and rural. Feudalism, modernity, class barriers, illiteracy, superstition, love, treachery, blind devotion and oppression rage through the stories. They are not potboilers; they mirror the reality that Dalits live with even today.

There is the generation that accepted the injustices. There is the generation that questions these injustices, followed by the generation that is

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caught in a limbo of acceptance and rejection of what their ancestors tolerated.

Then there is the generation which roars and seizes its rights by the throat. But turmoil still rules. The generation that takes its rights for granted is yet to be born—social conditions have not allowed for that generation to be born. Limbale captures all these aspects in his evocative, raw, painful and lyrical stories.

The intriguing title of Dalit Brahmin is a reference to the urban, educated middle-class Dalit who is suspected by other Dalits of looking down upon them.

Teltumbde explains how "the term was first coined by [the Dalit writer] Baburao Baghul, but made famous by [the Dalit litterateur] Arjun Dangle through his anthology *Poisoned Bread*.... Dangle's description of the Dalit Brahmin as one who seeks to distance himself from the political progress and cultural expression of his caste community drips with disdain. Dangle's Dalit Brahmin is educated, yet beset by an inferiority complex. He is opportunistic, and unmoved by the communal spirit of freedom and struggle of the Dalit movement..."

In the story with that title, the protagonist likes his Brahmin friends visiting his home because it increases his prestige; his wife attends non-Dalit ceremonies such as the *haldi-kunku* (social gathering in which married women present each other turmeric and vermilion) and the Satyanarayana puja; he himself likes to attend functions of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS). He talks of revolution but shies away from attending a Dalit protest march. Finally, after a meeting at a Brahmin household, his friend baldly tells him: "Do you know—all the utensils that you used were kept separate. All the cloths you used have been taken and given to the laundry.... You as a Dalit writer stay at his house, and *his* progressiveness and generosity shine forth for the world to see. Do you understand? He would not serve even a charity meal to a Dalit from this town."

Listening to his friend proves to be a reality check for the Dalit Brahmin who reflects, "Dinesh's [the friend] words pierced me like arrows. I had become numb like a lump of clay. I had understood the limits of that house. The limits of humanity, and my own." Although Limbale is clearly contemptuous of the "wannabe" Dalit Brahmins, he captures the fragility of their expectations and aspirations sensitively.

A thread of Brahminical hegemony runs through the stories, whether it is the beautiful Brahmin women who reject the advances of Dalit men because of their caste or the school principals and government servants who conspire against their Dalit colleagues. Brahminical power is expressed succinctly in the story titled "Son-in-law of the Government" where Brahmins assert themselves and perform pujas in offices despite it being unconstitutional, but object when Dalits ask to celebrate Ambedkar Jayanti.

Limbale highlights the infighting among Dalits when he talks of the leaders of the community being interested only in collecting contributions. He also exposes the almost internalised need of some Dalits to carry forward the slavery of their ancestors.

This is brought out with anger and pathos in "The Yeskar's Bhakri", the story of a Dalit village watchman. A robbery occurs on his watch and he is accused of involvement. He tries to find the thieves but is unable to. His punishment is a thrashing given to him by fellow Dalits on the orders of the village patil (chieftain). To clear his name he hangs himself, leaving his family destitute. His post is a much-coveted one among his community, and when another Dalit is appointed watchman, life moves on as if nothing had happened.

Limbale also exposes the grip that customs have on his community. In "Vows", a Dalit fulfils a vow to the village goddess by making his teenage son participate in a *dhadka*, a ritual in which the devotee rushes headlong into a temple wall. His son dies while doing this and the distraught mother hits her own head against the wall and dies as well. Instead of expressing horror at the deaths and the manner in which they occurred, the other devotees worry about whether the goddess will curse them because a woman had performed *dhadka*.

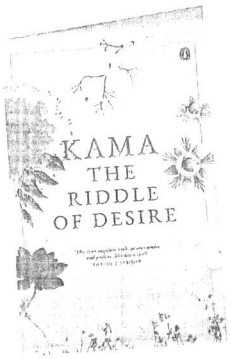
While this reviewer has not read the Marathi original, there is something about the translation that, at times, feels stilted. The translator, Priya Adarkar, has addressed this problem in her introductory note where she says: "The levels of Marathi used vary with the character who speaks or narrates. It is, of course, not always possible to convey the effects of dialect in the original, when it moves to a different language. One just has to approximate it with simple, less sophisticated words."

NARRATIVES OF UPLIFT

Although the stories express well-worn and well-known themes of exploitation, suppression and oppression, there is a vigour in Limbale's writing that raises them from tales of woe and self-pity to narratives of struggle, uplift and courage.

If there is criticism, it is that the narrative seems to have been handled simplistically at times. Teltumbde expresses this when he says: "Limbale's engagement with the Dalit universe appears tunnelled insofar as he either does not confront the complexity induced by capitalist development that has been taking place since the last century, or notes it but prefers to drive past it on the preconceived caste road."

Limbale is a representative of the community, and his narratives uphold this, but he needs to go the extra mile. Teltumbde sums it up when he says: "Perceptive writers like Limbale have a definite role to play. They are not expected to provide answers; their role is to hold a mirror to society." □



Kama: The Riddle of Desire | Penguin Allen Lane | 320 pages | Rs 799

Expatiation Riddled By A Tale

Das's erudite treatise on the nature of desire—its opposite pulls and its shape in literature—is weakly illumined by a fictional prop with cardboard characters

BY MANU S. PILLAI

THE first thing that strikes the reader of Gurcharan Das's new book, *Kama: The Riddle of Desire*, is its sheer size: Is there really, one wonders, 550 pages worth of fresh insight into what he describes as a "sense-intoxicating emotion"? As it happens, there is, and *Kama* is a creditable attempt to encapsulate in a single, voluminous tome the author's informed grasp of the subject of desire. The prose flows smoothly (despite the odd repetition of a sentence on the same page, and a few typographical errors), and there is strength in Das's exposition, enriched by an insightful reading of texts. Marcel Proust makes regular intellectual appearances, as does wisdom from the Mahabharata. We learn from the Panchatantra, even as we encounter Sextus Propertius and *Anna Karenina*. The book is at once a philosophical rumination as it is an explication of legendary works of literature, and on the whole stands on sound legs, adding to the author's already impressive bibliography.

There are, however, two books in *Kama*. The first and more appealing of these is where desire is investigated through a broad sweep of history, and a study of the perennial contest between "kama optimists" and "kama pessimists" (a very interesting categorisation). The former welcome desire as a meaningful purpose in life in its own right, and Vatsyayana belongs in this category; the latter perceive desire as another human limitation to surpass in order to arrive in the vicinity of true meaning. The pessimists, as any Indian could tell, appear to have won most battles and Das points out that while the Victorians heightened our passion for competitive prudishness, there was always a general "surfeit of kama pessimism" in Indian philosophical traditions. The Mahabharata is a case in example, where kama is a "many-coloured, brilliant and strange tree", born from ignorance, anger, ego, ambition, sorrow and much else that falls necessarily in a catalogue of negative things.

Told as a fictional memoir, the voice we hear is meant to be that of Amar's, a man who grows up in the Nehruvian age, and is an older, wiser soul by the time of Vajpayee. He exemplifies the battle between kama optimists and pessimists, forever caught between middle-class morality and his own individual yearnings. But often the tone switches, unintentionally, from the Amar of fiction to that of Das, the writer of non-fiction. Although the detailed analyses of desire are framed by fictional dialogue or events, they sometimes overwhelm the story, testing the flow of the narrative. They offer factoids of great interest which, however, reveal a structural infirmity in the book. So, for instance, we learn of a survey of 1,152 women that found that they tended to time extramarital sex with periods of ovulation, or that female infidelity is highest in Sweden and lowest in China. Then there are discussions on the *Kumarasambhava* and Satyajit Ray's *Charulata*. These are all interesting in their own right, except that the reader is not convinced that Amar is the one speaking.

> Although detailed analyses of desire are framed by fictional dialogue and events, they overwhelm the story itself. One is not convinced that Amar, the protagonist, is speaking.

The fictional tale in the book is recognisable, though, because the feelings that so exercise the minds and hearts of its characters are familiar. So, even as Amar's infatuation for an upper-class girl is followed by a discussion on the Rig Veda and Freud, one does feel for Amar. There is fairly often, though, a whiff of cliche in the story, not least in one of the last scenes featuring a dramatic twist at a train station, or the tragedy that befalls the girl as she grows into both a frustrated woman and a frustrating lover. The characters are predictable, though one wonders whether this is because human beings tend to be predictable when it comes to matters of the heart and the emotions that result. While clearly Das intends to weave his study of desire through the life of these people, this format is not entirely compelling, and it is the sometimes essay length analyses of kama that really stand out and offer ideas and inferences that sparkle—not the fiction that tries to hold it all together.

One suspects that the fictional element in the book was an attempt to bridge the world of the diverse texts, which Das surveys with comfortable authority, with the raw emotions of human experience. That bridge is shaky, however, and the result is that while half the book is genuinely interesting, the other half leaves one dissatisfied; that ever so often the reader is tempted to skip pages and return to those parts where the voice belongs not to Amar, but to Das, that excellent writer of non-fiction.

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Rakhshanda Jalil

Shahryar: A Life in Poetry | HarperCollins | 256 pages | Rs 599

Divisions Made Nazms

A masterful minimalist with measured tones, Shahryar fused traditonal and modern idioms

BY BINDU MENON

SHAHRYAR'S recitations at mushairas bore a trademark nonchalance. A languid drawl. No high notes. No shrill excesses. Much like his poetry, that spoke to you like an intimate friend, yet touched the soul. It is this timeless quality of his poetry that Rakshanda Jalil brings out deftly in her book *Shahryar: A Life in Poetry*. It unravels the essence of his poetic vision, which was "to speak of the world, to the world".

Born as Kunwar Akhlaq Muhammed Khan, he took Shahryar as a nom de plume in his later years. It was deemed that Shahryar would join the police force like his father and elder brother. But the rich cultural life in the Aligarh Muslim University of the 1950s and the active encouragement of friends and mentors ensured that Shahryar found his calling as a poet and academic.

Shahryar was a man not bound by isms. Though a self-confessed Marxist, he was not an atheist. He was influenced by the radically opposed schools of thought—the progressivists and the modernists—but he was never one of them. According to Jalil, Shahryar's seminal contribution to modern Urdu literature was to marry the traditional and contemporary idiom together and infuse the ghazal with a new *rang* (colour) and *ahang* (melody). And, as Gulzar observed, he also bridged the distance between the ghazal and nazm, the shorter and younger form of Urdu poetry.

> He was a self-confessed Marxist, but not an atheist. Influenced by both the progressives and modernists, Shahryar belonged to neither camp.

The book explores many facets of Shahryar's poetic vision—the recurring motifs of dream, sleep and thirst in his poems, his felicity with words and his concerns with the relationship between men and women, and sexuality that is neither overt nor coy. Jalil refuses to dwell too much on Shahryar's personal life and wrench out reasons for the dislocation and melancholy in some of his poetry, terming it unfair to his creative process. She also believes Shahryar's limited oeuvre in film lyricism does not define his poetry.

His movie songs have remained timeless, like the unsettling *Seene mein jalan* and *Ajeeb saneha* from the movie *Gaman*, reflecting the cold impassivity of urban life, or the haunting melodies of *Umrao Jaan*. But Jalil believes the general obsession with his film songs do disservice to a Jnanpith awardee who produced six highly regarded volumes of poetry and two editions of collected works. Nevertheless, they underline Shahryar's masterful brevity in conveying emotions. He also refrained from using *izaafat*, or coining new expressions using hyphenated words. His poetry is bereft of extreme views or agenda-driven polemics, yet they convey a disquiet that speaks louder than the most fiery rhetoric: *Tumhare shahr mein kuchh bhi huwa nahin hai kya/Ke tumne cheekhon ko sachmuch suna nahin hai kya* (Has nothing happened in this city of yours?/ Have you really not heard the screams?)

If at all there was any ambiguity in his poems, there was none in Shahryar's position on the Art vs Life debate. He had said, "If such a situation arises where I am forced to choose between life and art, I will choose life. Poetry is nothing more than this for me."

As scholar Gopi Chand Narang summed it up, "Shahryar's urge was inner and his own."

ON THE SHELF

Bulbul Sharma

Love and Learning Under the Magnolia | Westland

A romance between nouveau riche and noblesse d'épée—a widowed maharani, no less—set amid the unspoilt beauty of the remote, real-life mountain village of Shaya, which the author has called home for the past three decades, this novel portrays a clash of cultures that goes on until snootiness is shaken off in a surprisingly literal manner.

Surender Mohan Pathak

Conman | Westland

The 122nd book of the 'Sunil series', translated from Hindi, is about a WhatsApp conman—later the murderee—and his hapless female victim, later the suspect. Plenty of stern questioning of the sleuth pins interest down, for there's something to be said for 'Sunilian sense'. Plus, a hotel room numbered 506, while 'an overcoat-clad figure', his 'collar turned up', flits by!

Trisha Das

Kama's Last Sutra | HarperCollins

An archaeologist digging in Khajuraho for another temple, a dual crush on a boss, as well as the king who built the temple "with the most sex stuff on the walls"—meet the feisty Trisha Singh, who then is transported to 1022 AD, meeting not only the 'sexy' king in person, but encounters courtly intrigue and cruelty.

रेत–समाधि को पढ़ते हुए

राजीव कुमार मंडल

परख

'रेत-समाधि' को पढ़ते हुए जैसा अनुभव किया उसे आप सबों के बीच रखने की कोशिश है यहां. तीन भागों में व्यवस्थित यह उपन्यास एक उपसंहार भी अंत में देता है. इसके केंद्र में आठ दशकों से जिंदगी जीती एक औरत है. 'पीठ' शीर्षक पहले भाग में वह अपने पति के मरते ही खटिया पकड़ लेती है और पीठ फेर लेती है अपने बच्चों से. लगता है कि खटिया से सटी दीवार में समा जाएगी. सभी उठाने की कोशिश में हैं. पर वह उठना चाहती ही नहीं! घर वाले समझते हैं कि उसने जीवन से मुंह मोड़ लिया है जबकि मुंह मोड़ा है उसने परिवार से. कोई देख भी नहीं पाता और एक नए जीवन की चाह पनपने लगती है उसके भीतर. बड़े अनोखे ढंग से उपन्यास में बयान होता है मां के अंतर्मन का यह सिलसिला, "नहीं-नहीं, मैं नहीं उठूंगी. अब तो मैं नहीं उठूंगी. अब्ब तो मैं नइ उठूंगी. अब्ब तो मैं नइई उठूंगी. अब मैं नई उठूंगी. अब तो मैं नई ही उठूंगी."

स्त्री जीवन की टीस का एहसास पहले पृष्ठ से ही होने लगता है जहां आप पढ़ते हैं, "औरत और सरहद का साथ हो तो खुद-ब-खुद कहानी बन जाती है. बल्कि औरत भर भी. कहानी है. सुगबुगी से भरी." स्त्री विमर्श का आत्मावलोकन है यह. स्त्री जीवन हमेशा से अधूरा है और आगे भी अधूरा रहेगा. इसकी संपूर्णता उस खुलेपन की मांग करती है जो ढोंगी समाज, देना तो दूर, देखना तक नहीं चाहता. पर लेखिका समाज की आंखें खोलने पर उतारू है. उसके पात्र खुलते जाते हैं, लिंग भेद पर आधारित इस समाज और उसमें व्याप्त संवेदनाओं को खुली चुनौती देते हुए.

यह उपन्यास मध्यम वर्गीय जमीन पर आधारित है. टूटते संयुक्त परिवारों की कहानी कहता है. लेकिन एक ऐसी नजर से जो यह भी देखती है कि संयुक्त परिवार स्थूल रूप में गायब हो रहा हो मगर लोगों की मानसिकता में अभी भी है. इसलिए मां कहीं भी रह रही हो, उसकी बीमारी सब को एक साथ ला देती है, "अम्माएं गिरती हैं तो कथा में सारे किरदार गिरते-पड़ते एक जगह जमा हो जाते हैं. ...वही पुराना परिवारों का चलन कि सबको फिकर, चाहे एक-दूसरे से चिढ़, प्रतिवाद. आपस में बने न बने, अम्मा डोर जोड़ती."

बाजार व्यवस्था की मारक भाग-दौड़ में फंसे अवसादग्रस्त युवा-युवतियों की त्रासदी भी है यहां. और है उस व्यवस्था की तड़क-भड़क के पीछे छिपा मानव का मशीनीकरण. देखें हवाई अड्डों के बहाने उत्तर-आधुनिक जीवन का यह वर्णन :

वहां उसे लगता वो कीड़े के बराबर का कीड़ा है, किसी जबरदस्त प्रयोगशाला में बंद. नकली बत्तियां, नकली गर्मियां, नकली धींगाधांगी जहां है. उसी की तरह के कीड़े हर दिशा में भरे हुए हैं, सब बेहद व्यस्त और बदहवास...सबको चकाचक पहनावा पहनाया है और सबको एक जैसी पहियों वाली अटैचियों से अटका दिया है, जो उन्हें खींचती ले चल रही हैं. और इस जगर मगर रोशनी में उनकी हर जरा-सी हरकत पे नजर है, कैमरे में कैद हो रहे सबके ब्योरे हैं. उस कीड़े ने अभी लुई व्युत्तों कमीज के कॉलर पर पंजा फेरा, इसने नाक में उंगली घुसेड़ी.

इस वर्णन में भाषा और शैली के साथ हो रहे उन अनोखे खेलों की एक बानगी भी मिलती है जो बड़ी कुशलता से इस उपन्यास में चलते रहते हैं.

उपन्यास के पहले भाग में एक जगह आता है, "सब औरतें भूलना मत बेटियां हैं." इस सारगर्भित कथन का बड़ा ही मार्मिक विस्तार होता है उपन्यास के दूसरे भाग में जिसका शीर्षक लेखिका ने 'धूप' रखा है. इस भाग की कहानी शुरू होती है बूढ़ी बीमार मां के अपने बेटे का घर छोड़ बेटी के घर में रहने लगने से. मानो 'सब औरतें बेटियां हैं' को उलटे अर्थों में भी चरितार्थ करता, कथानक बताता है, "बेटी ने मां बनकर मां को बेटी बनाया और उनके माथे पर हाथ फेरा. आ गई यहां, अब न जाने दूंगी." सब कुछ छोड़-छाड़ के वह लग जाती है मां को स्वस्थ और प्रसन्न करने में. मां की निगरानी का सुख तो मिलता है उसे, पर कुछ और भी होता है. समझने लगती है वह कि "मां और प्रेमिका एक खाल में नहीं रह सकते." यौवन की स्वाभाविक इच्छाओं और जरूरतों की– अपने

होने की–कुरबानी मांगता है बेटी बन गई मां के प्रति मां बन गई बेटी का वात्सल्य.

'धूंप' वाले भाग में ही एक अन्य अविस्मरणीय पात्र–रोजी से भी हमारा परिचय होता है. यहां बताना जरूरी है कि इस उपन्यास की उपलब्धि है इसमें हर तरह की हदों-सरहदों का टूटना. इन्हीं उध्वस्त सरहदों में एक सरहद है आदमी और औरत की. रोजी न आदमी है और न औरत. दूसरी तरह कहें तो वह आदमी भी है और औरत भी. ममता की मूर्ति रोजी के माध्यम से उपन्यास में बड़ा हृदयविदारक चित्रण हुआ है हमारे संवेदनशून्य समाज में किन्नरों के त्रासद अस्तित्व का.

आदमी और औरत की ही नहीं, मानव और जीव-जंतु की सीमा भी लांघता है यह उपन्यास. इसमें कौए, तीतर, तितली, कुत्ते इत्यादि बड़ी मस्ती से आते-जाते हैं, सहानुभूति और मित्रता के संदेश उपन्यास में घोलते. चर-अचर की सीमा भी टूटती है यहां और कभी कोई दरवाजा, कोई दीवार, कोई सड़क न केवल वर्तमान बल्कि अपनी आंखों देखे अतीत की भी गवाही देने लगते हैं.

महत्त्वपूर्ण है कि कहानी स्याह और सफेद की सीमा को भी नकारती चलती है. उदाहरण के लिए, मां के प्रति हर तरह से समर्पित बेटा सदा सतर्क रहता है कि जरूरी चेकों पर और जायदाद से संबंधित कागजात पर मां के दस्तखत नियम से होते रहें, चाहे वे उसके साथ रह रही हों चाहे बेटी के. असंदिग्ध प्यार के रिश्तों में भी व्यापार बोध रहता ही है. इसी तरह गंभीर से गंभीर स्थितियों में भी बहुत कुछ मनोरंजक भी होता रहता है. अस्पताल में राउंड पर आए हेड डॉक्टर और बूढ़ी मां का संवाद एक ऐसा अजीब-सा दृश्य आपकी आंखों के सामने पैदा करता है जैसा कि आप अपने घरों में या आसपास के बड़े बुजुर्गों में देखा करते हैं.

लेखिका बालू के रेत के प्रतीकों के साथ तीसरे और अंतिम भाग में 'हद-सरहद' शीर्षक से प्रवेश करती है. 'वाघा आ गए तो गाथा ड्रामा और कथा पार्टीशन'. दिल में उतर आता है दर्द. त्रासदी. लेखिका इसे पाठकों को बताने के लिए तारीखी नामों को याद करती है–भीष्म साहनी, मंटो, खुशवंत सिंह, राजेंद्र सिंह बेदी, मोहन राकेश, इंतजार हुसैन आदि. पर बूढ़ी मां भी जिद ठाने बैठी हैं कि वह तो फाटक हिंदुस्तान से फाटक पाकिस्तान को पार करेंगी ही. आम लोगों के बीच का प्रेम राष्ट्रवाद के खोखले ड्रामे से कहीं अलग है. ये सभी ठीक से समझते हैं कि राष्ट्र तो हाल की अवधारणा है. इनकी सीमाएं बनती-बिगड़ती रहती हैं. पर प्रेम की सीमा तो प्रेम के भीतर ही है. वाघा बॉर्डर पर चलने वाले हर शाम के आक्रामिक ड्रामे से आजिज होकर लेखिका सपाटबयानी करती है, "लड़ाई है कि खेला, कुछ लोग ऐसे तकते हैं. लेखक भी. मंटो तो सिर नीचा कर लेते हैं जैसे सो गए या रो दिए. कृष्णा सोबती जरूर अभी भी बीच-बीच में उंगली गुस्से से हिला के सर दैट इज इनफ कहती हैं." सरहद पार प्रेम है जो सारी अमानवीयता के बीच भी फलीभूत होगा. मासूमियत है जो दोनों देशों की राजनीति का ग्रास है.

राष्ट्रवाद के नारे जितने बुलंद हैं आज, उतनी ही खामोश है संविधान की प्रस्तावना. लेखिका इससे सचेत है.

समग्रता में यह उपन्यास साहित्य प्रेमियों के लिए बहुत ही उपजाऊ जमीन तैयार करता है. इसमें शास्त्रीयता भी है और रूमानियत भी. कल भी है और आज भी (आने वाला कल भी). यह सीमाओं के भीतर भी है और बाहर भी. लेखिका ने ऐसा खेल खेला है जो समय एवं भौगोलिक सीमाओं को लांघता है. मर रही मानवीय संवेदनाओं को जीवित रखने के लिए प्रेरित करता है.

जब बाजार ने पूरे समाज को मानवीय मूल्यों से विलग कर दिया हो तो साहित्येतर समझौते किए बग़ैर सृजन कर्म कैसे करेंगे संवेदनशील रचनाकार? उल्लेखनीय है कि ऐसे समय में लेखिका ने बार-बार जोखिम उठाए हैं. नए रूपक गढ़े हैं. भाषा के अनुशासन को तोड़ अतिव्यंजना एवं अतिरंजना का भरपूर इस्तेमाल किया है. चरितार्थ करते हुए मुक्तिबोध के आह्वान को कि "अब अभिव्यक्ति के सारे खतरे उठाने ही होंगे. तोड़ने ही होंगे मठ और गढ़ सब."

उपन्यास बार-बार अपने को पढ़ने की दावत देता है. इस दावत को पाठक अवश्य स्वीकारें और समृद्ध हों. बहुत कुछ बाकी है अब भी इस उपन्यास की विवेचना के लिए!

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पुस्तक : रेत-समाधि
लेखक : गीतांजलि श्री
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मानवीय संबंधों की मार्मिक दास्तान

रीमा भाटिया.

परख

साहित्य अकादमी पुरस्कार से सम्मानित पंजाबी लेखक नछत्तर का 'कैंसर ट्रेन' छठा उपन्यास है. इससे पहले इनके चार उपन्यास ('बूढ़ी सदी का मनुष्य', 'बाकी का सच', 'निके-निके आसमान', 'हनेरियां गलियां' तथा 'स्लो डाउन') प्रकाशित हो चुके हैं. इसके अतिरिक्त इनके छह कहानी-संग्रह तथा चार अनुवादों की पुस्तकें भी प्रकाशित हो चुकी हैं. प्रस्तुत उपन्यास 'कैंसर ट्रेन' पंजाब में बढ़ रही कैंसर की समस्या को केंद्र में रखकर लिखा गया है. नछत्तर बेरोजगारी, नशे की आदत, किसानों के ऋण की समस्या और इन समस्याओं के प्रति सत्ता की उदासीनता आदि पर भी उपन्यास में सवाल खड़ा करते हैं. उपन्यास कई संदर्भों से रचा-बुना गया है लेकिन अपने व्यापक परिप्रेक्ष्य में मानवीय संबंधों की मार्मिक दास्तान है.

उपन्यास की एक बड़ी विशेषता उसकी शैली है. उपन्यास की यह शैली यथार्थ का ऐसा वृत्तांत रचती है कि पाठक उपन्यास के पात्रों के साथ अपने को खड़ा पाता है. उपन्यास की मुख्य कथा 'कैंसर' के इर्द-गिर्द रची गई है. यह कथा मुख्य पात्र अमन के माध्यम से कही गई है. अमन एक शोध छात्र है जो पंजाब के मालवा क्षेत्र में कैंसर के कारणों की जांच कर रहा है. अपनी परियोजना के लिए डेटा इकट्ठा करते समय वह गांव में कैंसर से पीड़ित मरीजों और उनके परिवारों के संपर्क में आता है. अमन अपने शोध के दौरान विभिन्न मर्द, औरतों व बच्चों से रूबरू होता है. इसके जरिए पाठक को यह भान होता है कि कैंसर किसी उम्र, जाति, धर्म, लिंग या वर्ग का लिहाज नहीं करता, इसकी चपेट में कोई भी आ सकता है. लेखक ने अमन की हर मुलाकात के जरिये कैंसर से उपजे शारीरिक कष्टों को तो बताया ही है साथ ही पंजाब की विभिन्न प्रकार की सामाजिक समस्याओं को भी उजागर किया है—चाहे वो नशे की लत हो, बेरोजगारी हो या फिर राजनीति में फैला भ्रष्टाचार हो. उदाहरण के लिए करमो की कहानी के माध्यम से लेखक हमें दैनिक मजदूरों की समस्या और मनरेगा में फैले भ्रष्टाचार रूपी कैंसर से परिचित कराता हैं. करमो और उसके पति का जीवन गरीबी के चक्रव्यूह में फंसा हुआ है. करमो का शरीर कैंसर से इतना पीड़ित है कि काम पर जाना तो दूर वह बिस्तर से उठने में भी असमर्थ है. अगर वह हिम्मत करके काम पर पहुंच भी जाए तो बेतहाशा दर्द के कारण वह काम नहीं कर पाती. अपनी आर्थिक स्थिति के कारण वह और उसका पति दवाइयां तो दूर, दो वक्त की रोटी का भी इंतजाम नहीं कर पाते. करमो की तरह बंसो भी इसी गरीबी के दलदल में फंसी हुई है. कैंसर ने उसके शरीर को इतना तोड़ दिया है कि वह उठकर अपने बच्चे को प्यार से गोद में भी नहीं ले सकती. बीकानेर के अस्पताल जाने की वजह से वह और उसका पति भी काम पर नहीं जा सकते. करमों और बंसो की इन छोटी-छोटी कहानियों द्वारा नछत्तर हमें दैनिक मजदूरों की समस्याओं से परिचित करवाते हैं. उनकी आर्थिक विवशता उन्हें कैंसर के सामने बेबस कर देती है. न तो इलाज और न ही

अच्छी खुराक के लिए इन परिवारों के पास पर्याप्त पैसे हैं. अमन के संपर्क में आने वाले अलग-अलग पात्रों की लघु कहानियां कैंसर ट्रेन के डब्बे हैं जिनके जरिए कड़ियों में अलग-अलग सामाजिक-आर्थिक समस्याएं नमूदार होती हैं. उपन्यास की कथा में ऐसे अनेक पात्र रचे-बसे हैं जिनकी रोजमर्रा की जिंदगी के माध्यम से कैंसर की समस्या और उस समस्या से उत्पन्न अन्य विभीषिकाओं को रेखांकित करने की कोशिश की गई हैं. दरअसल प्रस्तुत उपन्यास आर्थिक, शारीरिक और सामाजिक रूप से विवश ऐसे ही परिवारों के बारे में है. पात्रों के जीवन का छोटा से छोटा घटनाक्रम भी कैंसर से जुड़ कर कथा को एक व्यापक परिप्रेक्ष्य देता है. 'कैंसर ट्रेन' वह ट्रेन है जिसमें मालवा के लोग इलाज के लिए बीकानेर के कैंसर अस्पताल जाते हैं.

कहानी में एक महत्त्वपूर्ण किरदार निर्मल का भी है. निर्मल के पिता नाजर एक छोटे किसान हैं. कैंसर के कारण निर्मल स्कूल जाने में असमर्थ है. यह विवशता और असमर्थता उसके पिता के किरदार में भी दिखाई देती है. नाजर के माध्यम से नछत्तर हमें हरित क्रांति का कैंसर रूपी भयानक चेहरा भी दिखाते हैं. हरित क्रांति के दौरान पंजाब में किसानों ने उत्पादन बढ़ाने के लिए रासायनिक खादों और कीट-नाशकों का अंधाधुंध प्रयोग किया. फलस्वरूप पंजाब के मालवा क्षेत्र में विशेष रूप से भूमिगत जल और मिट्टी इन हानिकारक रसायनों से युक्त हो गए और धीरे-धीरे यह रसायन

फल और सब्जियों का भी हिस्सा बन गए. परिणामस्वरूप मालवा में कैंसर का प्रकोप फैल गया. दरअसल निर्मल और नाजर की कहानी न सिर्फ कैंसर बल्कि कैंसर के कारणों की भी पड़ताल करती नजर आती है. इसलिए यहां 'कैंसर' एक रूपक की तरह आया है जो न सिर्फ 'कैंसर' बल्कि पंजाब में 'कैंसर' बन चुकी समस्याओं को भी रेखांकित करता है. कैंसर की बीमारी के कारण ही नाजर की आर्थिक समस्याएं अधिक बढ़ जाती हैं. एक तरफ ऋण दूसरी तरफ बीमारी दोनों मिलकर नाजर और नाजर के माध्यम से पूरे पंजाब के किसानों की आर्थिक स्थिति को उपन्यास में बखूबी उभारा गया है.

उपन्यास की संरचना में कैंसर हमेशा एक खलनायक की तरह उपस्थित रहता है. रेलवे प्लेटफार्म पर इलाज के लिए बीकानेर जाने वाली ट्रेन का इंतजार करते लोग उपन्यास के सबसे विडंबनात्मक पक्ष का हिस्सा बन जाते हैं. यह इंतजार जीवन और मृत्यु के बीच झूलते लोगों के उस मजबूरी और असहायता का बखान है, जिसमें उनके परिवार के लोग भी शामिल हैं. इसलिए कैंसर मात्र एक बीमारी भर नहीं बल्कि आर्थिक, सामाजिक, पारिवारिक, भावात्मक क्षति का परिचायक या रूपक भी है. रोगियों द्वारा डॉक्टरों की प्रतीक्षा, अपनी परीक्षणों की रिपोर्ट का इंतजार धीरे-धीरे उन्हें व उनके परिवार को भीतर से खोखला करता जा रहा है चाहे वह रोगी हो या उसके परिवार के सदस्य. खासतौर पर इसके महंगे इलाज के कारण यह समस्या और भी दारुण हो उठती है.

उपन्यास में नछत्तर ने एक एन.आर.आई. सुखी के चरित्र द्वारा सत्ता के विरुद्ध उठने वाली बुलंद आवाज और उस आवाज के आंदोलन बनने की इच्छा को भी रेखांकित किया है. सुखी जैसे पात्रों के प्रयत्न और संसाधनों की मदद समाज के दायित्वबोध की ओर भी संकेत करती है.

उपन्यास के वाचक ने कैंसर के साथ ही सरकारी मशीनरी, स्वास्थ्य केंद्रों की बदतर हालात आदि को भी कथा का हिस्सा बनाया है. उपन्यास में मुख्य कथा के इर्द-गिर्द अनेक छोटी-छोटी गंभीर कथाएं भी रची-बसी हैं लेकिन इस जटिल कथा संरचना के बावजूद उपन्यास के कथारस में कहीं भी बाधा नहीं पहुंचती बल्कि लेखन की यह टेकनीक पाठकों को आकर्षित करती है और अर्थ संप्रेषणीयता को अधिक संभव बनाती है. इसलिए कैंसर ट्रैन उपन्यास को सिर्फ 'कैंसर' की बीमारी ही नहीं बल्कि सभी तरह के सामाजिक 'कैंसरों' की यात्रा के रूप में देखना चाहिए.

❐

पुस्तक : कैंसर ट्रेन
लेखक : नछत्तर, अनुवादक : सुभाष नीरव
प्रकाशक : भारत पुस्तक भंडार, नई दिल्ली
मूल्य : 395 रुपए

संपर्क : 9899277300

सद्दाम हुसैन की ग़ज़ल

प्यार के संगीत से आंगन सजाकर देख लो
अपने घर को स्वर्ग का नक्शा बनाकर देख लो

दिल के गुलशन में सदा आएगी खुशियों की बहार
राहे हक में जान की बाज़ी लगाकर देख लो

देखना मुझ जाएगा जुल्मो जिहालत का चिराग़
भाईचारे की शमा दिल में जलाकर देख लो.

रूह हो जाएगी ताज़ा दिल को मिल जाएगा चैन
एक पल नग़मा वफ़ा का गुनगुनाकर देख लो

जाने जां मेरी वफा पर गर नहीं तुमको यकीं
जब जहां चाहो मुझे तुम आज़माकर देख लो

दूर हो जाएगी अये 'सद्दाम' हर ग़म की घटा
गर्दिशों को भी अगर तुम मुस्कराकर देख लो

संपर्क : कस्बा खेड़ा, पोस्ट धमना, तहसील-राठ-210431 (उ.प्र.)
मो. : 9532646654

ज़हीर कुरेशी की ग़ज़ल

कुछ लोग तो कह रहे थे कि खुशबू बिखर गई,
खुशबू बिखर के चारों दिशाओं के घर गई.

कुछ भी गलत हुआ न कभी उसके साथ में,
फिर भी, वो रोज़ अपने ही साए से डर गई.

कम हो गई है बाढ़, मगर क्रोध शेष है,
पागल नदी अभी-अभी पुल से उतर गई.

कुछ इस तरह से उसने परोसी थीं रोटियां,
जो भूख लग रही थी, अनायास मर गई.

मिलती है आसमान से धरती जहां गले,
उस आदमी की रोज वहां तक नज़र गई.

इक्कीसवीं सदी में भी ये सोचती है मां,
घर से निकल के लड़की किसी 'लाम' पर गई.

उसको निहारते रहे मोती तमाम उम्र,
प्रतिभा अगर समुद्र के तल तक उतर गई.

संपर्क : 108, त्रिलोचन टावर, संगम सिनेमा के सामने गुरुबक्श की तलैया, पो.ऑ. जीपीओ, भोपाल-462001 (म.प्र.)
मो. : 9425790565

किताबें

समाज की कड़वी कथाएं

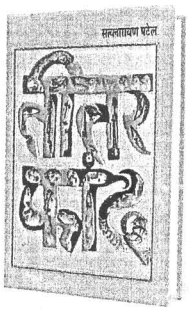
देवेंद्र राज अंकुर

इससे पहले मैंने सत्यनारायण पटेल की कोई कहानी नहीं पढ़ी थी. उनके कहानी संग्रह *तीतर फांद* की सातों कहानियां एकदम से झकझोर कर रख देती हैं. पहली बार एक लेखक की ऐसी रचनाओं से साक्षात्कार हुआ जिसने इतने निर्मम, क्रूर और बेबाक ढंग से अपने आसपास की स्थितियों और परिस्थितियों का जायजा लिया है. लेखक ने उन परिस्थितियों के लिए जिम्मेदार राजनीति तथा व्यवस्था की गहरी छानबीन करने की कोशिश की है.

संग्रह की पहली कहानी 'ढम्म...ढम्म... ढम्म...' ही उस भूमिका और तेवर की पृष्ठभूमि तैयार कर देती है जिसे लेकर बाकी कहानियां आगे बढ़ती हैं. कुल जमा तीन पृष्ठों की यह कहानी है, पर ऐसा लगता है कि हम इस ढम्म...ढम्म के असह्य शोर से न जाने कब से आक्रांत हैं. कहानी का 'मैं' इस शोर को नकारना चाहता है लेकिन वह असहाय है. यह जबरदस्ती थोपे जा रहे, लादे जा रहे नारों, भाषणों और वादों का शोर है जिसके नीचे आम आदमी पिसता जा रहा है. यदि हम इस कहानी को बोल-बोलकर पढ़ें तो कभी न खत्म होने वाली एक अनुगूंज का एहसास बहुत देर तक आपके भीतर बना रहता है.

'न्याव' कहानी तो इससे भी ज्यादा क्रूर यथार्थ को हमारे सामने प्रस्तुत करती है. एक मनचले द्वारा एक छोटी बच्ची के साथ दुष्कर्म के एवज में उसकी अपनी मां उसे जो सजा देती है, वह बहुत ही निर्मम और अकल्पनीय है क्योंकि वह उसके अंडकोषों को पत्थर से कुचलकर नष्ट कर देती है. स्वयं मां के द्वारा अपने बेटे के पुरुषत्व पर चोट करने से बड़ा न्याय या 'न्याव' और क्या हो सकता है.

यह मात्र संयोग नहीं है कि इस संग्रह की सात कहानियों में से पांच कहानियां छोटी लड़कियों बच्चों के इर्दगिर्द बुनी गई हैं क्योंकि किसी भी अराजक व्यवस्था के शिकार सबसे पहले यही लोग होते हैं. 'मैं यहीं खड़ा हूं' कहानी का 'पिता जी' बरसों से अपनी लड़की का इंतजार कर रहा है जो उसकी आंखों के सामने से न जाने कहां अदृश्य हो गई और आज तक उसका कुछ पता नहीं चला—क्या श्रीनगर के आसपास एक लड़की के साथ घटित इससे कहीं अलग है? 'मिनी, मछली और सांड' की मां आराधना अपनी बेटी को



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कीमतः 150 रु.

व्यवस्था का तीखा जायजा लेती कहानियां

सबसे बड़ी तैराक बनाने के लिए कटिबद्ध है क्योंकि उसके माध्यम से वह अपने अधूरे सपने पूरा करना चाहती है. वहीं अंतिम कहानी 'तीतर फांद' की तीतरी, जो एक भोलीभाली, निष्पाप बच्ची है, लेकिन वह भी व्यवस्था के हाथो कुचली जाती है और कहानी का 'मैं' कुछ भी नहीं कर पाता.

पहली बार कहानीकार ने तीतर और तीतरी के प्रतीक के माध्यम से एक समकालीन समानांतर कथा का ताना-बाना तैयार किया है. मजे की बात यह है कि प्रतीक कथा होते हुए भी यह कहानी अपने निहितार्थ में ज्यादा से ज्यादा यथार्थपरक होती जाती है.

कुल मिलाकर सत्यनारायण पटेल की कहानियों से गुजरने का अनुभव बहुत ही गहरा और मार्मिक है. मुझे याद नहीं आता कि दूसरे किसी कहानीकार ने अपने आसपास के माहौल, आज के हालात और उसके लिए जिम्मेदार लोगों या व्यवस्था पर इतना खुलकर लिखा हो. और लिखने का अंदाज भी कितना ठेठ, अनगढ़ और खांटी— किसी भी तरह की बौद्धिक, जबरदस्ती ओढ़ी हुई मुद्रा से विहीन. इसीलिए सत्यनारायण पटेल की ये कहानियां भीड़ में होते हुए भी बिल्कुल अगल दीख पड़ती हैं. एक तरह से ये कहानियां हम लोगों को आईना दिखा जाती हैं. अगर मैंने इन कहानियों को नहीं पढ़ा होता तो शायद एक बड़े अनुभव से वंचित रह जाता. ■

इंडिया टुडे
17 oct. 2018

किताबें

जंगल की सत्यकथा

मनीष दीक्षित

दन्तक्षेत्र
लेखकः ***राजीव रंजन प्रसाद***
प्रकाशकः **यश पब्लिशर्स ऐंड डिस्ट्रीब्यूटर्स**
कीमतः **500 रु.**
आदिवासियों की हकीकत

बस्तर को खनिज और नक्सलवाद के लिए जाना जाता है लेकिन इसके पीछे की कई कहनियां और विस्तार हैं जिनसे आम लोग अनभिज्ञ हैं. अबूझमाड़ के जंगलों और आदिवासियों की जिंदगी के बारे में सब कुछ जानने के लिए राजीव रंजन प्रसाद की *दन्तक्षेत्र* पुस्तक पढ़ना जरूरी है क्योंकि इसमें इतिहास से लेकर वर्तमान तक की चर्चा की गई है. इसमें राजनीति, समाजशास्त्र और विकास का भी जिक्र किया गया है. लेखक ने 1981 की बोधघाट बांध परियोजना के विरोध और फिर उसे खारिज करने का जिक्र बड़ी शिद्दत से उठाया है. इसके लिए भारत सरकार को विश्व बैंक का लोन 5 करोड़ डॉलर के जुर्माने के साथ लौटाना पड़ा था. लेखक ने ये सवाल उठाया है कि विरोध के बावजूद देश की अनेक परियोजनाएं पूरी हुई हैं तो इसे ही क्यों खारिज किया गया. इंद्रावती नदी के पानी पर ओडिशा से चल रहा विवाद भी बस्तर और आसपास के इलाके के हितों को प्रभावित करता है.

दंतेवाड़ा जिले को लाल गलियार घोषित करने वालों के इस तर्क पर तीखा प्रहार किया गया है कि खनिज और उसकी लूट के साथ विस्थापन ही नक्सलवाद का कारण है. प्रसाद की दलील है कि दंतेवाड़ा में लौह अयस्क, बॉक्साइट, टिन, कोरण्डम, ग्रेनाइट, डोलामाइट, एस्बेस्टस आदि खनिज प्रचुरता से होते हैं लेकिन व्यावसायिक रूप से लौह अयस्क को छोड़कर किसी अन्य खनिज का उत्खनन नहीं किया जा रहा है. जबकि संभावनाएं अनेक हैं. बस्तर में छुट-पुट अवैध खदानें जरूर जहां-तहां मिल जाती हैं. लेकिन खनिज यहां के आदिवासियों को विकास और रोजगार दोनों उपलब्ध कराने में नाकाम रहे हैं.

राजशाही और अंग्रेजों की दस्तक के साथ ही बस्तर में आदिवासियों का शोषण शुरू हुआ. लेखक ने नक्सलवाद और आदिवासियों की समस्याओं का बेहतर ब्योरा और विश्लेषण प्रस्तुत किया है. इसके अलावा आदिवासियों की संस्कृति, रीति-रिवाज और परंपराओं का विस्तार से वर्णन है. चित्रों का भी इसमें भरपूर इस्तेमाल हुआ है जो कहीं ठीक लगते हैं तो कहीं खटकते हैं. आदिवासी संस्कृति का वर्णन बहुत ज्यादा हो गया है जिसे कम शब्दों में भी कहा जा सकता था. आधिकारिक सूचना के लिए अखबारों की खबरों की तस्वीर छापना कहीं से युक्तिसंगत नहीं लगता है. हालांकि तथ्य उद्धृत करने के स्रोत को बताना सराहनीय है. फिर भी जो पाठक दण्डकारण्य के इस हिस्से से अनभिज्ञ हैं और प्रामाणिक जानकारी चाहते हैं उनके लिए यह पुस्तक कीमती साबित होगी. बहुत सहज ढंग से बस्तर के आदिवासियों और उनसे जुड़े हर पहलू की जानकारी इसमें मिलती है. ■

अरबपति की आत्मकथा

प्रदीप यादव

एक ऊंची उड़ान
लेखक-बिनोद चौधरी
अनुवाद :
रचना भोला 'यामिनी'
प्रकाशकः राजपाल ऐंड संस, नई दिल्ली
कीमतः **375 रु.**
कारोबारी की कहानी

उद्यमशीलता की राह भारतीय उपमहाद्वीप में कितनी मुश्किल होती है इसकी एक झलक दिखाती है बिनोद चौधरी की पुस्तक *एक ऊंची उड़ान* (मेकिंग इट बिग का हिंदी अनुवाद). नेपाल के पहले अरबपति बिनोद चौधरी की कामयाबी की पूरी दास्तान इसमें है तो उनके रास्ते में आई अड़चनों का ब्योरा भी इसमें मिलता है. मूल पुस्तक अंग्रेजी में है और इसका अनुवाद रचना भोला 'यामिनी' ने किया है. जिस देश पर गरीबी का ठप्पा लगा हो और जहां बिजनेस शुरू करना एवरेस्ट चढ़ने के समान कठिन हो, ऐसे दमघोंटू माहौल के बावजूद *फोर्ब्स* मैगजीन की अरबपतियों की सूची में शमिल होना बिनोद के संकल्प का साक्षी है. बिनोद के सूझबूझ भरे फैसले के दम पर आज चौधरी ग्रुप का बैंकिंग, बीमा, होटल और रियल एस्टेट कारोबार विदेशों तक फैल रहा है. यह किताब नेपाल के राजघरानों के अंदर व्याप्त भ्रष्टाचार की भी झलक देती है. बिनोद ने इस किताब में बताया है कि कोई भी कारोबार शुरू करने से पहले कैसे नेपाल के राजतंत्र को हिस्सेदारी देनी पड़ती थी. किताब के एक अध्याय में बिनोद लिखते हैं कि 90 के दशक में नेपाल में कारोबार करने वालों को दोहरा टैक्स चुकाना पड़ता था. एक तो राज्य सरकार लेती थी दूसरा छिपा टैक्स राजमहलों के अंदर लिया जाता था. अनूदित होने की वजह से पुस्तक में कई त्रुटियां रह गई हैं, इसके बावजूद रचना भोला ने लेखक की मूल भावना को बरकरार रखा है. ■

कविता संग्रह

आख्यानों का स्त्री पक्ष

स्त्रीशतक
लेखकः ***पवन करण***
प्रकाशकः **भारतीय ज्ञानपीठ**
नई दिल्ली
कीमतः **370 रु.**
मिथकीय स्त्री चरित्रों की
वेदना का स्वर

दिनेश कुमार

पवन करण के नवीनतम काव्य-संग्रह *स्त्रीशतक* को एक तरह से प्राचीन संस्कृत साहित्य, पुराणों, मिथकों और आख्यानों का स्त्री पक्ष कहा जा सकता है. यह स्त्री पक्ष ध्वंसात्मक न होकर रचनात्मक है क्योंकि यहां आधुनिक स्त्री विमर्श की अतिक्रांतिकारिता से बचते हुए देश काल और परिस्थिति के अनुरूप ही स्त्री प्रश्न को उठाया गया है. कवि ने संस्कृत वाङ्मय से चुनकर सौ स्त्री पात्रों की वेदना और सिसकियों को अपनी सौ कविताओं के माध्यम से स्वर देने का काम किया है. इन स्त्रियों की कराहों से हमारी सभ्यता का भव्य महल अपने-आप भरभराकर गिरने लगता है.

स्त्रीशतक में उन स्त्रियों की छवि को अंकित करने का प्रयास किया गया है जिन्हें प्रायः भुला दिया गया है. तारा, सवर्णा मालिनी, सुप्रिया, मदयन्ती, सुकन्या, सुवर्चा, तारणी, इला, सुनीति आदि अनेकानेक पात्रों के माध्यम से मिथकीय आख्यानों का स्त्री पाठ प्रस्तुत किया गया है. संग्रह की कविताओं के साक्ष्य पर कहा जा सकता है कि प्राचीन संस्कृत साहित्य चाहे जितना महान हो पर वह मुख्यतः पुरुषवादी साहित्य है और उस साहित्य के पास स्त्री प्रश्न का कोई उत्तर नहीं है. ऋषि के सामने संतानोत्पत्ति के लिए प्रस्तुत कल्पाषपाद की भार्या मदयन्ती कहती हैं–''मैं तुम्हारे सामने खड़ी हूं'' तो मुझे उत्तर दो मेरे प्रश्नों से पैदा अपने भीतर के प्रकोप से मेरे 'शील को रख दो रौंदकर.' कीर्तिमालिनी (राजा मद्रायु की पत्नी) बुनियादी प्रश्न उठाती हैं कि 'परीक्षा लेने के लिए देव' स्त्री देह ही क्यों चुनते हैं यह तो सरासर देह-लोलुपता है.' इन प्रश्नों के उत्तर तो नहीं हैं पर इससे इतना तो स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि अधिकांश मिथकीय आख्यानों में पुरुषवादी दृष्टि बहुत गहरे पैठी है.

ऋषियों और देवताओं की स्त्री संबंधी लोलुपताओं से हमारे मिथकीय आख्यान भरे पड़े हैं. आश्चर्य इस बात का है कि आख्यानों में उनके कृत्यों के प्रति निंदा भाव न होकर किसी न किसी तरह से उनका महिमामंडन है. पवन करण ने बहुत ही साहस के साथ इन मिथकों के घोर स्त्री विरोधी स्वरूप को उजागर करके अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किया है. इन कविताओं में माएं, बहनें, प्रेमिकाएं, पत्नियां आदि सभी रूपों में स्त्री के दुख-दर्द को अभिव्यक्त किया गया है पर इन सब के मूल में स्त्री के प्रति पुरुष की भोगवादी दृष्टि ही है. एक ऐसे समय में जब परंपरा को एकांगी बनाने की कोशिशें तेज हो रही हैं, पवन करण का यह 'स्त्रीशतक' हर तरह के ऐसे प्रयासों का रचनात्मक प्रतिरोध है. ■

जैसे गगन ने अपने अनुपम यात्रा वृत्तांत *अवाक* में एक नया गद्य रचा था, वैसे ही रची गई है एक नई काव्य भाषा इस कविता संग्रह में.

रोमांटिक स्वप्न भंग का कथाकार

साहित्य विकल्प
संपादकः **डॉ. विजय अग्रवाल**
प्रकाशकः ***साहित्य भंडार, इलाहाबाद***
कीमतः ***150 रु.***

अपने प्रतिरोधी लेखन और विचारों के कारण आजीवन चर्चा में रहे विश्रुत कथाकार एवं संस्मरण लेखक दूधनाथ सिंह के व्यक्तित्व एवं कृतित्व को सामने लाता यह महाविशेषांक बहुत गहरे उतरकर उनके लेखन से मुठभेड़ की कोशिश है. इसमें कोई भी लेख या संस्मरण ऐसा नहीं है जिसमें लेखक को लेकर अतिरंजनापूर्ण निष्कर्ष परोसा गया हो.

हिंदी कहानी में दूधनाथ जी ने जो विधागत प्रयोग किए उससे एक नया रचना जगत उभरकर आया जिस पर इस महाविशेषांक में संकलित अनेक लेखों में इंगित किया गया है. दूधनाथ जी ने उपन्यास, कहानी, कविता समेत सभी साहित्य रूपों में विपुल लेखन किया और चर्चित हुए. असल में वे रोमांटिक स्वप्नभंग के कथाकार थे. विवेचित पत्रिका में संकलित काशीनाथ सिंह, विश्वनाथ त्रिपाठी, ममता कालिया, अली अहमद फातमी, हरिश्चंद्र मिश्र, धनंजय वर्मा, प्रभृति के संस्मरण एवं मूल्यांकन खंड के तहत खगेंद्र ठाकुर, अजय तिवारी, राजेश जोशी, अखिलेश, अरुण कुमार, आदि के लेख दूधनाथ की कहानियों, नाटक, कविता और खास तौर पर उनकी विख्यात कृति *निरालाः आत्महंता, आस्था* एवं *महादेवी* पर बहुत ही गहरे उतरकर विश्लेषण कर उसके निष्कर्षों को सामने लाते हैं. इस अंक में दूधनाथ के लेखन के जिज्ञासुओं के लिए विपुल सामग्री पेश की गई है, जो बहसतलब है.

–ओम नारायण

स्लोडाउन का असर और नछत्तर का उपन्यास

महेश दर्पण

परख

पंजाबी के सुपरिचित रचनाकार नछत्तर के कथाकार से मैं लंबे समय से परिचित व प्रभावित हूं. यदि उनका सबसे महत्त्वपूर्ण पक्ष मुझे नए तथ्य की खोज करने लगता है, तो इसके कारण हैं. न सिर्फ उनकी कहानियों में बल्कि उपन्यासों में भी वह कोशिश यही करते दिखते हैं कि कंटेंट के स्तर पर कुछ नया ही प्रस्तुत किया जाए. इस दृष्टि से एपीएन पब्लिकेशन से प्रकाशित उनका उपन्यास 'स्लोडाउन' आकार में बहुत बड़ा न होते हुए भी अत्यंत महत्त्वपूर्ण कृति है. अनुवादक-कथाकार सुभाष नीरव ने इसकी भूमिका में सही संकेत किया है कि "विश्व स्तर पर आई आर्थिक मंदी के दौरान जहां बड़े-बड़े देशों पर इसका व्यापक और बेहद खराब असर पड़ा, वहीं भारत जैसे अनेक विकासशील देश भी इसके प्रभाव से अछूते नहीं रहे. भारत में मल्टीनेशनल कंपनियों में कार्यरत युवा कर्मियों ने इस असर को गहरे में महसूस किया है."

'स्लोडाउन' का प्रारंभ उन आवाजों से होता है, जो अमरिंदर को परेशान करके रख देती हैं. दरअसल ये आवाजें उसके जेहन से ही आ रही हैं. वह सुनता है, "सर जी, सीमा ने जो कहानियां आपको सुनाईं, हम उन्हीं के पात्र हैं." ये पात्र उसी आर्थिक मंदी के मारे हुए हैं जिसका वर्णन अभी हुआ है. इनके प्रति अमरिंदर के मन के संशयों को स्वयं वे पात्र ही स्पष्ट करना चाहते हैं. यह एक ऐसी फैंटेसी है जिसके गर्भ में यथार्थ छिपा है. बेहद संवेदनशील होने के कारण अमरिंदर इन पात्रों के दुख से प्रभावित होता है.

उपन्यास का स्ट्रक्चर कुछ ऐसा है कि पात्र अथवा पात्र-युग्म के साथ एक नया कथा-कोण सामने आता चला जाता है. पहली पात्र है सीमा. नीरज के साथ रीयल एस्टेट मैनेजमेंट में एम.बी.ए. कर वह उसके साथ ही जीने के सपने देखने लगती है. यहां तक कि पहले खुद को जॉब मिल जाने पर भी वह दोनों का गुजारा उसी से चल जाने की बात सोच बैठती है. पर जॉब न मिल पाने के कारण नीरज चुप्पा हो जाता है. कथा में नाटकीय मोड़ यह आता है कि नीरज को विदेशी कंपनी का ऑफर क्या मिलता है, वह विदेश पहुंचकर सीमा को वहीं बुला लेने की बात करने लगता है. यहां तक तो ठीक था, किंतु धीरे-धीरे वह सब भूलने लगता है. सीमा के लिए यह एक बड़ा झटका है. पर वह उसी में उलझकर नहीं रह जाती.

दिल्ली से जयपुर सीमा का और जयपुर से दिल्ली अमरिंदर का आना-जाना ऑफिस के काम से लगा रहता है. दिल्ली के मंडी हाउस में अमरिंदर से भेंट होने पर उसे अच्छा लगता है. यहीं कभी वह नीरज के साथ आया करती थी. टूट जाने वाली चरित्र नहीं है सीमा. उसकी सोच में, 'जो चीज तुम्हारे हाथ न आ सकी, उसके लिए उम्र भर दुखी क्यों होते रहो. तुम्हारे इर्द-गिर्द और बहुत कुछ है. तुम उसमें से कुछ अच्छा चुन सकते हो.' अपनी इसी सोच के चलते, उसका जयपुर में अमरिंदर से मिलना-जुलना चलता रहता है.

बदलते जीवन में महानगर की भूमिका कितनी महत्त्वपूर्ण है, यह करतार चंद के प्रसंग से समझ आता है. यहां व्यक्ति का वर्ण, वर्ग, जाति सब पीछे छूट जाते हैं. उसका बेटा शर्मा परिवार की लड़की से और बेटी पंडित के बेटे से विवाह कर लेती है. नई पीढ़ी की सामाजिक परिवर्तन में यह एक बड़ी भूमिका है. करतारचंद की हीनभावना धरी की धरी रह जाती है कि चमार होते हुए भी वह कैसे ऊंचे लोगों से संबंध कर सकता है. उपन्यास की विशेषता यह है कि संवादों के मध्य, शहर जाकर बस गए और गांव में छूटकर पिछड़ा जीवन जीने को विवश लोगों के बीच तुलना करता चलता है. करतारचंद भी इतना विवेकी हो चुका है कि गांव वालों को यह बता सके कि "यह तुम्हारा भरम है कि कोई पार्टी तुम्हारा सुधार करेगी. इसके लिए तुम्हें खुद ही इकट्ठा होकर साहस दिखाना पड़ेगा." इसके बावजूद करतारचंद के भीतर चल रही उथल-पुथल को उपन्यास तरीके से प्रस्तुत करता है.

नए समय में जहां पति-पत्नी, दोनों का कामकाजी होना एक जरूरत ही बन गई है, वहीं पारिवारिक जीवन इससे प्रभावित भी खूब होता है. रोहित-मोनिका प्रसंग में नछत्तर खूबसूरती से यह दिखा गए हैं कि इनके पास जिंदगी जीने का समय ही नहीं है. लुधियाना से आए मां-बाप कमला-गिरधारी यह देखकर हैरान हैं. यही कारण है कि उनका जी बच्चों के शहर में नहीं लगता. दोनों की बातचीत में इस शहरी

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जीवन की आलोचना चलती रहती है. अन्य प्रसंगों की तरह कथा यहां भी पात्र परिचय के बाद फ्लैश बैक में चलने लगती है. पीढ़ियों का अंतराल, सोच का अंतर होते हुए भी सलाहियत उभरकर आती है कि बदल गए समय में बच्चों का नया मनोविज्ञान समझना जरूरी है. यहां एमएनसी कल्चर के दबाव हैं और विवशता में बंधी जिंदगी, इसलिए ब्रॉड माइंड होना आवश्यक है. उपन्यास की सार्थकता यही है कि मां-बाप, बच्चों की खुशी में खुश रहने का निर्णय कर लेते हैं.

पंकज के वर्तमान के साथ ही खुलती है उसकी अतीत कथा भी. स्टैंडर्ड चार्टर्ड बैंक का कर्मचारी रहा यह पात्र अपने निठल्लेपन से ऊब चुका है. उसका ही नहीं, उसके साथ काम करने वाले अनेक लोगों का जॉब छिन गया है. ऋषि इन्हीं में एक है. उससे मिलने के बाद पंकज को बड़े खराब अनुभव होते हैं. लूटपाट के धंधे में लगे उसके साथी पंकज को भी अपने साथ शामिल कर लेना चाहते हैं. पढ़े-लिखे ये क्वालिफाइड लड़के इस नए विपरीत समय में अपराधी बने जा रहे हैं. यह ऐसा चक्रव्यूह है जिसमें जाने के बाद निकलना मुश्किल है. पंकज ही है जो घर लौट आता है. पर वह यह नहीं भुला पाता कि महज वर्तमान में जीने के सिद्धांत पर चलने वाला उसका बैंक का सहकर्मी करमवीर कैसे अंत का सामना करने को विवश है. अपराधी गिरोह में शामिल हो गाड़ियां चुराकर बेचने लग जाता है. उपन्यास में उसकी अपराध-कथा भले ही सूचनात्मक है, किंतु दिखावे के संजाल में फंसे युवाओं का यह पात्र सही प्रतिनिधित्व करता है.

स्लोडाउन के हव्वे से परेशान पंकज की हरकतों से उसके मां-बाप परेशान हैं. वह अपने सहकर्मी सुधीर की पत्नी से इसलिए संबंध बना लेता है कि वह उसका पहला प्रेमी तो है ही, खुद को अकेला भी महसूस कर रहा है. शबनम के साथ उसकी कथा, बड़ों की जिद के आगे युवा मन के संकट सामने रखती है. अच्छी बात यह है कि अंतरंग दृश्यों में संकेत भर हैं, रस लेने की प्रवृत्ति नहीं.

समीर-सुरभि कथा में भी इसी, नई रोजगार माहौल की हवा का असर है, जहां कंपनियां बदलते-बदलते और एक बच्चा हो जाने के बाद पत्नी से ऊब हो आती है. समीर-रुचि का प्रसंग खोलता है वह मजबूरियां जहां इन कंपनियों में काम करने वाली लड़कियों को नौकरी बचाए रखने के लिए समझौते करने पड़ते हैं.

दृश्यों और प्रसंगों में चलती इस उपन्यास की कथा को कथा-समय के बाहरी दबावों से भी दो-चार होना पड़ता है. जैसे राजस्थान का गूजर आंदोलन सीमा को जयपुर में रुकने को विवश कर देता है. उसकी स्मृतियों में पंकज भी है और नीरज भी. वह डरती है कि कहीं नीरज की तरह अमरिंदर का साथ भी न छूट जाए. यह डर हमें इस समय ने दिया है जो परिस्थितियों के सामने संबंधों की परवाह नहीं करने देता. लगाव के बावजूद अमरिंदर-सीमा के बीच एक लक्ष्मण रेखा बनी रहती है. हर पात्र के साथ प्रायः एक पूर्व संबंध अवश्य है इस उपन्यास में. यही कारण है कि सीमा और सिमरन की तुलना करता रहता है अमरिंदर. परेशान अमरिंदर को किताबों की शरण बचाती है.

सीमा-अमरिंदर के बहाने प्राइवेट व सरकारी नौकरी के बीच तुलना भी चलती रहती है. सुकून भरी सरकारी नौकरी की तुलना में प्राइवेट जॉब में अनिश्चितता बनी रहती है, कोई नियम-कानून नहीं. इसीलिए सीमा स्वयं को विवाह के बंधन में नहीं बांधना चाहती. उसे पिंजड़े में बंद पंछी भी अच्छे नहीं लगते. हां, वह मनचाहे पुरुष के साथ चलते रहने को तैयार है.

अंत तक आते-आते यह कथा अमरिंदर के साथ फिर फैंटेसी में चली आती है. कथा में आए अदृश्य पात्र अमरिंदर का गुस्सा देख घबरा उठे हैं. इस घबराहट में उनकी कमजोरियां सामने हो आती हैं, "सर जी, हमें यूं गुस्से में न देखो. यह तो आसपास की चकाचौंध ने हमें अंधा कर दिया. पहले हम भी ऐसे नहीं थे. आपके मन के अंदर ऐसी गलतफहमियों को दूर करने के लिए ही हम आपके जेहन के दरवाजे खटखटा रहे थे."

दरअसल पूरा उपन्यास इसी अदृश्य-दृश्य के बीच ही बंधा है. विभ्रम और यथार्थ की यात्रा यह कथा एक साथ कराती लगती है. सीमा इनमें सदाशय पात्र है. वह पंकज के लिए अमरिंदर से कुछ करने को कहती है. इस संदर्भ में अपनी स्थिति भी वह स्पष्ट कर देती है, "यदि कोई लड़की किसी मर्द के साथ हंसकर बात कर लेती है तो इसका यह मतलब नहीं कि वह मर्द उसका आशिक ही हो. वह उसका भाई भी हो सकता है."

संवेदनशील मन अमरिंदर कई दिनों तक पंकज के न आने के कारण घबरा उठता है. उसका पंकज के घर की ओर निकल पड़ना और उपन्यास का अनायास अंत हो जाना दरअसल, इस समय की ही एक असमाप्त कथा है. यह कहती है कि जीवित वही रहेगा जो संवेदनशील होगा. बदलते समय में इसीलिए संवेदनशीलता को बचाकर रखना होगा ताकि हमारा विवेक नष्ट न हो. छोटे कलेवर में नछत्तर ने यह एक बड़ी कथा कही है. इससे पंजाबी उपन्यास समृद्ध हुआ है. यह उपन्यास चुपके से यह संदेश थमा गया है कि मनुष्य को अपनी सीमाएं पहचानते हुए, तात्कालिक चमक-दमक में खो जाने के बजाय परिस्थितियों से लोहा लेना सीखना चाहिए. यह नहीं कि आदत बन गई जरूरतों की पूर्ति के लिए अपराध के मार्ग पर चल दें.

❐

पुस्तक : स्लोडाउन
लेखक : नछत्तर, अनुवादक : सुभाष नीरव
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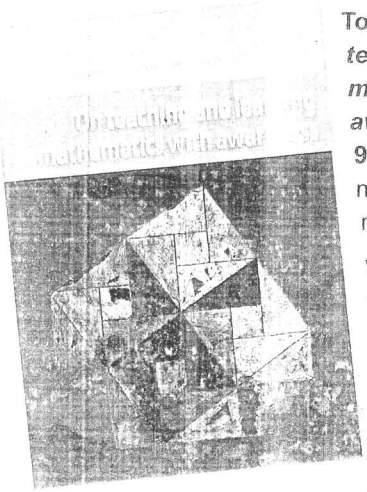
Mathematics Teaching Journal of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics
Issue No. 263 Sept 2018

Book reviews

Tony Cotton reviews *On teaching and learning mathematics with awareness* and Alistair Bissell reviews *Variation in mathematics teaching and learning.*



Tony Cotton reviews *On teaching and learning mathematics with awareness.* ATM. ISBN 978 1 9121850407. £12 members. £16 non-members.

What do you expect from a book review? A précis so that you can decide whether this is a book that will be of interest to you? An opinion? Enough information to decide whether or not to make a purchase? Or, simply, something that will be of interest in itself?

On teaching and learning mathematics with awareness is a collection of reflections written by the ATM Science of Education group. Whilst it was put together over a single weekend, it is the result of three years thoughtful discussion and exploration. This allows the book to be a slow, thoughtful, reflection and a coherent collection. The book is organised in four sections: A diary to give the reader insight into what it was like to be a member of the Science of Education Working Group; a collection of the tasks that were worked on in the meetings; individual member's writing "sparked-off" by the collaborative work on the tasks; and a selection of reflections on the writings of Gattegno, the man who lies at the heart of the book.

There is an assumption that the reader understands that Gattegno and his writings are constantly present in the text. We all do this with our gurus, assuming that they are ever present in everyone's lives. He is introduced in the text on page 4 through his last address to the ATM conference in 1988. He said:

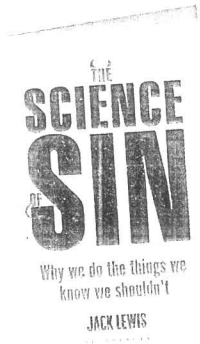
> People often say "I teach them, but they don't learn". Well, if you know that, stop teaching. Not resign from your job: stop teaching in the way that doesn't reach people, and try to understand what there is to do for you to become daily more skilled in helping these youngsters furnish their minds with things which are so elementary that, where they take 5 years today, one can do them in 18 months, sometimes less.

So, the challenge for the reader, and the challenge the writers took on was to explore how to stop teaching in the way that has become habitual and how to start teaching in a way that will, "unleash the power of the learner." The reader is supported through this process, invited to pause and watch animations. We are taught how to notice. We are taught to become aware of how our awarenesses develop.

The reader is offered tasks to explore, firstly for themselves with theoretical discussion of how awareness develops and then, in section 2, the same tasks are presented so that we can use them in our classrooms. As the book suggests, these are tasks to be worked on rather than worked through. The third section digs deeper. Extended reflections from the members of the group, often on the same tasks, but with a slow and detailed discussion of how the writer's thinking developed whilst exploring a piece of mathematics. What fascinates me is how, to quote Gattegno again, "images and dynamics be the forerunner of words". The text only exists as it does because of the power of the images that are offered. Something we can all take back to our teaching.

The book closes with an article *On algebra* by Caleb Gattegno, first published in MT105 in December 1983. I close this review as the article closes. If this passage resonates, I suggest you buy the book:

> As soon as we see that because mathematics is of the mind we must concern ourselves with the inner life of our students and, in particular as we do here, with their awareness of the dynamics of the mind, we cast an entirely new light on the subject and on its transformation into life-giving activities which contribute to each of our students' personal evolution and hence a more responsible situating of themselves in the future descending upon us.



The Science of Sin: Why we do the things we know we shouldn't | Bloomsbury | 304 pages | Rs 499

Gloriously Sinful Are Our Ways

The seven deadly sins—no-go areas for us for millennia—are picked threadbare with a wealth of neuro-scientific data in this readable study

BY SHOBHIT MAHAJAN

AROUND 300,000 years ago, a new species emerged from the now extinct Homo erectus. Homo sapiens differed from its predecessor in several ways but the most important difference was the increase in brain size. A larger brain led to greater specialisation of its functionality, which in turn led to things we consider uniquely human—the development of language, sophisticated tools and the ability to form social bonds and collaborate with people. Social bonding led to the formation of large cooperative groups, called InGroups, whose membership proved to be crucial for the survival of the species.

Despite what Facebook might claim, our cognitive capacity limits the number of individuals with whom we can maintain stable social relationships. This number, called the Dunbar number, is around 150. In a group of roughly this size, harmony and cooperation was possible with social mores which defined acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. However, meaningful cooperation on a larger scale needed other constructs like religion. With religion came the concept of sin—defined simply as forbidden behaviour.

It was only in the 6th century CE that a list of seven deadly sins was drawn up by Pope Gregory. These were pride, gluttony, lust, sloth, greed, envy and wrath. Stripped of the religious mumbo-jumbo, these were basically traits which were acknowledged to be detrimental to individuals as well as the InGroup. Labelling bad behaviour did not make it any rarer—it just led to more guilt. But why have these traits persisted? What are the biological and psychological dimensions of these capital vices? Jack Lewis, a neuroscientist and a television presenter, seeks to explore this terrain.

Studying the human brain was wellnigh impossible till the 20th century. The wounded of the two world wars, especially those with brain injuries, offered doctors a unique opportunity to learn about brain structure and correlated functionalities. Subsequently, with the development of tools like CAT and MRI scans, scientists could glean information about the amazingly complex organ. In the 1990s, with the advent of the technique of functional MRI, scientists could finally localise brain activity in various parts of the brain and correlate it to stimuli and behaviour.

Lewis looks at each of the seven deadly sins in their many dimensions. Using the enormous amount of scientific data on the human brain that has accumulated over the years with MRI and other techniques, he tries to explain how the neural circuitry of the brain is involved not only in tempting us to be sinful, but also how it restrains us. This can all get pretty complicated, with terms like the Medial orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) and the Rostral anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) etc., thrown around. Fortunately, the nitty gritty of neuroscience is but a small part of the discussion of each of the vices.

> Apart from neuroscience, Lewis uses evolutionary psychology to explain human behaviour. But the latter's findings aren't verifiable. It's misleading and the major lacuna here.

What make the book interesting are the socio-cultural, contemporary and historical sidelights woven together with anecdotes and curious trivia. For instance, in his discussion on sloth, he talks about the case of a South Korean couple who were so completely absorbed in a game that featured caring for a virtual infant that they accidentally starved their own three-month-old child to death. Or his discussion on how Facebook and reality TV, unlike all the world's major religions, is an ideal breeding ground for narcissism, which he links with the vice of pride. Pride is considered to be the "queen of all sins"—an exaggerated sense of entitlement and self-importance would make it easier for one to feel justified in taking more than their fair share. In this reading, pride leads to other sins like lust, greed and sloth.

Apart from neuroscience, Lewis uses evolutionary psychology—where human behaviour is linked to evolutionary adaptations—to explain human behaviour. Unfortunately, evolutionary psychology is methodologically and theoretically controversial, since among other shortcomings, its findings are not verifiable. Intermingling such explanations with hardcore neurobiology misleads the non-specialist into thinking that both are on an equal footing as scientific theories go. This is a major lacuna in a well-written and immensely readable book.

We humans are fallible and prone to giving in to our deep-rooted impulses, which are mediated through the complex external environment we inhabit. These impulses can have both good and bad outcomes. Apart from various medical interventions which can curb pathological behaviour, Lewis also suggests various strategies that can be used at an individual level so that we can better manage these innermost impulses that ultimately make us unhealthy, unhappy and unproductive. The best advice turns out to be still what has been known to wise men for millennia—moderation in one's behaviour.

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BOOKS

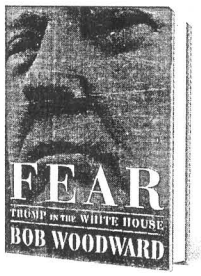
INSIDE THE TUMULTUOUS TRUMP WHITE HOUSE

By Sumit Ganguly

The noted British newspaper, *The Guardian*, has acquired an early version of a book, *Full Disclosure*, written by the porn film star, Stormy Daniels (Stephanie Clifford), about her life and alleged affair with President Donald Trump. Apart from highlighting the president's quirky personal characteristics, it is also rich in salacious detail about the putative affair. Once published, it will probably complement what two other books, including Michael Wolff's *Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House* and Omarosa Manigault's *Unhinged: An Insider's Account of The Trump White House*, have revealed both about the tribulations of the campaign trial and the subsequent chaotic workings of the White House under the Trump presidency.

Bob Woodward's book, *Fear: Trump in the White House*, is also replete with details pertaining to the turbulence that has marked decision-making within the White House since Trump assumed office. Woodward, a journalist with an extraordinary pedigree harking back to the days when he and Carl Bernstein of *The Washington Post* broke the story on the Watergate burglary, does not, unlike the other tell-all accounts published thus far, write in breathless prose. However, he provides detailed, telling and troubling accounts about how the president reached a series of critical decisions laden with much import for both the United States and the world.

Trump's choices on a series of matters dealing with South Asian politics will be of particular interest to the readers of this magazine. Among other matters, Woodward devotes a fair bit of a chapter to Trump's views about Afghanistan. He reminds readers that during the campaign, Trump had repeatedly and sharply criticised the US involvement in Afghanistan and had threatened to withdraw American forces from the country if elected.



FEAR: TRUMP IN THE WHITE HOUSE
Bob Woodward
Simon & Schuster
420 pages; ₹467 (UK price)

Despite Trump's stated fondness for Modi, McMaster was unable to convince Trump to invite Modi to Camp David. Trump decided to simply host him at the White House

Once in office, he hewed to his original position even as his aides, most notably the then National Security Adviser General H.R. McMaster, sought to devise a new strategy for ending the war. Trump, sceptical of any plan that involved adding more troops, had little use for the new strategy and categorically told McMaster as much in rather colourful language. More to the point he even countered McMaster stating that his friend, Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, had informed him that the US had not benefitted from its long involvement in Afghanistan. Worse still, Trump insisted that the People's Republic of China (PRC) was busy extracting Afghanistan's substantial mineral wealth.

Simultaneously, he made clear to his aides that the payments to Pakistan would have to end unless it was willing to cooperate. On the questions of Pakistan and Afghanistan, Trump proved to be unyielding. However, the hawkish Senator from South Carolina, Lindsay Graham, eventually persuaded him to augment American forces in Afghanistan arguing that a failure to stabilise the country would inevitably damage his presidency.

Ironically, despite Trump's stated fondness for Modi, Woodward also reports that it was McMaster who had to make a spirited but ultimately unsuccessful case for inviting Modi to Camp David. Despite McMaster's advocacy, Trump decided to simply host Modi at the White House. This curious unwillingness to invite Modi to Camp David notwithstanding, Woodward shows that Trump genuinely believes in the power of personal diplomacy. This is evident from the discussions that Woodward recounts about Trump's dealings with Chinese president Xi Jinping. When the PRC signed off on a raft of new sanctions on North Korea, Trump attributed them to his personal chemistry with Xi. Yet, true to his mercurial self, he had no compunctions about imposing significant tariffs on the PRC when it suited his perceived electoral needs. As he completes nearly two years in office, Woodward's book provides a fascinating aperture into the tumultuous White House. ■

Sumit Ganguly is a Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Indiana University, Bloomington

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BOOKS

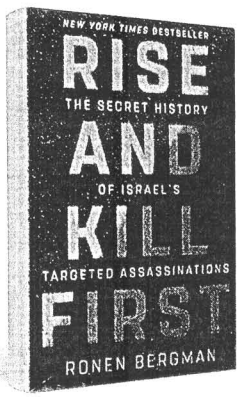
SILENT KILLERS

By Ajai Sahni

Ronen Bergman takes his title from the Talmudic injunction, 'If someone comes to kill you, rise up and kill him first'. Israel's roots are inextricably intertwined with the rejection of the passivism that afflicted European Jews—contemptuously, *Muselmänner*—that sent them, unresisting, to the slaughterhouses of the Holocaust. They are equally enmeshed with the intelligence apparatus and the campaign of targeted killings that entrenched itself in the pre-state era and, subsequently, in the state's strategy of survival.

Targeted killings were not merely a tactical and strategic option, but also a moral choice. Open warfare was to be waged only 'when the sword is on our throat'. Neutralising a few 'major figures' often prevented greater conflagrations and the loss of 'untold numbers of soldiers and civilians on both sides'. However, such a strategy can lose direction, as we find through a history of extraordinary professionalism as well as of incompetence and loss of control. The consequences of the latter are disastrous, particularly in phases where indiscriminate violence brought odium and isolation on Israel.

Bergman's narrative is masterful, and astonishing in its detail on a subject that is shrouded in secrecy and buried under Israel's rigid censorship laws. Bergman, however, discovered that 'everyone wants to speak about what they've done'. In an age when the leading countries have adopted Israel-initiated tactics of targeted assassination, drone warfare and extraordinary rendition, this is mandatory reading for anyone even remotely interested in counterterrorism. But the purpose of Bergman's fascinating work is not mere documentation; it is to address the twin questions: are targeted killings effective? And are they justifiable? Bergman asserts that Israel's campaign of assassination constitutes 'a long string of impressive tactical successes, but also disastrous strategic failures'. He argues, further, that Israel paid a 'high moral price... for the use of such power'.



RISE AND KILL FIRST: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations
by RONEN BERGMAN
Published by John Murray
₹899; 755 pages

In an age when the leading countries of the world have adopted Israel's tactics of targeted assassination, drone warfare and extraordinary rendition, this is mandatory reading for anyone even remotely interested in counterterrorism

The arguments in support of this thesis occur episodically and are perhaps the book's weakest element, harvesting each failure or excess to assert that targeted killings don't work, or are counterproductive. And yet, Bergman concedes 'the assassination weapon, based on intelligence that is "nothing less than exquisite" is what made Israel's war on terror the most effective ever waged by a 'Western' country. On numerous occasions, it was targeted killing that saved Israel from very grave crises'. Elsewhere, he asserts "it is very hard to predict how history will proceed after someone is shot in the head". But then, it is equally hard to predict the course of history if certain people aren't shot in the head! These are poor arguments, led by faith, rather than evidence.

Bergman uses the expression 'terrorism' rather loosely, as indeed do many Israelis, applying it to operations even when targets were state entities and soldiers, or armed and violent Arab formations. He fails to build unrelenting Arab and Palestinian hatred, excesses and atrocities into the logic of his critique of targeted killings, preferring to treat these as nothing more than background information, with no clear impact on strategic or moral issues. Nevertheless, there is a treasure-house of material in *Rise and Kill First* that will allow readers to judge these issues on their own. And, for a book just short of 800 pages, it makes for surprisingly easy reading. ■

The author is the executive director of the Institute for Conflict Management

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The Story of Kashmir and Its People
Beyond the Metanarrative of Political Conflict

HAFSA KANJWAL

BOOK REVIEWS

Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation edited by Chitralekha Zutshi, *Cambridge, UK; NY, USA; Melbourne, Australia; New Delhi and Singapore: Cambridge University Press, 2018; pp xii+338, price not indicated.*

The edited volume *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation* brings together 14 essays on the region of Kashmir, ranging from the 14th century into the present day. The collection features interdisciplinary work from a wide range of fields, including literature, film and media studies, gender studies, history, political science, anthropology, religious studies, and sociology. Shifting the lens from the high politics of the Kashmir "conflict," to "less well-known aspects and areas of Kashmir," it seeks to destabilise the notion of Kashmir as simply a disputed territory (p 3). In doing so, it aims to

> illuminate the diversity and range of experiences, ideas, institutions, individuals, forms of resistance and interactions with the outside world that have shaped, and continue to shape, Kashmir and its people. (p ix)

The study of Kashmir has made substantial progress from the time when it was mired in scholarly disputes over the nature of events in 1947, or analysis of the multiple causes of the armed uprising against the Indian state in the late 1980s. As a result, the sheer range of scholarly possibilities that the volume as a whole considers, is promising.

Diversity in Perspectives

The volume reflects a number of recent developments in the historiography of Kashmir. One, the essays expand the geographical focus from the Kashmir Valley to the other regions of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir that are "very much a part of the Kashmir dispute" (p 3). In situating the importance of Azad Kashmir in instigating the Kashmir dispute through the little examined Poonch rebellion against the Dogra rule, Christopher Snedden's work depicts its contested relationship within Pakistan; Azad Kashmir is highly dependent on Pakistan, and therefore "lacks integrity as a genuinely autonomous entity." Martin Sokefeld's work in Gilgit–Baltistan shows the antagonistic political aspirations of the people of the region, who wish to fully integrate into Pakistan, but continue to be treated as part of a "disputed territory" and thus do not enjoy the full merits of citizenship. Mohita Bhatia's compelling look into caste politics in Jammu reveals how everyday Dalit assertion against the upper castes can still coexist with their participation in a pro-Hindu and nationalist politics that stands in contrast to Kashmiri Muslim aspirations for freedom in the Valley (p 11). Here, regional/religious identity overshadows broader caste identities and solidarities.

While attention to the multilayered politics of the entire state is important in understanding the diversity within the state, one must note that it has often been misappropriated by particular political agendas that seek to undermine the demand for self-determination—not just in the Kashmir Valley—but also throughout the state. Indeed, in an article for *Kindle Magazine* anthropologist Mona Bhan asks, "To what extent is this narrative meant to detract from the foundational question of Kashmir's disputed political status in order to reinforce the justness and legitimacy of India's rule over Kashmir?" While the edited volume calls for a multipronged approach to address this diversity in any solution to the Kashmir dispute, it is crucial that this diversity not be utilised to showcase the "intractable nature of political divides in the state," or to undermine legitimate demands for self-determination, from wherever they may arise (Bhan 2016). Furthermore, it is equally important to foreground the role of the state and other institutions in crafting or manipulating existing divisions along religious/regional/or linguistic lines.

Second, these essays also show how particular manifestations of religious identity as well as relations between diverse religious communities come to be constructed over a historical period and in response to specific socio-economic developments. In doing so, they shift our attention away from essentialist understandings of religious identities and their interactions. Mridu Rai's essay examines how Kashmiri Muslims used the colonial archaeological project in Kashmir as a means to demand control over religious spaces, as well as political rights as a community. Not unlike colonial practices of statecraft such as the census, "archeology ended up amplifying religiously defined identities within communities" (p 27).

Chitralekha Zutshi's essay foregrounds contestations over urban space—in particular, shrines—under the Dogras, how these contestations came to shape how Islam in Kashmir would be defined, and how Kashmiri Muslim protests against the state would take form. Haley Dushinski's article on Kashmiri Hindus showcases how homogenising community discourses by Kashmiri Pandit organisations after 1990 "reflected and refracted right-wing majoritarian projects of the saffron wave of Hindu nationalism" (p 172). This affinity was constructed over a series of events; it was not a teleological given at the time of Pandit migration to Jammu. In addition, Ananya Jahanara Kabir's essay on the changing representations of Kashmir in popular Indian cinema since the 1960s highlights how India's anxieties about its own Muslim population, especially in the context of the war on terror, are able to ideologically co-opt the Kashmir issue,

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and portray Kashmiri Muslims as violent terrorists. All of these essays underscore how colonial practices of statecraft, contestations over religious space, migration, and cinema shape particular manifestations of religious identities, and their relationship to the state.

Third, these essays also situate Kashmir in a longue durée of relations, politics, and identities. Using a number of different texts, including hagiographies, across centuries, Dean Accardi's essay shows how the indigenous medieval mystics, Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, were deployed for diverse political ends by the writers of these texts. In the act of narration, however, they became embedded in the Kashmiri spiritual landscape. The "cumulative result of these retellings is a weaving of these saints deeper and deeper into the fabric of Kashmir, and Kashmiri identity, thus rendering them synonymous with Kashmir itself," Accardi concludes (p 262). Vanessa Chishti's work examines the Kashmiri shawl as central to European representations of Kashmir in the late 18th and 19th centuries. When Kashmiri shawls were deemed exclusive and authentic, Kashmir was posited as an untouched paradise in European narratives. As Europe began to mass-produce shawls, the desire for Kashmiri shawls fell, and the representation of Kashmir shifted. As Chishti argues, the "Valley came to be seen as a frontier of the British empire and the theater for British capital and enterprise" (p 280).

Contemporary Politics

The remainder of the essays directly confront the politics of the present. Andrew Whitehead's essay uses the story of *Naya* (New) Kashmir to show how "there has been no enduring settlement between Kashmiri and Indian nationalisms, no agreement about the extent of autonomy for the state, and it is not hard to see why such a resolution has proved so elusive" (p 86). Shehla Hussain writes of the shifting meanings of the term *azaadi* from the 1930s to the present. She dispels the notion of freedom as a recent construct, and argues that its meaning must be broadened from political emancipation to a "concept informed by human dignity, economic equity and social justice" (p 90). Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay asks whether good governance can mitigate people's demands for freedom. She argues that it cannot, as it does not address "the deeper demands for dignity and social justice that are integral … to Kashmiris' sense of religion and regional identity" (p 11). In the last chapter, Suvir Kaul looks at a number of poems to explore trauma and resistance. He argues that these poems are not just a means of resistance, but also challenge tropes of loss, discord, and dispossession itself, in an attempt to build towards a more ethical future and serve as a conduit of political mobilisation.

While the chapters each push the direction of Kashmir Studies in the aforementioned directions, the introductory chapter by Zutshi entitled "New Directions in the Study of Kashmir," fails to truly break ground in articulating the "newness" in approaches to studying Kashmir. This is especially surprising in light of Zutshi's own previous works, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir,* as well as *Kashmir's Contested Pasts: Narratives, Geographies, and the Historical Imagination*, which tread similar ground. The introduction also upholds a number of (Indian) statist perspectives, not dissimilar to an earlier round of historiography that sought to reclaim Kashmir for India.

In the introduction, the region of Kashmir is defined in reference to historical literature—in both Sanskrit and Persian—as well as Kashmir's incorporation into the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir in the colonial period. However, the scope of Kashmir Studies itself is not examined. Why is it important to even have "Kashmir Studies" and what are some of its important thematic and theoretical contributions? While the introduction makes reference to how the set of essays reflect the failures of the postcolonial era, more could be said in interrogating the use of both "colonial" and "postcolonial" in relation to Kashmir.

Further, the introduction argues that the set of essays transcend the metanarratives of political conflict, to probe other, equally significant, arenas of conflict that inform the Kashmir dispute (p 3). What is seen a "political conflict" is not clarified—indeed, a vast majority of the essays do touch upon politics, broadly defined—and the political conflict is implicated and plays a crucial role in the types of questions a vast majority of the essays examine. Thus, it is perhaps not useful to "transcend" political conflict, but rather, foreground it as working alongside other arenas of conflict. For example, it would be difficult to imagine the extent of gender violence in Seema Kazi's essay without foregrounding the political conditions upon which Indian forces are able to exercise complete impunity.

Challenging 'Conflict'

In addition, when speaking of Kashmir, the language that scholars use is laden with particular meanings and political intent. For there to indeed be a new direction in Kashmir Studies, we must be, first and foremost, ready to shed the burden of nationalist discourses that continue to idealise the nation state, and Kashmiri aspirations as being simply "alienated" from this ideal. This begins with challenging the use of the term

"conflict" as it foregrounds Indian and Pakistani nationalist narratives over those of Kashmiris (which the volume purportedly seeks to do). At what point, then, do we shift our frames from seeing Kashmir more accurately as a military occupation instead of an interstate "conflict?" In the introduction, and elsewhere, there are also repeated references to the "insurgency," and "secessionist" politics which once again foregrounds Indian statist narratives, and frames the issue exclusively from a security lens.

Indeed, there are a number of times in the introduction where an attempt is made to reclaim Kashmir, in particular for the Indian state, by asking how national movements can be accommodated within states instead of being seen as threats to the national interest. Zutshi states, "Kashmiri nationalism, which at one time seemed perfectly aligned with the narrative of Indian nationalism, now seemed irreconcilable with it" (p 9). A cursory look at Kashmiri nationalism will reveal how it was always deeply fractured and contested; while a particular elite group of Kashmiri leaders may have identified with Indian nationalism, there is no evidence to suggest that "Kashmiri nationalism," as a whole, did so. Even this elite group had their own qualms about Indian nationalism, as we can see in the case of Sheikh Abdullah.

Zutshi also argues, "Kashmiris seek to distance themselves from India and claim a greater identification of Kashmir with the Islamic world, defined increasingly in West Asian rather than South Asian terms." One could of course question why Kashmir needs to be reclaimed exclusively on South Asian terms; surely a region such as Kashmir, which existed at the confluence of multiple civilisations can go beyond the contours of South Asia. Furthermore, why is a greater identification with the entity known as the "Islamic world" immediately seen as a negative development? Perhaps a more critical question would be to examine exactly how Kashmir came to exclusively fall within the ambit of "South Asia."

Hafsa Kanjwal (*kanjwalh@lafayette.edu*) is an assistant professor of South Asian History at Lafayette College, Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on state formation in post-partition Kashmir.

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Adding Meaning to 'Democracy'

SHRUTI JAIN

Claiming India from Below: Activism and Democratic Transformation edited by Vipul Mudgal, *Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2016; pp xxi + 329, ₹995.*

Thus far we have demanded "schooling" with the belief that it automatically leads to "learning," points out Rukmini Banerjee in her article in the book *Claiming India from Below: Activism and Democratic Transformation*. Banerjee shows how this realisation in itself is important, and that what is lacking is in fact "learning" and not schooling. This realisation then could become the basis of community intervention and initiatives to make "sarkari" schools as "our" schools. This, in my opinion, captures the spirit of this book, to figure out what is lacking and to add that meaning to the democratic structures through community participation, so that they become "ours," public in the true sense of the word.

Democracy and development, unfortunately, have come to sound like words that have lost their meaning; as they remain oblivious of, apathetic to and arrogant towards the ordinary people, their wisdom, and dignity. Often the processes that unfold in the name of democracy remain contrary to its essence. It is an achievement of this book to bring together the voices of social movements, grounded researchers, academicians and practitioners engaged in interventions that could bring back this essence. The focus of the book is on what can be done, on interventions that are feasible and workable, incorporating real-life experiences and "tangible reflections."

This book continues the legacy of the work of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) on alternatives and participatory democracy and takes a step forward. It has 18 contributions divided under the three overlapping themes of "Voices from below: Field notes from India unheard"; "Alternatives from below: Participation for transformation"; and "Politics from below: Activism for interventions." These contributions, which are a result of a series of dialogues organised over two years at CSDS, are lucid and have a flow that makes the book accessible to most, to both scholars and general readers, as it presents rich insights of years of sustained academic engagements, activism, and interventions.

This book is no doubt extremely relevant in today's time when autocratic tendencies within the democracy are not only gaining more legitimacy but are being celebrated. Civil society is increasingly being attacked and delegitimised with "anti-development" and "anti-national" tags. Financial support to many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) has been curtailed for not having espoused the vision of "development" as endorsed by the government. The autonomy of universities and academic institutions has been violated continuously. The hostility towards and targeting of any discerning voice is quite evident. The polarisation of people on caste and religious lines has sharpened.

In a nuanced introduction, Vipul Mudgal points out how even the "charade of grassroots consultation" through institutions like the Planning Commission has been given up (p 5). The day-to-day engagement with governance is becoming more virtual and distanced, excluding many, especially the already marginalised communities. Such is the politics of knowledge that the policy discourses get hijacked by the *policywalas*, the experts and the bureaucrats along with the *policy-researchwalas*, the thriving consultants. This "elite capture" of important policies

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and "political or legislative wisdom" appears to be "*brahminical* and techno-managerial" (p 3). The allocation of resources is getting captured by private interests. Mudgal highlights the consistent paradox of democracy that those with highest stakes in the democracy have the least say, despite their increasing participation in the electoral process. The participation of these marginalised groups in the democracy is by design "discursive and subjective rather than systematic or institutional" (p 5).

Rajeev Bhargava in the foreword to this book terms this phase of Indian democracy as the third phase of legitimation crisis (the first phase being the crisis of procedural legitimacy of elections and second phase that of social legitimacy crisis wherein aspiration of representation by "own" people consequently led to a sense of betrayal). The present phase of the crisis is that of moral legitimacy, which according to Bhargava, rekindles two contradictory impulses: impulses that favour autocratic leadership, as well as the participatory impulses. While this book builds a case to check the increasing anti-democratic impulses, its main concern remains exploration of spaces and structures that can increase the capacities of actual participation and intervention of the ordinary people in the sphere of democracy and policymaking.

Vulnerability and Transformation

The first section of the book, "Voices from Below," highlights the role of civil society organisations in building social capital of groups that are structurally rendered vulnerable, like those of migrants and tribals. Amrita Sharma and Rajeev Khandelwal address the crucial issue of the lack of support structures for migrants and describe how their organisation is attempting to build collective structures of migrants to provide them with a voice. Soumaya Kidambi and Akansha Yadav build a case for the institutionalisation of social audits for MGNREGS, so that the poor could not only monitor the delivery of services by the government departments but also oppose the capture of benefits by the powerful few. Sanjeer Alam questions the fictitious sense of the democratisation of the schooling system, due to its expansion and increased participation of panchayati raj institutions (PRIs). He makes a case for equal learning opportunities to enable the poor to access education and job opportunities in a scenario that favours those with high sociocultural capital.

The other three contributions in this section highlight how the ideas of development and democracy are shaped amidst social conflicts, and how these conflicts emerge when the people are denied their democratic rights over natural resources. Drawing on their field engagement in Jungle Mahal area of Santhal Pargana, Arindam Banerjee and Animesh Ghosh stress on strengthening of PRIs in this area as it struggles with poverty and Maoist and state violence. Legislations like Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act have limited impact in the tribal areas with rich mineral resources, as the state maintains its centralising tendency and the grip over the natural resources. Ajay Dandekar and Felix Padel in their respective essays insist that preserving the right of locals over natural resources is the way to address the polarisation between people and the state apparatus and its policies in such areas. For this, a new paradigm of development is required, which does not consider displacement and dispossession as inevitable side effects. Dandekar illustrates how even after the introduction of new forest acts, seeking to overturn the colonial policy of timber extraction, the same demands of the economy continue to be made in a "democratic manner," "thus ensuring that the democratic process was stymied" (p 78) and has been infused with regressive content. The observations of these authors have been given new meaning by the recent movement of Pathalgadi, when the Adivasi villages in Jharkhand declared their gram sabhas as the real constitutional body and a basis for self-rule, while banning the exploitative outsiders to emphasise their right over the *jal, jungle, jameen* (water, forest, land).

This book, while acknowledging the limitations of elections, suggests the instruments to channel people's voices in impacting transformations. Sanjay Kumar, on the basis of extensive field surveys, describes the political attitude of the slum dwellers. While they accept gifts and favours from all political parties, the casting of votes is not a result of any obligation but shows an agency, which, however, remains limited only to voting. In addition, as Trilochan Sastry elaborates, more often than not, it is not an informed choice that they make, and the chances of victory of candidates with wealth, illicit power and criminal background remain high. In addition, the "forgetting" of electoral promises is also due to the huge investment of corporate money in elections. Atishi Marlena, Prashant Bhushan and Reena Gupta present a case for institutionalised mechanisms of "direct democracy," that is, the citizen-initiated referendums or legislations or constitutional amendments, to aid electoral democracy, decrease corporate influence and increase the people's say in decision-making that impacts their lives. For example, most people do not have access to safe drinking water in India. The citizens of Uruguay realising the importance of this basic necessity, voted for an initiative that demanded that access to drinking water be enshrined in their constitution as a human right and all resources of water extraction, production and commercialisation be managed on principles of sustainability by the state with the people's participation (p 315).

Communication as a Right

An important concern of one section of articles in this book is to enable the spread of democracy through the diffusion of communication technologies, in information and in financial services. Mudgal proposes "citizenship communication" as a new paradigm in the place of development communication that aided imperialist agendas. He emphasises that communication be recognised as a right, embodied in the form of right to information (RTI), public hearings, and social audits, to ensure transparency and

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accountability of governance and to enable politicisation of people. In addition, there are tools like activity mapping, which can enable participation and communication at each level of governance and between different government departments and citizens, as Vincy Davis describes. Ram Bhatt persuades the reader to also stake a right on "spectrum," and to see it as a common resource and an issue of "public interest," not to be left out of the purview of citizen's rights by leaving it as a technical matter. Devi Leena Bose and Susan Koshy take this concern forward by showing the social value of spectrum in the form of community radio, especially when information is to be delivered to the "last-mile" in local language with local emphasis, in critical conditions like that of the floods in Uttarakhand and the Kosi river basin in Bihar and Nepal.

A unique feature of this book is insightful and eloquent essays like that of Hemachandran Karah, which is a joy to read. Karah questions the discrimination within our knowledge and cultural systems. He dismantles the discriminatory frameworks that are founded on the binary between ability and disability. This binary forms the foundation of the negative emotional and sensory presuppositions about disability, be it a sensory or cognitive disability. For example, as the academic research puts a premium on observation and excludes visually challenged people from academic jobs in fields involving empirical work, it ignores the fact that "an observer's agency is much bigger than an ocular equipment of the eyes" (p 206). Significantly, he suggests how research in Indian Sign Language could open up newer thinking about the oral and visual phenomenon to break new ground in fields like that of the philosophy of language, communication studies, acoustemology, visual aesthetics and body studies (p 199).

While few articles in this book celebrate the democratising of society by increased influence of communication technologies, Karah underlines the struggles in a spectacle-seeking mediated society. Remaining outside of the images "reduces blind people's real-life chances." It creates isolation. However, accessing the images through screen readers and excessive indulgence can "trap them within an identity, which is tied to nothing but the image," and does not come "without a drain of an inner self" (p 203).

Activism and Participation

Mihir Shah in his essay correctly pins it down both theoretically and empirically, when he says that the desired transformations in the sphere of democracy require day-to-day struggle and working out of feasible tasks by the civil society and a pragmatic engagement with the state. These tasks could include social audits, maintenance of water systems by the local people, running of government schemes like the mid-day meal by the active involvement of parents and community, peoples' use of the RTI to stake a claim on other rights, and through all these, challenging the dominant discourse and practices. He argues (as Mathew Titus also does in his essay) for the importance of building "powerful corporate institutions of the poor" to compete in the market, which he believes will be better than "predatory activities of exploitative Microfinance Institutions" (p 287). However, more importantly, he highlights how civil society organisations, instead of encouraging people's dependence upon them, should see their role as that of "cascading redundancy," of making oneself redundant over time as citizens become more capable to engage for their rights and entitlements.

The book also offers the reader with the voice of committed activists like Aruna Roy, who have been involved in social movements over long decades. Roy in her article shares the history of the struggle that led to coming into being of the RTI law, so that people evolved a system "where accountability is translated into a question asked and an answer extracted, to ensure credibility and integrity" (p 264). It is important to know this history, this struggle of the poor peasants and workers of Rajasthan, lest the hard-won law gets appropriated by the middle class, who then wish to tutor the poor to use it (p 272). She underlines the centrality of corporate money in the debate about corruption and governance. Her reminders are important, as, in the resistance against the appropriation of the legacy of progressive thought and peoples' struggles, one has to be wary of political parties and NGOs that are not only hijacking these movements but are generating knowledge to leverage corporate interests.

While "claiming India" through activism and participation, this book indicates the different meanings that activism and participation tend to assume. Activism is as much about protesting and mobilising people, as it is about making ground for action, questioning existing knowledge systems and thinking of cultures other than those that have been designated as "normal" and given. It is about building a "counter-expertise" to counter the claims of the "experts."

The important question that a book such as this leaves us with is how to tackle the contradictions within which we live. Even as social media provides a platform for the dissenting voices, it has also become a medium for broadcasting secrarian propaganda. The WhatsApp-inspired lynchings, the growing number of trolls, attempts at controlling virtual participation and boasting of election results on the basis of media images, are throwing up new challenges to the society. Even as more and more seemingly democratic spaces open up to newer information and communication technologies, the spectre of capital is also spreading to areas that were hitherto left untouched.

It is paradoxical that few NGOs depend on the state for existence. Their workers at times become mere cadres of the political parties. Often when corporate money enters NGOs, they end up becoming rationalising machines that advocate developmental projects at any cost. Such organisations at times even present themselves as activist groups, but wittingly or unwittingly end up weakening organic social movements. Given these realities, how capable will these organisations be in "biting the hand that feeds them," as Mudgal speculates (p 16), is a question we are left with.

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life and ouevre of a single person which is less than adequate to reach the rather broad-stroke conclusions he advances. The book shows examples that negate present-day stereotypes of Hindus and Muslims that dominate the historiography of Mughal India. Kinra portrays a picture of a cosmopolitan world defined more by "spirituality" than religions, such as Hinduism or Islam, and a taste for poetry over politics. His book is replete with data displaying instances of friendly relations amongst Hindus and Muslims. However, such data may easily be matched by someone else parading instances of discord amongst Hindus and Muslims during the same period. This data can easily make Kinra's framework redundant. There is a need to develop a theoretical framework to study Mughal India that goes beyond the present-day stereotypes of Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and secular (reinvented as "cosmopolitan" in Kinra's book).

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NOTE

1 See introduction in Appiah (2006), attributing the latter quote to Christoph Martin Weiland who was also known as the German Voltaire.

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Towards Political Power, Social Equality and Justice

Trajectories of Dalit Mobilisations

RAJ SEKHAR BASU

Dalit Politics in Contemporary India by Sambaiah Gundimeda, *Oxon, New York, Routledge, 2016; pp 32 + 298, ₹995.*

Dalit Politics in Contemporary India is essentially a study on Dalit politics from three principal "axes" as interpreted by the author, Sambaiah Gundimeda. The first relates to the historical context in which the anti-caste and Dalit protests took their origins in the later part of the 19th century in present-day Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Second, it has been authored in the context of contemporary debates especially when the space of democracy is expanding in India, with increasing instances of the lower-caste assertions which have challenged the cultural hegemony and the political domination of the upper-caste Hindus. Finally, it concerns itself in terms of a comparison of political developments in North and South India. Although not the first attempt at comprehending the historical underpinnings that have informed Dalit politics, it seems more engaged in understanding the contours that shape contemporary Indian political realities.

The author is interested in unearthing the validity of the comparative political framework that narrativises the politics of North India in terms of the Hindu–Muslim divide, quite in contrast to South Indian politics, which are much influenced by caste divisions. Despite, taking cues from these lines of thinking, the author at the very outset clarifies that he will also bring in the Ambedkarite perspective to cull out the complexities behind the political developments. It has been asserted that despite pioneering research on B R Ambedkar and Dalit movements, such intellectual initiatives suffer from limitations because of their propensity to confine their scholarly interests to developments that took place in the colonial period. Gundimeda prefers to examine the strategies of Dalit mobilisation and the political trajectories, somewhat in continuum with the colonial past and the postcolonial present. These efforts undoubtedly keep the reader's imagination open to the deconstructivist imperatives of the binaries like the "theoretical–personal," "empirical–theoretical," "objective–subjective," "scholarly–non-scholarly," and last but not the least, "personal becoming the political." Gundimeda also seeks to find an answer to the raging academic aspersions, which continually berate Dalit cultural assertions and activisms for their inadequacies in developing a theoretical understanding of their own. Academics often fail to notice that Dalit assertions, which epitomise the quotidian narratives of struggle and victimhood, are not simply empirical and thin in terms of theory.

Caste–Politics Linkages

The Hindu institution of caste has been the bane of hierarchised social structures, enabling the privileged to occupy the upper rungs, and relegating the "lower" castes to the depths of squalor and deprivation. The Dalits or Scheduled Castes (SCs) are at the bottom of the social scale, rarely giving the expression of a homogeneous category, but of a disparate grouping of heterogeneous castes. The problematic essentially arises from the British colonial legislation which introduced terms such as Depressed Classes and SCs, without considering the inner cultural and social divisions that pervaded these caste groups. The politico–bureaucratic systems of both the colonial and the postcolonial periods had little realisation that SCs differed in their standings within the caste hierarchy, with regard to socio-economic advancements, educational attainments and political behaviour. While there are disagreements over the

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usage of the term Scheduled Caste, nonetheless the nomenclature served to create an imagined commonness that equated "Dalitism" with resistance. Gundimeda asserts that the disparate grouping of castes under the broader rubric of SCs has ignored or bypassed the differences and diversities among them. He believes that the makers of the Constitution blindly endorsed the colonial categorisations in enforcing the policies related to reservations in post-independence India.

There was little realisation that, set against a historical past conditioned by social, economic and political inequalities as well as the sanctity enjoyed by the hierarchised jati social order, there had to be constitutional guarantees for the deprived sections of the society. Ambedkar —in his draft provisions submitted before the Minority Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly—had stated that social discrimination alone could be the real yardstick to decide whether a social group could be treated as a minority. In his view, Dalits qualified as minorities because they had not only borne the brunt of terror unleashed by caste Hindus, but stood to be more exposed to injustices, if political power in free India became a monopoly of the caste Hindus. Thus, what Swaraj meant for the privileged castes, perched in the upper echelons of the state power, was a lot different from the Dalit experiences conditioned by everyday life experiences.

In the decades that followed Indian independence, the modernist versions of equality and progress failed to wean out caste from the Indian social psyche or curtail its influence over political/electoral behaviour. In a quasi-feudal set-up, caste foregrounded the elements of collectiveness based on birth and for expressing primary group sentiments. Rajni Kothari had once approvingly observed that, despite being oppressive, the institution of caste provided a basis for struggle against oppression. Javed Alam was dismissive of caste as an agency of modernisation since casteism to him was responsible for engineering more social divisions. It is Gundimeda's keenness in exploring whether the claims of Indian democracy—of inculcating the notions of inclusiveness and unrestrained participation—has some meaning for the poor and oppressed, that makes his intervention interesting. To Gundimeda, the high-sounding phrases of secularisation and democratisation had very little to offer to the marginalised groups, thereby confining them to the category of passive citizens.

North and South Indian Politics

Gundimeda undertakes a comparative research perspective in the contexts of the claims made by Ashutosh Varshney and Christophe Jaffrelot on North and South Indian politics. Varshney believed that in northern India, politics was organised along the Hindu–Muslim axis, while in the South, it was organised along caste lines. More recently, with the rise of lower-caste assertions in North India, Varshney argues in favour of the model of "southernisation of North India." Jaffrelot has argued that divergences in the politicisation of the "lower" castes resulted from the diverse caste compositions in the two regions. The proximities and distances from the varna model of classification and the differences in the British land settlement systems had much of a role to play in this respect.

Though the demographic weight of the upper castes in northern India might have incarcerated lower-caste consciousness within the boundaries of Sanskritisation, the politicisation of lower castes in the South was conditioned by the absence of a complex middle order. This was much too evident in the strategies for mobilising the lower castes in the garb of non-Brahminism in the late colonial period, and in the decades following India's independence.

Gundimeda doubts the logic of the absence of a middle order in the caste hierarchy and its possible links with the politicisation of the lower castes. He asserts that the discrimination of the Dalits has been "irrespective of the presence or absence of a middle order in the caste hierarchy" (p 18). He differs with Jaffrelot over the control of economic resources and the domination of the sociopolitical and the cultural spaces by the different caste groups. Gundimeda argues that in the colonial period and in the immediate post-independence years, there was not much difference between Shudra jatis—who formed the rungs of the middle peasantry in South India—and the Dalits in matters of social status and entitlements over resources required for economic and social development. The differences widened from the late 1970s because of the land reform measures. The caste violence in the South Indian countryside was largely a fallout of the aspirations of the Sat Shudras like the Kammas and the Reddis, who sought to retain their rural control despite their preferences for urban, middle-class occupations.

Ambedkarite Approach

Gundimeda tries to analyse the nature of Dalit politics from the intellectual premise of Ambedkar's philosophy, which is often upheld by Dalit activists as "Ambedkar Vicharavadi." This perspective owed its intellectual origins to the Dalit Panther's movement and drew heavily from Ambedkar's ideas on caste oppression, democracy and the state. But, it went beyond Ambedkar by taking up ideas that emerged in particular sociopolitical or economic contexts. Gundimeda situates in this entire process a dynamic and critical reinterpretation of Ambedkar's ideas, which are unbounded by the constraints of time and space. He states that the term "Ambedkarite" could be used for any person who believed that "untouchability" was a distinct social phenomenon, whose redressal could take place through political empowerment instead of the Gandhian prescriptions of social reform. Such an understanding was of immense political value, rallying the Dalits and other underprivileged groups in favour of affirmative action programmes, and advocating democratic inclusion. The Ambedkarites, therefore, sought to identify the social factors responsible for the degradation of the "lower castes" and their being denied social equity and justice.

Resurrection of 'Adi'

Gundimeda argues that the nationalist struggle for freedom coincided with the Brahmin and the three upper-caste encounters against the subalterns (or the non-Brahmin communities), which

included Dalits, Shudras, Muslims and Adivasis. Moving away from Varshney's theory resting on the Hindu–Muslim axis, Gundimeda emphasises the rifts between Brahminism and non-Brahminism more. The contending viewpoints added an altogether new aspect to the transfer of political power, something often found missing in contemporary research literature. Gandhian mass movements converged or ran parallel to the different political streams that gained popularity either as the Adi Hindu, Adi Andhra, Adi Dravida or Ad Dharm movements.

The protagonists of these movements claimed to be the original inhabitants of India and demanded separate political representation along the lines of the representation provided to Muslims in the early 20th century. The links between these regional movements, alongside their discrete social and political components, and that of the Dalit movements of the late colonial and immediate post-independence periods, have been part of a ubiquitous discourse. Gundimeda has tried to resurrect the links between the Adi Hindu movement and the later-day Dalit politics of contemporary Uttar Pradesh, by restoring the primacy of caste as the mechanism of leverage in politics. He reversely argues that nationalism was an imagined consciousness of the upper castes, whereas Dalit consciousness was something real, expressing strong preferences for economic and social freedom.

The Hinduisation initiatives in the early 20th century temporarily attracted the Dalit castes, more particularly the Chamars in the United Provinces. But, the Dalit involvement with the Arya Samaj provided impetus to the Adi Hindu movement in its nascent stage. However, the provision of separate electorates led to rifts between the Arya Samajis and the other Hindu nationalists on one side and the Dalits on the other side, because the latter felt that social equality within the entire "Hindu sangathan," was still a distant dream. Notwithstanding these differences, the Adi Hindu movement, by incorporating the Bhakti traditions, gained a great deal of support from the socially disadvantaged castes in the central and eastern United Provinces. But, there was also a parallel trend that sought to negotiate with the Hindu institution of caste and the imposed hierarchies by seeking solace in Buddhism. The initiative came from Bodhanand and his disciple Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu who founded the Bahujan Kalyan Prakashan. The Adi Hindu and the Buddhist traditions, ideological assertions and the sociopolitical initiatives found their way into the politics of the United Provinces Scheduled Caste Federation (UPSCF). The reasons for these diverse streams to converge in a single movement were possibly related to their desire to renegotiate their own histories of oppression and to uphold their *acchut* (untouchable) identity. However, the UPSCF failed to carve a niche of its own in the years following Indian independence. Gundimeda believes that this failure could be related to the inherent weaknesses of identity politics operating within a democratic framework, where a larger support pool was essential for winning the elections.

The Republican Party of India (RPI), which succeeded the UPSCF, tried to stem the rot through a broader process of social engineering involving both the Dalits and the Muslims. However, its caste-based mobilisation and occasional preferences for class, within a very strong Ambedkarite-dominated congregationalist organisational structure, created a communication gap between the leaders and the workers. The co-option strategy of the Congress also stifled the prospects of Dalit mobilisation for social equality and political power. The establishment of the Dalit Varg Sangh gave the Congress an opportunity to woo back the Dalits into its fold. But, the Congress's land reform policies pushed the Dalits away from it rather than bring them closer to it. Gundimeda argues that the initiatives on the part of Kanshiram, in encouraging the All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) to organise cadre camps, awakening squads and bicycle marches, made the Dalits realise that the upper castes were enjoying political power at their expense. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) showed interest in rewriting Dalit history and tried to make the Dalits aware of the Brahminical machinations, by linking the issues of status and privilege with that of intellectual capital. There were also efforts towards the cultural rejuvenation of the Dalits through the melas and *jagriti dastas* (awareness campaigns launched by former ex-untouchable castes for gaining community support for their elevated social and political status).

The South Indian Episode

The author has concentrated mostly on Dalit activism in the Telugu-speaking parts of the erstwhile Madras presidency, later-day Madras province and the Andhra Pradesh of more contemporary times. In the early 20th century, the Adi Andhra Mahajana Sabha in coastal Andhra and the Adi Hindu Service League in the Nizam's Hyderabad state claimed the Adi identity, not only to contest Brahminical Hinduism, but also to recast the jati-based social system, and reclaim dignity for all individuals. While the Adi Hindus of Uttar Pradesh were not eager to be a part of the Hindu fold, the Dalits in the Telugu country favoured the retention of their connections. This resulted in their acceptance of the Harijan path laid down by M K Gandhi and the Congress in both colonial and postcolonial Andhra Pradesh. However, the transformations that had taken place in the rural parts of the Madras Presidency, following the construction of the railways and the canals, resulted in significant changes in the outlook of the Dalits. They felt the need to organise themselves in a collective, and this often led to a proliferation of caste-based associations.

The need for identity/communitarian politics had been felt earlier with the emergence of the non-Brahmin movement. However, the South Indian Liberal Federation, which later came to be known as the Justice Party, failed to build up a broader platform of all non-Brahmins, including Muslims, Christians and Dalits. The alienation of the Dalits from the homogeneous non-Brahmin bloc became much too evident in the early 1920s, the repercussions of which were reflected in the choice of the appellation "Adi Dravida" instead of "Dravida" and in the demand for separate electorates. In the next two decades, Dalits in Andhra Pradesh, apart from highlighting

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the need for self-respect and dignity, were drawn more heavily towards issues of identity and political representation. Y Chinna Rao had drawn attention to these early Dalit initiatives to reject the imposed "Panchama" identity in favour of the term "Adi Andhra." The popularisation of this term by Bhagya Reddy Varma indicated a trend within the articulate sections of the Dalits to restore the missing historicity in the ancient Hindu Puranic traditions. The Dalit heroes of the Hindu religious texts were brought back to buttress their demands for social respectability. Beyond the coastal districts, where the Dalit intellectuals were active, significant developments took place in the Telugu-speaking districts of Hyderabad state. The rule of the Nizams primarily depended on the upper-caste Hindu support. The Reddis, Vellamas and the Brahmins, for all purposes were ill-disposed towards the Dalits. The Dalits found themselves entrapped between traditional castes and the feudal forms of subordination, offering little prospects of occupational mobility.

This explicates the emergence of a small but vigorous movement among the Dalits in Hyderabad and Secunderabad for securing social equality and political representation. Gundimeda rightly points out that faced with a politically-repressive system, the claims to Adi Hindu identity became intertwined with the claims for respectability and equitable identity for Dalits within the caste structure. Thus, the popularisation of the Adi Hindu identity could be related to the efforts on the part of the Dalits to remain within the Hindu society rather than dissociating from it.

However, the caste disputes within the Dalit castes often ruled out the possibilities of undifferentiated political representation. The jockeying for positions, which came in the wake of the government's policy of special representation, opened up the prospects of rivalry within the Dalit castes. Ambedkar's political initiatives in the 1930s did have an influence on Andhra Pradesh, but it fell far short of Gandhi and the Congress who enjoyed an advantage in wooing the Dalits. The activities of the Harijan Sevak Sangh in Andhra Pradesh gave the Congress an upper hand in expanding its political presence in the rural Dalit hamlets, something less acknowledged by Dalit activists and political workers. The communists, with their idea of a classless society, had partial success in galvanising the support of a section of the Dalits. Gundimeda has shown that the Communist movement in Andhra Pradesh was a conglomeration of privileged caste groupings, whose entire political vision was tied towards the fulfilment of the interests of the Kammas and Reddis who controlled its organisational structure. This possibly explains the failure of the communists to incorporate the Dalit protests in favour of a social revolution.

The Congress's rule in Andhra Pradesh in the 1950s and 1960s was synonymous with the interests of the Reddis, and the Harijan leaders were only used to contain inner party factionalism. The Dalit ranks witnessed very little rifts and the Dalit leadership unequivocally expressed their resentment with the existing state of affairs. The founding of the Ambedkar Yuva Jana Sangam in Telengana was one such example. The 1980s witnessed the rise of the Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh, dominated essentially by the Kammas. Subsequently, there was the emergence of the Andhra Pradesh Dalit Mahasabha, which was composed mainly of the Dalits. In the following years, the Dalits questioned the caste-based discriminations and issues of domination leading to violent acts of retribution by "the Kamma state" (Kamma rajyam). Nonetheless, some of the Dalit groups like the Madigas improved their economy by cultivating the lands of the Kammas as tenant farmers. Their rising income levels allowed them to send their children to schools and to seek urban employment. This essentially brought about a change in their self-esteem and enhanced their self-consciousness. The Kammas interpreted these as challenges to their rural dominance, resulting in gory incidents, like the one in Karamchedu. Such experiences of victimhood influenced the Dalit cultural movement based on a balance between the Marxist and Dalit ideological perspectives. However, the claims and the counterclaims over the issues of subcategorisation exposed the rifts between the Malas and the Madigas. The Malas and the Adi Andhras enjoyed a demographic advantage in the coastal districts, while in the regions now within the present state of Telangana, there were a large number of Madigas who lagged behind the former caste in matters of education and employment. In the 1990s, with economic liberalisation gaining ground, there had been occasional convergences of Dalit caste-based organisations, but the element of competition stood in the way of a strong mass movement against the modernisation initiatives of the N Chandrababu Naidu government.

Conclusions

Gundimeda's narrative is rich in detail, but takes the conventional route of social scientists in defining the meanings and boundaries of the Dalit movements. The comparative framework remains a bit unclear and the monograph would have been an outstanding one had it simply concentrated its academic attention on the developments in Andhra Pradesh. It seems that there could have been a far more rigorous presentation, had there been an intellectual engagement with Ambedkar as one represented by the scholars of the subaltern studies group. For instance, there could have been a new interpretation of Partha Chatterjee's discussion on Ambedkar's political ideas and their significance in the construction of India's own post-coloniality. Gundimeda does not suffer from a middle-class mindset, and a more radical critique of a statist ideology is something which is missing in this particular academic initiative, although he might, perhaps, fulfil those expectations in his later research publications.

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or literary or anthropology or political science scholar, the scholar uses, say Telugu, to understand the Telugu region. The assumption that one needs to know the language to understand the region is at best a powerful methodological tool—but the taken-for-grantedness of the tool risks the interference of the tool with the object of analysis. Regions are affected by more global and pan-Indian vectors than just language. While the thrust of the resultant scholarship may be against essentialising language/region/history, nevertheless the effect of the scholarship reproduces the holism of region/language as the deconstruction remains internal, instead of say, comparative or global. The powerful use of vectors like gender and caste dissent (as well as categories such as selfhood, religiosity, visuality, non-identitarian political form, the phenomenology of labour and so on) is their ability to undercut the traditional regionalist paradigm, and offer new negotiations of agency and freedom. This is where Keshavamurthy's book may be a harbinger. Although he has restricted himself to a region/language/class, the conflicts he has described clearly have a trans-regional resonance. For example, the rhetoric of sublimating sexuality to social reform or art (again, especially Carnatic music), evidenced in T. Janakiraman's oeuvre, is immediately recognisable in writing from diverse Indian languages, especially those under the spell of an older norm of restrictive social realism—one thinks of a canonised figure like Premchand. This sentiment (of sexuality being subsumed for a larger nationalism à la Gandhi) has also been, in that very historical period, mercilessly mocked by writers like Manto. So there is much scope for a larger conversation on comparative, intra-Indian moral difference, irreducible to region or language: the relation of a layer of pietistic nationalism versus a more ribald, pluralising, assertive, anti-establishment free-speech-centric notion of service to entities like the nation or the city or the village. Maybe then the key merit of Keshavamurthy's work is his ability to pose questions on a more cosmopolitan register than the narrowly regional or historicist—questions of masculinity, but also questions such as sacrality (Mauni and Janakiraman), and the diseased outcaste at the edge of the polity (Kunju and Jeyakantan).

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ARUNDHATI VIRMANI, *Political Aesthetics: Culture, Critique, and the Everyday*, New York: Routledge, 2016, 214 pp.

DOI: 10.1177/0019464618782815

Political Aesthetics: Culture, Critique, and the Everyday, brings together interdisciplinary essays that invite students of international relation and global politics to think about everyday forms of political art, or indeed political activism, by engaging with key debates in aesthetics and philosophy that have been most

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fully developed in the humanistic disciplines. Arundhati Virmani offers a succinct account of her aims for this volume: recent theoretical debates, she writes, have invited scholars like herself to broaden 'our approach to aesthetics, which, in contrast to reflections centred on art for itself has transformed it into an analytical principle for understanding social, cultural and political experiences and events' (p. 2). This is of course the sort of critical work that has transformed the humanities for four decades now, but its concerns have not always been, to take some examples from this volume, forms of political mobilisation (whether in the service of the state or in resistance to its powers); the artistic remapping of urban spaces so that historical changes are rendered visible; or indeed public ceremonies of the judiciary that are designed to both confirm the bewigged and robed separateness of judges as well as to suggest that they are no other than citizens of a democratic polity. *Political Aesthetics* contains essays on such varied topics; such variation does however result in essays of uneven scholarly interest and significance.

But first the contents: Rachel E. Johnson and Shirin M. Ray describe murals and other decorations that were designed to allow the newly independent countries of India and South Africa to reshape iconic colonial buildings into postcolonial houses of Parliament. In such transfers of power, art was deemed powerful enough to repurpose colonial architecture. It is another matter that such art often confirmed the exclusions of class, gender and caste/race that marked the new nations. Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi offers a powerful study of Mussolini's belief that his form of fascism was an artistic mission as much as an attempt to mould political and civil society. She quotes Mussolini as arguing that 'Democracy has deprived people's lives of "style". Fascism brings back "style" in people's lives: that is, a line of conduct, that is the colour, the strength, the picturesque, the unexpected, the mystical' (p. 43). Arundhati Virmani writes on the 'aesthetics of sacrifice' mobilised by Indian anticolonial activists. Gandhi, of course, but many others from the Hindutva-right to the progressive and revolutionary left spoke of the importance of sacrifices made in the service of the nation; this legacy, deeply Hindu in its vocabulary and iconography, continues to shape political discourse in India.

Jean-Christophe Sevin examines the cultural and social resistance offered by those who participated in underground raves in France in the 1990s. These collectives were seen as threat enough to be banned by the government, ostensibly because these raves were fuelled by drugs and a techo-sound that converted ravers into automata! The photojournalist Franco Zecchin produces a powerful account of the role played by photographs in enabling the resistance offered by citizens as well as officials to the power of the Mafia in Sicily in the 1970s. Rashmi Varma turns to the archive of colonial photographs of Adivasis, and contrasts those ethnographic pictures with others taken by postcolonial photographers like Sunil Janah to ask the question, is it possible to represent Adivasi communities as living and energetic, as full participants in our fissured modernity, rather than as remnants of the pre-modern past? She also calls attention to Amar Kanwar's documentary practice, particularly

an on-going installation entitled *The Sovereign Forest and Other Stories*, which reminds us that the natural resources that enable Adivasi lives in India are precisely the resources sought for, and ravaged by, industrial capitalism.

Hendrik Sturm celebrates the art-activist work of a group of walkers who remapped a trail around Marseille in 2013, such that people who followed it would discover the palimpsestic history of the city and its environment. A walk through this urban topography is a walk into history and archaeology; the labour of people, in the past and in the present, is an inescapable, vivid feature of such rambling. Rebecca M. Brown has an essay on Gandhi and spinning, or rather, on Gandhi's recognition that spinning was the kind of activity, at once individual and reflective, and public and public-spirited, that would train and unify Congress workers in the anticolonial struggle. Leslie J. Moran's essay tracks the annual procession of the judges of the UK Supreme Court who, in full ceremonial regalia, walk from the Court to Westminster Abbey, but do so with minimum fuss, which means that they obey traffic lights, deal with construction detours and mingle with passers-by as well as those gathered to watch them. They are at once remote, swaddled in their robes and crowned by their wigs, and surrounded by ordinary pedestrians, and that combination is precisely the ideological point of this spectacle. Maria Tomboukou's essay rounds off the volume, and she considers the life, art and political activism of the US artist May Stevens, leading Tomboukou to argue that they add up to an 'assemblage of *artpolitics*', an assemblage whose rhythms and juxtapositions interrupt our sense of everyday, and thus offer the possibility of 'new beginnings' and of the emergence of 'new sensorial nodes' (p. 196).

As these summaries make clear, each essay does have both site-specific and historical observations to offer, as well as useful commentary on the interplay between aesthetics and political life. However, these critics have very different notions of how to understand this interplay: is it formally recognisable, self-declared art practices that disrupt our sense of the everyday, and thus should provide us paradigmatic examples of political aesthetics? Or is it forms of quotidian practice—particularly rituals ossified into customs and commonsense—that we should examine to understand the shaping role of political aesthetics more generally? As we know, both organised politics and art draw from, and innovate within, aesthetic practices and knowledge accumulated over time; that is, they reorganise elements of existent social and cultural life in pursuit of their particular ends. Which is another way of restating the truism that there is no political activity that does not rely on aesthetic norms; conversely, there is no aesthetic practice that does not inculcate politics. The essays collected in *Political Aesthetics* allow us to see those intricacies at work.

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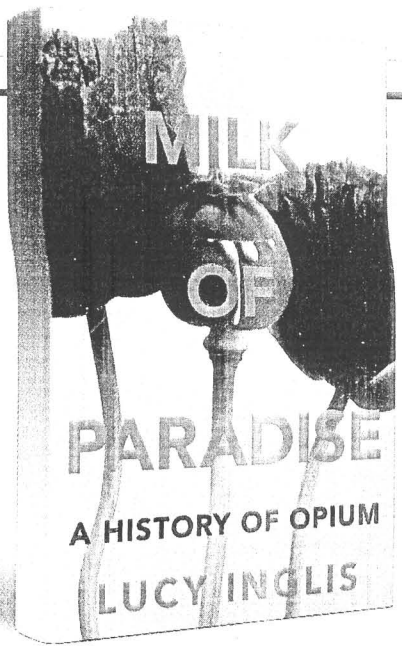
BOOKS

PLAIN KILLER



MILK OF PARADISE: A History of Opium
by LUCY INGLIS
Macmillan
440 pages; ₹**699**

India—especially Punjab—is drowning in opiates. But there's almost nothing to relieve the pain of the ailing and dying. India is one of the largest producers of legal morphine in the world, says renowned palliative care physician M.R. Rajagopal. Due to draconian laws, doctors here have only some 37 kg of the stuff to meet a demand for 36,000 kg.

A far worse drug problem is sweeping the United States, fuelled by the easy access to prescription opioids, especially fentanyl. Drug addicts often mix it with the heroin flooding the country. In 2016 alone, fentanyl misuse was blamed for 20,000 deaths. Few doctors there are trained in treating patients with drug addiction, and law enforcement agencies are unable to stop the flow of illegal drugs now that the trade has shifted to the internet and bitcoin.

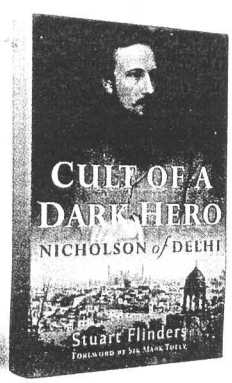
No other plant on earth has helped or harmed humans as much as *Papaver somniferum*, as historian Lucy Inglis shows in her well-researched and heavily illustrated book *Milk of Paradise*. It is essentially three books in one: the history of opium and how it was traded between the West and the East; the record of the isolation of morphine and the scientific and political changes it brought about in the 19th century; and the story of its refinement into heroin of varying grades and its easy adulteration, which produced millions of addicts. The earlier sections make for heavy reading. The book gets more interesting when she talks of the modern opiates. She minces no words regarding the role of Big Pharma in fuelling the epidemic and quotes an Illinois state attorney as saying "the source of this crisis is not on street corners; it's in boardrooms".

Opiates have created a seemingly unstoppable public health crisis, writes Lucy Inglis

From ancient Mesopotamia to the present-day US, artists, writers and singers have relied on narcotics and alcohol to fuel their creativity. Nations have battled to control narcotics, in vain, primarily because of the mountains of illegal money involved. The associated crime, prostitution and disease have rarely worried capitalists or communists. *Papaver somniferum* has survived empires, and will continue to do so. It is one of the greatest global commodities, says Inglis, and "we must seek to mitigate the harm it can do while retaining our faith in the marvels it can achieve. This will be our endless opium war".

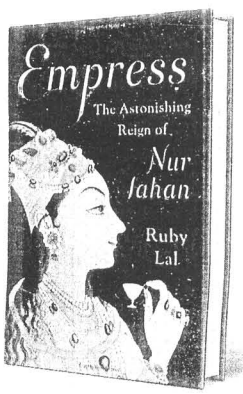
–G. Krishnan

CULT OF A DARK HERO: Nicholson of Delhi
by STUART FLINDERS
I.B. Tauris
242 pages; ₹**2,387**



John Nicholson led the British assault against the Indian uprising of 1857. In recent times, descriptions of him have been less flattering. Flinders investigates the charismatic soldier's sexuality and religious views

EMPRESS: The Astonishing Reign of Nur Jahan
by RUBY LAL
Penguin
308 pages; ₹**599**



Jahangir's wife Nur Jahan ruled the Mughal empire alongside him, and then on his behalf when he fell sick. Lal's engrossing biography unveils how she defied the presumptions of her time (and many of ours)

Still, in more local terms, Guyot–Réchard is surely correct in maintaining that once the border fighting had stopped, India fared much better than one might have expected in securing the allegiance of populations on both sides of the line of control. Paradoxically, but entirely convincingly, this outcome is ascribed not to the power or efficiency of the Indian state vis-à-vis China, but to precisely the opposite. The performative dimension of the border war, the book submits, demonstrated to "*the people living on either side of the McMahon Line* ... [the] story ... of China's greater capacity and potential, and of India's corresponding weakness" (p 240). It was the Indian state's appearance of vulnerability, above all, that made it more attractive to Himalayan peoples seeking to retain "agency in accepting or manipulating when, how, and how far state penetration could go" (p 249). Or, in other words, the image and substance of efficiency and power projected by China was too convincing and intimidating for its own good.

It is a little churlish to expect more from such an enterprising and compelling study of Sino–Indian interaction, but critical engagement with any work of scholarship demands some reflection on issues of emphasis and omission. *Shadow States* draws upon an impressive array of Indian archival sources, at national, state and local levels. The coverage of Chinese sources, which, in fairness, are far less accessible, is much more limited. There are a wide range of Chinese published primary sources and newspaper records, however, which could have been consulted, and that would have addressed some imbalance in the narrative. In essence, we learn an awful lot that is new and intriguing about the Indian side of the border issue. The Chinese vantage point, in contrast, remains largely opaque and subject to inference and conjecture.

Still, the fact that Guyot–Réchard's authoritative and timely examination of competitive state building on the part of India and China illuminates important directions for further scholarship, merely underscores its significance and path-breaking originality. *Shadow States* is certain to become an indispensable work of reference for academics and a general readership interested in efforts undertaken by New Delhi and Beijing to win the hearts and minds of the Himalayan peoples. In recovering and reimagining fault lines in Sino–Indian relations from the bottom-up, and privileging the hitherto marginalised agency of border constituencies, *Shadow States* challenges readers to reflect upon and revise accepted interpretations of Sino–Indian relations.

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State Policy and Adivasi Resistance in Contemporary India

INDRA MUNSHI

First Citizens: Studies on Adivasis, Tribals, and Indigenous Peoples in India edited by Meena Radhakrishna, *New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016; p ix +444, ₹995.*

As its title suggests, the book uses the nomenclature First Citizen, in preference to terms like Tribal, Adivasi, Scheduled Tribe (ST), or Indigenous People for a number of reasons. In the introduction, Meena Radhakrishna, editor of the volume, explicates the historical-political context of each of these terms, from colonial to contemporary, on global but especially the Indian scene. Bringing together discussions among colonial and postcolonial administrators, anthropologists, sociologists, and political activists concerned with Adivasi communities, she argues in favour of using the term which is somewhat new in the discourse on Adivasis. Radhakrishna observes,

> The phrase "first citizen" derives from the understanding that all such communities, including in India, are amongst the world's *first, original people,* and so by definition, the world's first citizens. Terms like "tribe," "adivasi," and "indigenous" have genealogies which arise from specific historical-political Indian contexts. (p 2)

However, as the studies in the volume show, these communities may prefer one term over another, for different cultural or political reasons, to best identify themselves at any particular time. Of course, they are neither uncontested nor unchanging.

The volume brings together studies by well-known scholars, and scholar activists seriously engaged with questions of Adivasi identity, livelihood, right to resources, gender issues, impact of "development," state action and growing discontent and its articulation among them. Fifteen articles are organised into three sections titled "Categories and Identities as Historical Process"; "Destruction, Loss, Dislocation"; and "Negotiations and Redressals." The introduction and the concluding paper titled "Epilogue: Violence of 'Development' and Adivasi Resistance: An Overview," are written by Radhakrishna, providing a context and an overview of the assault on the existence of these communities in rapidly changing India, and the emergence of new alliances to assert their democratic and human rights.

Ethnicity and Conversion

In the first section, Virginius Xaxa highlights the implications of the use of different terms, reminding us that "the label used often becomes an issue in the politics of identity." He elaborates on the question of indigenous, its usage in international and Indian situation, the controversy surrounding its applicability in many countries, including India and China. In India, Xaxa points out, the complexities of regional diversity make the use of the term problematic. So that communities which are indigenous to the country as a whole may not be indigenous to the region/territory of their

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present settlement, making a group "indigenous" and "non-indigenous" at the same time. The distinction is important because it is tied up with rights and privilege of the communities and significantly, with their identity.

Issues related to Adivasi identity, ethnicity, conversion to Christianity or Hinduism, and the assimilation and modernisation agenda of the Indian state are highlighted by Biswamoy Pati, David Vumlallian Zou and Rudolf C Heredia, from historical and contemporary perspectives. For Heredia the Adivasi question raises more fundamental issues for the whole society: economic sustainability, cultural autonomy, democratic integration that need to be addressed. Neither assimilation nor isolation can be the answer. Pati explains the aggressive phase of conversion by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) in Odisha, especially in the recent decades, with reference to the virtual abdication of responsibility by the state to provide livelihood, education, and healthcare. The space is taken over, partly by schools and ashrams run by the VHP, Christian missionaries and non-governmental organisations. In addition, the VHP has created a narrative that tribals are in reality Hindus who were converted to Christianity by the missionaries—so they must be reconverted. This goes along with the terrorising of Dalits who had converted to Christianity—to escape discrimination—to now reconvert.

In the North East, conversion of tribals to Hinduism and Chrisitanity is old, going back centuries, but Zou finds that most of these groups retain some of their indigenous practices and beliefs. This can be said for the rest of India, too, where a peculiar mix of the old and new seems to have evolved over time without creating difficulties. The recent conversions by Hindu organisations, however, present a different picture.

Zou also highlights the dynamics of power politics in post-independence India, the contest between the new modernising elite, the old traditional chiefs and the majoritarian politician. But, importantly, he tells us that the tribal groups of this region "constitute a heterogeneous body with distinct historical lineage and divergent political trajectories" (p 122). The plains tribes are not prepared to share the benefit of being STs, a politically privileged identity in post-independence India, with Assam's tea tribes, also known as Adivasis.

This section on categories, Adivasi, tribes, indigenous communities, offers a new perspective which views "indigenous" and "Adivasi sensibility," "outside the frame of primitive accumulation of capital," which subordinates both labour and nature to the ever expanding need of capital, by converting use value into exchange value. In this economic organisation, both nature and labour are degraded and destroyed because profit must be made. The indigenous and Adivasi perspective, therefore, emphasises the value of and need for preservation of ecological balance, labour potential, human rights, and right to means of subsistence. The Adivasi sensibility recognises that the

> life support system cannot be defined satisfactorily either by the market or by the state, or by both of them put together. The state and the market perpetuate and deepen the contradiction between equity and development. (p 65)

To achieve equity and development that creates conditions for the regeneration of labour and nature, Savyasaachi forcefully argues, "Adivasi people need to be engaged not only as members or as cultural identities alone, but also as persons of knowledge and skills" (p 65), as people who have an alternative to offer.

The havoc that can be played by arbitrary de-notification of a tribe by the state government is well spelt out in the article on the Rathvas of Gujarat. Using the ambiguity surrounding the nomenclature Hindu–Adivasi, the government has not only deprived the Adivasis of their rightful benefits but even more seriously, it opens up the renewal and non-renewal resources in the areas inhabited by them for commercial exploitation by big business interests. This process is likely to continue in many other regions of a country, despite the resistance put up by Adivasi organisation. Arjun Rathva et al rightly point out,

> The Fifth Schedule and PESA are proving to be significant hurdles. Therefore, a new method is being embarked upon—that of denotifying communities from the list of Adivasis as declared by the president and mentioned in the Constitution. (p 156)

'Development' as Disaster

It is amply clear by now that "Development," a misnomer, has spelt disaster in the form of loss of life, livelihood, and deep-rooted ecological culture among the Adivasi communities. The second section closely examines the process and consequences of what Felix Padel terms "Investment-induced displacement" in different regions in India. He argues that, in a situation where megaprojects have invaded and destroyed the largely sustainable tribal economies, any attempt like the Panchayats (Extension to Schedule Areas (PESA) Act, 1996 to introduce a democratic self-government in these communities can only succeed minimally.

And although, dispossession and forced migration resulting from redesigned land and forest tenure and rights, and rampant usury, can be traced to colonial administrative system. It has not only persisted in new forms, but even gathered fresh momentum in recent decades.

In an insightful article, Indrani Mazumdar observes that the intermittent, survival-oriented migration of Adivasis, of whom Adivasi women form a large proportion, only deepens their insecurity, exploitation, and bondage. She writes,

> ... the particularly degraded conditions of adivasi women's migratory employment in agriculture and non-agriculture, the chronic cycle of debt/advance-based recruitment, low income, wage-reducing dependence on contractors, and related unfreedoms do not seem to be capable of providing any security of livelihood or settlement outside agriculture. (p 203)

Employment as domestic servants in urban households, does not enhance their economic or social position in any way, on the contrary, traps them in an alien culture causing "acute identity crisis and social isolation" (Neetha). Even for the plantation labour, after decades of employment and despite the growth of trade union politics in West Bengal, Sharit K Bhowmik does not find a marked improvement in the quality of their life. In fact, the unemployed youth, he reports, are forced to migrate to distant places like

Haryana, Bengaluru, and Kerala, moving from one place to another one job, to another as per the wish of the contractor.

The growing invasion, ever more violent, on their lives, livelihoods, rights, dignity, and identity, by the state and national and global capital, has evoked a widespread resistance from many Adivasi groups. This has taken many forms, the last section and the epilogue address issues related to ideologies strategies, demands that characterise these protests, struggles, negotiations and initiatives.

In this context, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (FRA) 2006, a remarkable legislation, has been an important step forward in recognition of their individual and communal rights. Two articles, by Sudha Vasan and Madhu Sarin, critically evaluate the act, its limitations and successes. Apart from its overall tardy implementation, which most articles in the volume point out, Vasan emphasises that while FRA encourages the demands for individual rights from the state, it fails to establish the mechanism and institutional process for promotion of collective rights of Adivasi communities. Sarin's examination of the ground reality in several states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, West Bengal and others, however, leads her to a more optimistic conclusion. For, although the act suffers from inherent limitations and poor implementation, it has strengthened the hands of the Adivasi communities to challenge the authority of the forest department. I quote her at length,

> the assertion of rights by organised communities, even where these are yet to be recognised formally, is changing the balance of power between communities and the forest bureaucracy. Over one million households are already enjoying tenurial security over their cultivated lands obtained under FRA, while community control over forests is beginning to expand to areas beyond the pockets in which it was achieved initially. (p 305)

It has empowered and encouraged forest communities to adopt creative ways of defining and exercising democratic control over forest.

Archana Prasad's analysis of the trajectories of Adivasi politics, the multiple forms of protests against state policy and Adivasi resistance in contemporary India, is a useful addition to the volume. The complex interplay of class consciousness and Adivasi community consciousness is important to understand Adivasi political mobilisation in the context of the larger economic-political processes at work. The larger structural changes like crisis in the agrarian sector, reduction in the state welfare measures, and the expanding control over resources has "increased the likelihood of overlap between Adivasi and working class consciousness," but Prasad is quick to add that this emerging politics is more a critique of "modern" development, than the "capitalist form of modern development." Neither the Adivasi elite, totally absorbed into the neo-liberal framework of the state, nor the Marxists in Central India, Prasad argues, "Can provide a credible opposition to neo-liberal market on which they partly depend for their survival" (p 330). But there have been cases like Vedanta and POSCO where grass roots Adivasi organisations have confronted the Indian state and the corporate houses. These and later struggles have taken diverse forms, legalistic and militant, brought together scholars, mass organisations, activists, local committee to resist the attack on their communal as well as democratic rights by the nexus of state, business interests, and the aggressive Hindu nationalism promoted by the right wing. One can only agree with Prasad that there "is an urgent need to build a unity and ideological cohesion between class-based struggles and the communitarian Adivasi politics of Adivasi workers."

Adivasi demand for rights to resources like land, forest and water for subsistence, has also been challenged by the hardcore environmental groups. But, there is a growing realisation among many of them that Adivasi rights are not incompatible with protection of natural resources and biodiversity. Ashish Kothari and Neema Pathak Broome hope that a more inclusive conservation may evolve, which would protect both nature and peoples' livelihoods from the destruction by aggressive and unbridled economic growth. Small steps in this direction by communit-based initiatives and few official efforts, the authors believe, give cause for hope that a paradigm shift at the national level may occur in the future.

Adivasi Identity under Attack

Summing up, what stands out from the volume, despite the complexity and the variation, is the Adivasi mode of existence, habitat, culture, identity are under attack by the state and the dominant classes since centuries. The trend has only deepened and become more violent in the recent decades of globalisation and privatisation. Adivasi resistance to it is also growing and giving rise to wide alliances, creative initiatives and experiments. Radhakrishna concludes on a hopeful note arguing that

> this remarkable movement, which will be an ongoing one for the foreseeable future, has entrusted itself which the historic task of watching over not just the rich ecology of Adivasis' habitats, but over their value identity and dignity. (p 408)

The volume is a valuable addition to the growing literature on Adivasi issues. It brings together well-researched articles, which are not just well-argued and substantiated but also reflect a deep concern. Scholars, students, activists and administrators will find it useful to understand the predicament of a large section of our population who somehow remain far from our consciousness.

However, repetition of facts and arguments in the articles makes one want to skip pages. But more importantly, a larger discussion on the North East, which presents a highly complex and a different picture for the rest of India, would have been useful. Lastly, it is also important to recognise that although Adivasi assertion is growing, one can notice the erosion of the "Adivasi sensibility" within the Adivasi communities, so that a large section of the youth feel totally alienated from their material and cultural existence, and values. But, this is a challenge for the organisations that are struggling to restore the pride and confidence of the Adivasi people.

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symbolic power, from Sanskrit to Marathi, from Brahmin orthodoxy to critiques of social inequality, coheres around, and is preserved in the biographies of remarkable individuals. Treating the biographies as primary sources for gleaning a public debate about society and inequality, *The Quotidian Revolution* nevertheless brings these figures and the well-known texts of Marathi literature, along with Hemadri Pandit, the metonym for the Brahmanic ecumene, wonderfully to life through lively prose, amidst the rich conceptual discussions about the public, vernacularity and power. It deserves to be widely read within the academy and by the wider public.

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ANSHU MALHOTRA, *Piro and the Gulabdasis: Gender, Sect, and Society in Punjab*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2017, 357 pp.

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This compelling book demonstrates the myriad ways in which early modern Bhakti and Sufi literary forms continued to shape the expression of social identity in colonial Punjab. *Piro and the Gulabdasis* focuses on a remarkable archive produced by Piro, a Muslim courtesan in nineteenth-century Lahore, who, inspired by the words of Gulabdas, left her community to begin a new life with the Gulabdasis. Gulabdas, whose own broad engagement with Advaita, Sikh, Bhakti and Sufi ideas offers a fascinating glimpse of the complicated facets of self-fashioning already under way in the Sikh kingdoms, forged a community which continued through the period of colonial rule in Punjab, inspiring later reformers and community leaders. Anshu Malhotra's work is part of an emerging scholarship by new authors whose attentive engagement with under-represented subjects and themes in Punjab and Sikh studies has helped to highlight the sheer diversity of social identities and practices prevalent in colonial Punjab. Malhotra approaches this challenge with verve and confidence, offering a multilayered study which has much to offer scholars of the period and is also quite accessible to readers who may not be familiar with nineteenth-century Punjab.

A considerable part of the book (Chapters 2–5) explores the way in which Piro crafted an 'agential' self by deploying the language of Punjabi *qissas*, Bhakti *sants*, Sufi piety and multifaceted forms of devotion and dissent found in each of these literary and spiritual traditions. 'Piro comes to us through her own performative storytelling as simultaneously defiant and deprecating, bold and bellicose at one moment, humble and effacing at another, in command of her destiny, and as a servant (*dasi*) of her powerful (*zorvar*) guru', as Malhotra aptly put it (p. 325). This micro-historical approach allows Malhotra to place the exceptional story of Piro

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and her bold defiance of social norms into a deeply contextualised study of the forms of dissent and community building such narrative forms offered low-caste, subordinate groups in Punjab at this time.

This is not only a celebratory story of subaltern and gendered resistance, as Malhotra also demonstrates the limits of such strategies of self-fashioning. While Piro's *Ek Sau Sath Kafian* vigorously questioned the hierarchies of caste and gender, as well as the arbitrary social boundaries imposed through religious rituals and boundary markers, she was not above recognising and deploying terms that distanced herself from her Muslim origins, even using pejoratives like *mleccha* in her works (p. 87). The gendered dimensions of bhakti self-narration may have included defiant voices such as Mira (pp. 141–2), but it is the devotion of exceptional wives such as Sita (p. 150), or low-caste women bhakts such as Jivanti or Kubjan that allowed Piro to self-narrate her earned place as Gulabdas' consort and her new identity as 'Mata Piro' or Mother Piro to his followers (pp. 151–2). It is precisely this mix of performative self-narration that employed fictional tropes with lived experience that illustrates the extent and limits of Piro's dissent, but it offers a compelling glimpse of the creative manoeuvrability of the public self Piro and other Gulabdasis invented. Malhotra's complex and open-ended examination of the literary inspirations that may have fuelled and anchored Piro's unique narration is very persuasive.

The success of Malhotra's historical excavations lies in part not just on the close reading of Piro's works, but also on dense engagement with several scholarly methodologies: micro-history, memory studies, gender history, bhakti literature, scholarship on Indian reform movements, biographical studies, to name just a few. This crisscrossing of theoretical approaches also creates the need to revisit and recentre some of these perspectives for each chapter as new meaning is teased from the multifaceted and dense layers of Piro's verses. While taxing for readers, this strategy is necessary and in fact yields chapters that may function as stand-alone essays. The clarity with which each approach is outlined makes it particularly accessible to students and will greatly enhance the ability of instructors to use this text for a wide variety of classes. Particularly beneficial in this case, is the ample focus not just on Piro, but also the later colonial reformers such as Ditt Singh, a familiar figure to scholars of colonial Punjab, but whose early life is presented through an entirely new lens here.

The last section of the book plunges into the later life of such movements. The discussion of the many self-inventions of Giani Ditt Singh, whose family origins were among the Gulabdasi deras, but who also found considerable professional success as reciter of Punjabi *qisse*, later joined the Arya Samaj and finally became active with Singh Sabha, ending his life as a Sikh. Tracing the ways in which Ditt Singh's journey was also shaped by traditions of devotion, dissent and self-narration, Malhotra reveals the narrowing possibilities of such self-invention under colonial rule, as well as the lasting impact of categories of thought such as caste. It is in this

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last section that also moves to examining the ways in which modern writers have approached Piro's life and works (Chapter 7), or the more recent revivification of a Gulabdasi *dera* under Vijendra Das (Chapter 8), that Malhotra's work highlights how figures such as Piro, Gulabdas and Ditt Singh continue to exercise fascination for a new generation of Dalit activists, feminists and reformers. Their projects are also complicated by the creative tensions such contemporary projects face in remoulding a usable past from the chameleon-like selves gleaned from the writings of Gulabdasis. As this last ethnographic chapter reveals, contemporary authors, historians and bhakts find a renewed challenge in attempting to frame and channel a past that brims with possibilities but also defies easy categorisation. Malhotra's strategy of letting these multiple voices and quests speak for themselves, while making sense of them through contexts that have often been silenced in mainstream historical accounts produces a work that is a pleasure to read and generates important questions for scholars of South Asian history.

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Kiran Keshavamurthy, *Beyond Desire: Sexuality in Modern Tamil Literature*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016, 197 pp.

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Kiran Keshavamurthy's *Beyond Desire: Sexuality in Modern Tamil Literature* is a provocative addition to the still meagre list of titles that critically analyse, as opposed to merely describe, modern Indian literatures. Both cultural historians and literature area-studies specialists have, since the 1990s, done thorough work (with regard at least to some regional languages) in giving us a clear sense of how prose-production mirrored historical developments, especially the various flavours of nationalism. Yet the gain to both literature and history is best when what is sought is not so much mirroring, as difference. What might a granting of part autonomy to the literary sphere gain for evolving historiographies of political movements such as Dravidian ideology? For one, it might be discovered that not all cultural production in Tamil has deferred to the hegemonic referent of the Dravidian movement. What are these other imaginations of polity, community, the household, the healthy citizen, the working class woman and so on?

Let the book then guide us through some of these imaginations. The introduction gives us a bare historical outline and discusses some pertinent books on the constructions of gender in diverse modern Indian literatures. This is followed by six chapters, each focused on a literary figure (K.P. Rajagopalan, T. Janakiraman, Karichan Kunju and M.V. Venkatram, Mauni, Dandapani Jeyakantan and Tanjai Prakash in that order). This is a fairly canonical list for one familiar with twentieth

How did the seasonal availability of different types of prey affect it? What were the hierarchies within tiger society? What was the interaction between tigers and villagers who live adjoining the park? Such questions were essential to understand the dynamics of this tiger population and formulating strategies to ensure its survival. To find the answers, Chundawat and his team radio-collared and tracked 41 tigers for eight years as they roamed a 400 square kilometre area within the reserve.

In the depth of its engagement and its trajectory, the resulting book rivals *Track of the Grizzly*, the breathtaking account by Frank C. Craighead Jr of 13 years of studying the Grizzly bears in and around Yellowstone National Park. The researchers spent days and nights in the wild, often in extreme weather conditions. And their discoveries often upended conventional wisdom—dominant male tigers were remarkably tolerant of other non-challenging males, for instance. Sadly, the writing suffers from an excess of science jargon, poor structuring and repetitiveness—at times reading like a litany of science papers.

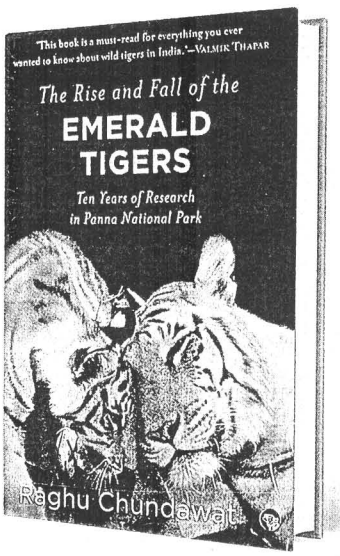
Nonetheless, the project at its heart makes it worth the effort.

With the cooperation of forest department officials, Chundawat's findings helped establish better protocols for tiger protection, spurring an increase in the number of tigers living in the reserve to 35 by 2002. It was a conservation success story that inspired the BBC film *Tigers of the Emerald Forest*, from which the book draws its title.

Soon, however, a new set of forest officials arrived. Distrusting researchers like Chundawat, they hindered and curtailed scientific studies in the park, while growing complacent about security, and soon the poachers moved in. By the time Chundawat was forced out of the park in 2004, the population had fallen from 35 to less than the 15 tigers. But the park authorities and 'biased' wildlife agencies obfuscated or outright denied this. And, by 2009, all of Panna's tigers had disappeared.

In less than a decade, therefore, Chundawat observed the dynamics of a growing population, but also chronicled the reasons for its precipitous decline. Individual 'wisdom' masquerading as science to fashion conservation policies, the complex mix of politics and paid research that hid failings, and an outmoded and stagnant notion of 'protected areas' had all contributed to the tragedy, he argues.

"The high point of the work was seeing how my own perspectives and conclusions changed over time," Chundawat said in a phone interview. "After 10 years of scientific work in Panna, I was the biggest critic of the papers I'd written after two initial years of work in the reserve," he added. For instance, he had once focused on the chital as the tiger's main prey. But his extended research illustrated that the chital population happened at the cost of other animals like swamp deer and sambar, which, in the long run, harmed the ecosystem.



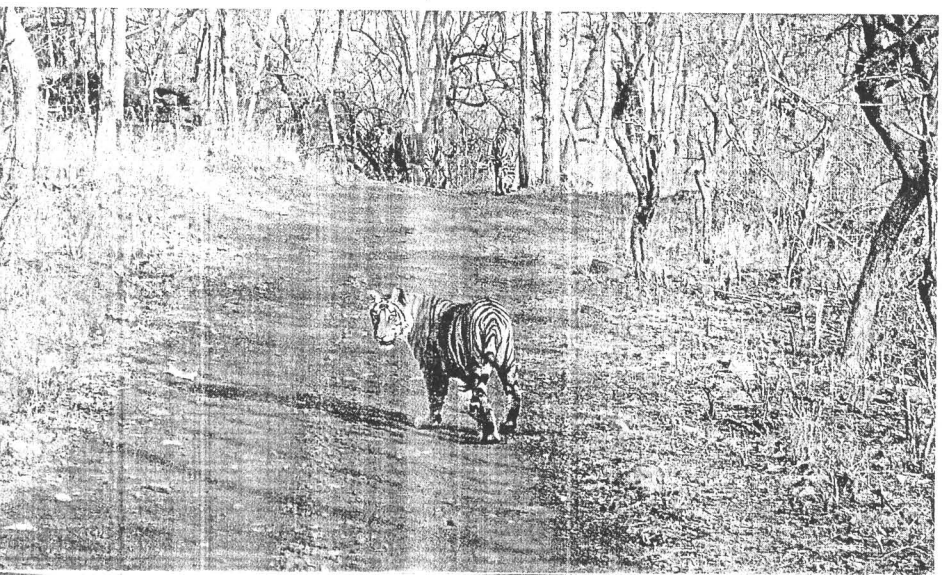
RISE AND FALL OF THE EMERALD TIGERS
by Raghu Chundawat
Speaking Tiger
₹899, 369 pages

The tiger population in Panna has recovered since 2009, but, as Chundawat points out, small populations such as these remain vulnerable as long as they are isolated from others. Creating smaller satellite populations might, he says, be a way of making them more resilient. It is also time that the governance of national park moved away from divvying up parks into uniform 'beats' to a more nuanced approach that takes the needs and wildlife of different areas into consideration.

"The sad part is that none of the science in my book has been acknowledged by park authorities," says Chundawat. "Things that should not be done are still being done in Panna." The mortality of female tigers in Panna is far higher than that of males, though in most populations it is the other way round. "This is something that needs to be addressed. Why should I have to point this out? The park officials should have flagged it themselves."

Hounded out of Panna, Chundawat now focuses on tiger conservation outside protected areas—where the animals are most likely to come into conflict with humans. In particular, he's developing environmental education programmes for children in communities that live in areas around Panna in the hope that this will make for "friendlier communities". ■

–Akshai Jain



AJAY TIWARI

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