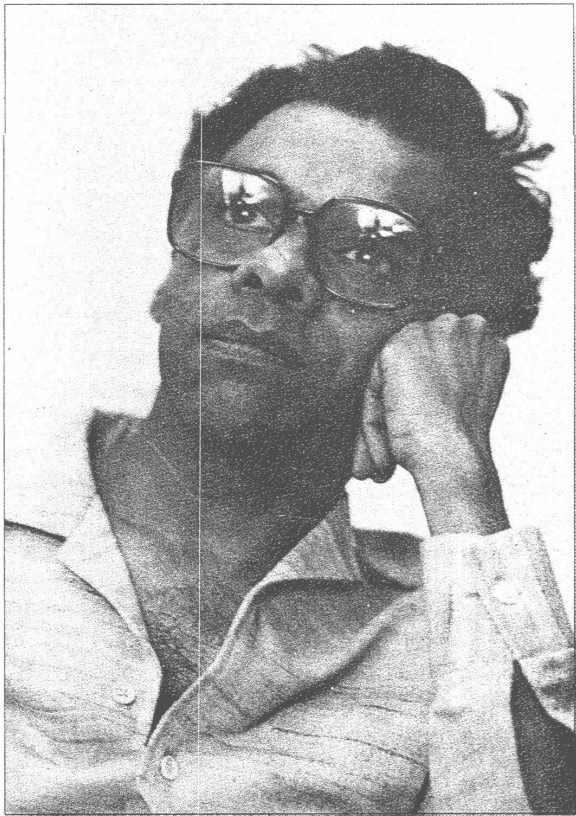


THE BOOK REVIEW

AUGUST 1993

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NEW FROM OXFORD

Human Development Report 1993

Human Development Report 1993 examines how—and how much—people participate in the events and processes that shape their lives. It concludes that at least five new pillars of a people-centred world order must be built.

This year's Report describes specific policy actions that can make markets more "people-friendly" and rescue economic growth from becoming "jobless growth".

Human Development Report 1993 was prepared by a team of eminent economists and distinguished development professionals under the guidance of Mahbub ul Huq, former Minister of Finance and Planning of Pakistan and now Special Adviser to the Administrator of UNDP. The panel of consultants included Sudhir Anand, Lourdes Arizpe, Meghnad Desai, Xavier Greffe, Simon Johnson, Atul Kohli, Bernard Lecomte, Gustav Ranis, Roger Riddell, Amartya Sen, Guy Standing, Frances Stewart, Paul Streeten and Herbert Wulf. Inge Kaul headed the UNDP team. Leo Goldstone was responsible for preparing the statistics.

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Shifting Agriculture and Sustainable Development P.S. RAMAKRISHNAN

An integrated approach to conservation and sustainable development presupposes the satisfaction of basic human needs, equity with social justice, and the maintenance of social, cultural, and biological diversity together with the ecological integrity of the system. This case study, based on north-eastern India, is an in-depth analysis of the integrated approach.

The book is divided into three main parts. The first section is on agroecosystem and village-system function. Section Two is on secondary successional patterns and processes. Management implications are addressed in the third section.

The book has been organized in a way that makes it of special value to ecologists, social scientists, planners, and administrative and non-governmental agencies interested in the sustainable development of traditional societies.

Essays on Indian Philosophy, Traditional and Modern Edited by PURUSHOTTAMA BILIMORIA

J.N. Mohanty took his PhD from the University of Gottingen, taught for years as the Acharya B.N. Seal Professor of Mental and Moral Sciences at the University of Calcutta, served as George Lynn Cross Research Professor of Philosophy at the University of Oklahoma and as visiting Professor in the New School of Social Research in New York, before taking up a Chair of Philosophy in Temple University, Philadelphia (USA) where he currently teaches.

Purushottama Bilimoria PhD, was educated in New Zealand, Australia, India and has held fellowships at Oxford, Stony Brook (SU-NY) and Harvard Universities.

He is editor of *Sophia*, a journal in philosophy of religion and theology, and edits two monograph series: *Indian Thought* with E.J. Brill, and *Studies in Indian Tradition* (Delhi). He is co-editor for the Mimamsa project within the *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*.

This collection of essays by Professor J.N. Mohanty on Indian philosophy and related topics, brought together in a volume for the first time, provides us a vignette into his writings in this area over a forty years span. They 'chart... a sort of intellectual autobiography'. But they do more than that the 27 essays unwittingly trace the development of thinking and studious reflections on a range of issues and problems that have occupied among the best minds in philosophy, East or West.

The editor's lengthy introduction followed by the author's own prologue set the scene for a stimulating reading. The volume is designed also to supplement Professor Mohanty's book-length works in the teaching of Indian and comparative philosophy.

Rs 400

Vessels of Time

AKOS OSTOR

This extended, penetrating, and elegantly structured and written essay is an exploration of time, conceptually, comparatively, and in different historical and social contexts.

It opens with an exploration of time in different societies. Is time among the Salteaux, Balinese, Nuer, or Pitajara similar or different? What of ancient India and China? What if we add medieval Europe and industrializing America? Immediately 'time' becomes problematic: is it a concept, a series of concepts, or just a set of measurements? How does one compare: are we sure we are dealing with comparable things.

The author concludes, *inter alia*, that time in an anthropological sense is not a universal condition with a constant meaning throughout histories and societies, and that the anthropologist's task is to find ways of comparing the differences, thereby opening cultures and traditions to each other in a more egalitarian way than was possible in the past.

Akos Ostor is Professor of Anthropology and Film at the Wesleyan University, Middle-town, Connecticut. He is the author of several notable books and has been associated with a number of distinguished anthropological films.

Rs 175

The Lie of the Land

Edited by RAJESWARI SUNDER RAJAN

This volume, taken as a whole, breaks the long silence and asks why. It comprises seventeen essays, fourteen of which are by women academics. Collectively, they seek to show up the sorts of conservative orthodoxies, bureaucratic power structures, fossilized thought processes, unacademic institutions, colonial world views, outdated theoretical frameworks, gross cultural premises and crassly commercialized situations which frequently define what it means to study and teach English literature in India.

Rs 95

Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

Edited by KESHAVRAM N. IENGAR AND RAMA P. COOMARASWAMY

A literary work, built up with parallel citations is apt to grow in the compass of the author himself, from his encyclopaedic scholarship. The revised edition of one of Coomaraswamy's most significant writings is now being issued by incorporating his additions to the printed first edition of 1942.

The Indian Theory of Government is expounded on the basis of the textual sources, mainly of the *Brahmanas* and the *Rgveda*. This is the fifth volume in the series of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts programme of reprinting the collected works of A.K. Coomaraswamy.

Sri Keshavram N. Iengar (b. 1928) graduated from Bombay University with a B.Sc. in Physics and Mathematics and a Government Diploma in Architecture. Starting his professional career as an architectural assistant at Madras, he was associated in the field of architecture for over 25 years with the Madras and Bangalore Universities.

Dr Rama P. Coomaraswamy (b. 1929) is the only surviving son of Dr Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. At present, he is Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in Connecticut. He has authored over 40 articles in the surgical research field as well as innumerable articles in theology and philosophy.

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Cover: Dr A.K. Ramanujan

Courtesy United States Information Service, New Delhi

Atippat Krishnaswamy Ramanujan

The sudden and wholly unexpected demise of the poet/genius A.K. Ramanujan has left the world of book-lovers stunned and bereft. Words are inadequate even to express the sense of loss, and yet homage to a master words craftsman of Indian poetry must needs be paid in mere words. We bring to our readers a sprinkling of tributes.

C.C.

"How can I say farewell
when farewells are made
only for people who stay
and only for people
who go away?"

THE STRIDERS

A.K. Ramanujan, poet, scholar, teacher, friend, has gone away without saying farewell. There is no way to mitigate the loss, for Raman was versatile and gifted enough to refine everything he touched. No doubt this talent drew many students and admirers to him, but even more compelling was his warmth and generosity to young people and students. It never mattered how young or small you were, Raman always took the time to be kind and encouraging.

I first ran into him at Harvard as a naive young prospective student, vaguely interested in Indian literature and unsure about everything as students usually are. Raman was infectiously enthusiastic, and I walked out of his office feeling worthwhile. Three years later, we met at Chicago and to my surprise he remembered me. Working together with him was as easy as picking up the conversation we had started on a November morning in Boston years ago. He was a friend with whom you could share exciting discoveries, never a learned acharya holding forth pedantically. He was interested in everything, from poetry to folk lore to aesthetics to magic, and his insights were startling in their simplicity and depth.

Raman was not just a brilliantly talented poet, a gifted teacher, a superb translator—he was also a loyal friend with a wonderful sensitivity and the ability to help others at critical junctures in their lives. I will always remember going to him at the end of my Ph.D. courses at Chicago, with no visible means of financial support for research I had to do in England. He took me aside and explained gently that there were people to whom money mattered, and there were people to whom work mattered. People obsessed with finances let their work suffer if the money did not come through. My task, he said, was never to let the work suffer. The money would take care of itself. A week later everything worked out and I could carry out my research. Raman's perceptions were luminously clear, in life as well as academia.

His warmth, his clarity of vision, and his generosity of spirit will remain with us. We have not said farewell yet.

ADITYA BEHL

Of all the Indians who sought to project our literature abroad in the post-colonial half-century since Independence, A.K. Ramanujan was by far the most eminent. As a poet, he wrote of themes and preoccupations traditionally and essentially Indian, such as family, kinship and Hindu beliefs, with a fastidious and ironical elegance which was perhaps largely Western. In his even more influential role as teacher and translator, he sought to communicate to the West aspects of Indian literature and culture which were uncompromisingly indigenous. He did not at all tailor his materials to Western taste; instead through patient and exquisite explication, he facilitated the West's approach and access to them. Before him, speaking of Siva or interrogating *sanskara* was not a popular or respectable activity among the Indian and Indophile reading public. Ramanujan made it so.

Ramanujan was a neat and spruce man, whose fine wit not so much sparkled as it gleamed. There was a gravity and stability about him, and a sense of high seriousness marked both his objectives and his pursuit of them. At the same time, he retained a boyish brightness and keenness right to the end, so that his passing away at the age of 64 feels acutely premature. But "the past never passes", as he once said characteristically, and his own splendid and multi-faceted achievement will continue to be our living heritage.

HARISH TRIVEDI

How I envy him! Not just the varied achievements of his richly productive life but the manner of his going. Without bothering any friend or relation, he seems to have gone on his own to hospital and lay down wordlessly to die. After a lifetime's practice of being quiet and unobtrusive, he could hardly have changed at the end.

I got to know him a little long before he became famous, and I treasure this memory because thereafter everybody appears to have met him or known him or wanted to meet and know him. I even kept referring to him as Ramu while he had become Raman to everybody else. We met at a rather unlikely place—Bennington College (Vermont, U.S.A.) which, in those days was peopled mainly by tall American girls who drove fast foreign cars. But for Bennington we might never have met or not met right then (August/September 1960) because I had gone from Patna and he had come, I think, from Belgaum (but via Pune and Bloomington). What places could be farther apart in 1960 than Patna and Belgaum? I must clarify that both of us happened to be in Bennington that summer not to fix fast cars or chase tall girls but as part of an orientation programme for Fulbright scholars.

For about a month we met everyday, talked endlessly about translation, then did not see each other for the next twelve years. He had already switched allegiance from English Literature to linguistics and stayed on in the United States to consolidate it. I had enlarged the same allegiance to take in American Literature and came back within my allotted time to propagate Emerson and Whitman in Pataliputra.

Sometime in 1965 I saw a Writers Workshop publication entitled *Fifteen Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology* wherein the translator was named as A.K. Ramanujan. Not for the first time friend Purushottam Lal had spotted yet another *uttam purush* among translators. I rejoiced in Ramu's having remained in touch with his motherland in letter and spirit even if he was far away in flesh and blood. Two years later came *The Interior Landscape* which I did not actually see for a couple of years, such being the realities of the book-trade in India. But my envy of him had begun.

SUJIT MUKHERJEE

In a class of more than a dozen enthusiasts, a babble of tongues—Sinhalese, Persian, Bangla, Gujarati, Japanese, Russian, Sanskrit, and a multitude of forms—modern haiku, renderings by famous poets of Pasternak's poems, religious discourses from ancient texts and turn of the century short stories—make for an apparently impossible workshop scenario. Professor Ramanujan gives every piece his time and transmits to everyone in the class the pleasures and torments of having to weigh the burden of words as they move from one

language to another, carrying much more than linguistic history in the process.

The classroom setting calls for a very different exercise than the ordering and laying out of interior landscapes. But the participants learn without being constantly reminded, that the excitement of group interaction, of responding to others respond to 'one's own' piece, of making public as it were, the private delights of one's own reading, a poem or a poet, comprise only the ripples and eddies of the deeper crosscurrents of translation. The weekly sessions can come alive only from living long with the work one has chosen. A constant weighing and whetting in the choice of words and combating the evasiveness of rhyme and metre and a critical attention to every pause in the flow of syntax. All this, without making the beginners feel overwhelmed or paralysed either by the richness of the texts or the relative scarcity of resources with which they struggle to render into other tongues. All this with a rare combination of affection and respect, not only for the many different languages and cultures that have come together in the classroom, but more remarkably for all the disparate young minds grappling with translation.

RIMLI BHATTACHARYA

The last time I saw Raman was when we had dinner together at a Pakistani restaurant in Chicago. The food was delicious and Raman promised that the next time I came to Chicago to teach, in October of this year, he would like to take us—our mutual friend Wendy O'Flaherty and myself—to dinner at the same restaurant. I guess this is a promise that will not be kept.

For two years, off and on, we had worked on an essay on "Siblings in Indian Folklore". This was to be based on his vast collection of Kannada and Tamil folktales which were almost ready for publication. They only awaited one of his marvellous introductory essays which said more than most scholars' books. He promised that we would complete the study this autumn. I guess this particular essay will never be written.

Raman was to come to Delhi in August for a Indo-US seminar on the Mind. We had talked about what he was going to say, what he had read. "All my reading only confirms what we have believed all along, Sudhir," he said. "There is nothing after the brain dies. I wish we could believe in any kind of immortality but the death of the brain is the end, finis." We had then talked of our greatest common fear of old age, of an impairment of consciousness while the body insisted on its life. And now Raman's splendid consciousness, which made him one of the most perceptive and sensitive minds I have known, is no more.

In the last six months, he had shooting pains in his legs which occasionally made him limp and kept him awake at nights. He would not take pain killers. They dulled the consciousness that was his most prized possession.

There was another pain he was now getting used to much better than before. For the last two years, after the divorce from his wife Molly, Raman was unhappy, even depressed. Just after the separation, when reminded of all the people who admired and loved him—and their number is legion—he still had the courage to face his personal reality and say with his typical wry humour, "Yes, everyone loves me except my family." I found him much more cheerful the last time I met him, in spite of the mysterious pain in the leg which the doctors could not diagnose. He was looking forward to publishing his collected poems of the last seven years. His volume of Tamil and Kannada folk tales was almost ready for publication. The books will doubtless come but the man and friend is gone. I shall miss him.

SUDHIR KAKAR

In Ramanujan's "Introduction to the Study of Folklore" course in the University of Chicago, which I was attending in 1990, there was a young man who interrupted him constantly to show off his own knowledge of post-structural-

ist theory and find fault with Ramanujan's method. Most of us in the course felt impatient with this young man for taking up so much class time. While walking back with Raman after class one day, I complained to him for letting this fellow go on: 'I am attending this course to learn from you, not from him.' Ramanujan's answer was characteristically generous: 'It is necessary to hear criticism. I might even learn something from him.'

I saw Raman a lot that semester—at least four times a week: twice in his folklore course and twice in my 'Novel in India' course. I had not bargained for having A.K. Ramanujan sitting among the students in my class. It was not a retaliatory gesture, he assured me. He genuinely wanted to re-read some Indian novels and needed an incentive. I must confess, at first his presence in my class was a little inhibiting, but gradually I relaxed, and found him an invaluable help in discussing Indian texts with American students. His participation in class was very low-key, but sometimes, through a seemingly casual remark, he suddenly illuminated a text or forged unexpected corrections. I do not know how he found time to attend all the classes regularly because he was involved in a dozen other projects at the same time.

I have met Raman off and on for two decades, read his work with admiration and pleasure, taught his poems in class, but when on July 14, the third editorial of The Times of India abruptly announced his departure I found myself going back to those four months in late 1990 when through long conversations Ramanujan had quietly opened out for me new perspectives for reading life no less than literature.

MEENAKSHI MUKHERJEE

A Wrong Time for Gleaning

(For A K Ramanujan)

*It's the Tamil month of Aadi
a time for sowing, rooting, planting
a time when the rain gods shower their grace
in abundance, and a time
when the river Ponnai is in spate,
enfolding everybody within her Aadi perukku*

*Aadi is here,
a regenerative time when the good earth
receives the roots
swells up the shoots
a time when green limbs tremble
with pearls of water
for it's a time for breeding, for growing
a time for living.*

*How could you strike such a discordant note
and so abruptly?
Were you claimed by Murugan
your six-headed god about whom
you sang in three languages
with the fertile glide of your tongue?
Did your Murugan
reap you up as a rich harvest
at a wrong time,
when it's a time for growing,
not gleaning.*

LAKSHMI KANNAN

*Ponnai: The classical Tamil name for the river Cauvery

The Debate on the New Economic Policy

S. Guhan

ECONOMIC REFORMS AND INDIAN MARKETS

By S.L. Rao

Wheeler Publishing Co., Allahabad, 1992, pp. 179, price not stated.

INDIA IN TRANSITION: ECONOMIC POLICY OPTIONS

By Arun Ghosh

Wheeler Publishing Co., Allahabad, 1992, pp. 202, price not stated.

LIBERALISATION: ITS IMPACT ON THE INDIAN ECONOMY

Edited by S.P. Gupta

Macmillan India, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 240, Rs. 195.00

The new economic policies (NEP) initiated by the Narasimha Rao government in July 1991 have generated an extensive literature mostly in the form of journal articles and seminar papers. The debate in the last two years has revolved around aspects of the initial phase of the reforms such as the causes of the fiscal and balance of payments crisis in 1991 that necessitated them; the optimal mix and sequencing of the two main elements of the reform, namely, short-term macro-economic stabilisation and medium-to-long term structural adjustment; the results that are visible so far; the impact, actual and likely, of the reforms on different sections of the population; the sustainability of the reform process; and the promises and dangers that lie ahead. Since the new policies were initiated barely a couple of years ago and are a continuing process, one cannot look for any definitive conclusions from the writings on the subject nor feel surprised if the same set of facts, viewed from different ideological perspectives, lend themselves to quite contradictory value judgements.

The S.L. Rao and Arun Ghosh volumes are similar in format. Both are collections of periodical articles published during the first 12 months of the reform process, between August 1991 and July-August 1992. Many of Rao's pieces have originally appeared in leading financial dailies while Ghosh's articles, mostly published in the hospitable columns of the *Economic and Political Weekly*, are considerably longer. There is much overlap in the terrain they cover since both necessarily deal with major aspects of the reforms. Both being collections of articles, written from time to time, suffer from a fair amount of internal repetition. And,

by now, both are somewhat out of date, particularly since the budget proposals of 1993-94 have not been taken into account. The comparability of the collections however ends here for while Rao is a somewhat starry-eyed supporter of the reform process, Ghosh critically evaluates them in much greater depth and detail.

Rao, being a business economist, is most interesting in what he has to say about the implications of the reforms for management and marketing. The most useful of his essays deal with the nature and changes in the home market in recent years for consumer goods based on data collected in NCAER surveys. The surveys classify an estimated population of 142 million households into five broad groups according to annual household income: L or low income (upto Rs. 12,500) constitute about 84 million households and about 59 per cent of all households; LM or lower middle (Rs 12,501-25,000) about 38 million households (27 per cent of the total); the other three groups viz., M (middle), UM (upper middle) and H (high) with incomes above Rs. 25,000 add up to 20 million households or 14 per cent of the total. Rao's definition of the 'Indian Middle Class' comprises the last four categories, namely, LM to H and, accordingly, he estimates the size of the 'middle class' at 58 million households or a little less than 300 million people. His characterisation of the top 40 per cent of the population as 'middle' is clearly invalid but evidently what he seems to have in mind is that this is about the absolute size of the market-involved segment of India's population whose demands for various manufactured products (other than textiles) offer rich and increasing opportunities for consumption-oriented

production and growth. It is for industry and business to exploit these opportunities which liberalisation has opened up in a big way.

There is, of course, considerable heterogeneity in incomes and tastes within this large mass and about 60 per cent of it is rural. Yet, the market for a whole variety of consumer non-durables (e.g. cooking oils, tea, beverages, toilet and washing soaps, tooth powder and paste, hair oil and talcum powder, footwear) extends right down to LM and even further to the upper crust of L. The market for consumer durables is thinner, more varied and hierarchical. Transistor radios, wrist watches and bicycles correlate with the bottom rungs; sewing machines, mixer-grinders, black and white TV and mopeds with the middle to upper echelons; and refrigerators, washing machines, VCR/VCP, motor cycles and automobiles with the top most.

Rao's thesis would appear to be that in terms of size and sustainability, the most promising strategy for market penetration would be to concentrate on the rural market, on basic non-durables and on durables affordable to the down-market. In this strategy, innovative marketing methods and advertising will have an important role with brand names counting for a great deal since the Indian consumer, including the rural consumer, has a high degree of 'brand loyalty'. It is precisely this strategy—based on rural marketing, manufactured items of daily consumption, brand names and advertising—that the multinationals have successfully pursued in India (Hindustan Lever, Lipton, Colgate, Ponds, WIMCO et al). The NEP has made it easier for them to enter, and thrive on, the large and growing Indian market directly or through liberalised technology and brand name collaborations with Indian business. What implications does this have for a drain on the balance of payments in terms of outward remittances of high profits from low-investment consumer industries? Rao does not discuss this important issue. Is it because his view of business is so global that it does not matter who gains from whose market?

Howsoever the Indian 'middle class' is construed, it is certainly a very large one in absolute size. Even if only M, UM, and H are included, its size will come to 20 million households or 100 million people and if half of LM is added to it, the figure will be 39 million households or almost 200 million people which is the size of 4 to 5 average countries in the world. One can get very interested, even engrossed, in the dynamics of this market as its size and purchasing power grow and to the extent its consumption preferences diversify or can be manipulated through advertising, brand names and aggressive marketing. Yet it is only one or more worlds within the much larger cosmos of India in which the 'other' over 70 per cent of the population subsists and of whom about one half are below the offi-

cial poverty line. Rao does not have much time or patience for this 'other India' despite its Himalayan presence. He disposes of it by saying: "Below them (i.e. the so-called 'middle class') is an under class of people who never, or perhaps very rarely, buy even simple manufactured consumer products. This under class, however has some exposure to TV, and sees among themselves some households who have become consumers. Aspirations have, therefore, been aroused. They now have to be satisfied". Having said this, Rao is silent on the massive transfer of purchasing power to the 'underclass', through employment and incomes, that will be necessary to satisfy their aspirations and to integrate them into the market. Equally, he is silent on the social and political consequences of a failure to do so. The 'underclass'—of the order of 650 to 750 million Indians—having made a brief appearance in his discussion becomes invisible again.

On the other hand, for Arun Ghosh the "choice before India is whether we should bow to the forces of market demand (emanating from some 10 to 15 per cent of the population), or concern ourselves with the latent demand of the rest of Indians, numbering some 750 million persons". The latter, he points out, will require a "totally different type of structural change within the economy in terms of egalitarianism, job opportunities and self-governance". Ghosh's basic critique of the reforms is that they are not addressed to these objectives. His 'alternative agenda' is to cut defence expenditure, reduce subsidies that benefit the non-poor and to target them to the poor, increase direct taxes, crack down on tax evasion and to create employment based on local area planning and decentralisation. On the short and medium term issues of macro-economic management to which the NEP is addressed, Ghosh's specific criticisms would appear to relate mainly to modalities rather than to the broad direction of the move to a freer and more open economy. In principle, he is not against deregulation but he feels that too much has been done too soon yielding to pressures from the World Bank and the IMF. His own preference would be for a more selective and priority-discriminating approach. He feels that the devaluations of July 1991 were excessive and resulted in terms-of-trade losses dampening gains from exports. He points out that fiscal adjustment has involved serious cuts in capital investments on infrastructure and on welfare outlays instead of on essential and non-developmental expenditures. He makes a strong plea for austerity with the example being set at the top.

Essentially, Ghosh's critique of the reforms is in two parts. He raises interesting debatable questions about the instrumentalities, sequencing and pace of the specific reform measures contained in the NEP. He also points to the absence of a long-term, poor-oriented development strategy based on redistributive fiscal

policies, employment generation and decentralisation. However, Ghosh is not convincing when he implies that his long-term strategy is an 'alternative' to the medium-term reforms and that the reforms are inconsistent with, or necessarily inimical to, poor-oriented development. In itself, the NEP may not be poor but it does not follow that it is anti-poor or that it cannot enable conditions under which it may be easier to pursue pro-poor policies once stabilisation measures begin to yield results and medium-term adjustment is on its way. Non-inflationary, self-reliant and sustained growth at a faster rate is certainly a necessary condition for poverty alleviation although, of course, it may not be a sufficient one.

While the Rao and Ghosh collections being—at different levels of sophistication—to the genre of economic journalism, the 12 papers included in the S.P. Gupta edited volume contain de-

and was precipitated by the Gulf War in 1990. Some, politicising history, would put most of the blame on the non-Congress governments of December 1989–June 1991 while some others would be inclined to trace the pre-history of the 1980s to policies pursued from about the beginning of the 1960s. Causality apart, it was quite clear that in mid 1991, the external solvency of India was at rock bottom, inflation was ruling high, fiscal deficits in the Central budget had reached unsustainable levels and were accelerating out of control. It is in this setting that the NEP was initiated in July 1991 with essentially a three-part strategy. One was a set of emergency measures to pull the external account from the brink, the second was to achieve fiscal consolidation over a period of 3 to 4 years and the third, concurrently with it, was to initiate comprehensive policy reforms over a wide front: trade and industrial policies; fiscal, monetary and exchange rate adjustments; restruc-

ture of public sector enterprises and financial institutions; labour market policies and the institution of social safety nets; adjustments to administered prices; protection of outlays on basic social services. In the same period, 1991–93, the Eighth Plan has also been finalised providing a medium term frame for the NEP. By now, as far as the government is concerned, the new policies have been reasonably fully articulated.

The debate that has ensued on the NEP being an on-going debate on an ongoing process, it is not easy to take stock of it in any definitive manner. The attempt can only be to discuss the highlights, leaving out a number of interesting but inconclusive arguments and assertions. We should begin by underlining that there has been a great deal of consensus, wider than one would have expected in India, not only about the need for comprehensive economic reforms but also about the broad directions it should follow: industrial deregulation, greater export orientation, containment of fiscal deficits, and the restructuring of public enterprises. Most of the actual debate has been about the contents, pace and sequencing of reform measures as they have emerged in the last three budgets and in policy pronouncements and specific measures between them. Here again, an element of consensus is not lacking. No one seriously denies that the NEP has been able to pull back the economy from

the brink of the 1991 precipice or that there has been a sizable reduction in the Centre's fiscal deficits between 1991–92 and 1993–94 (Budget). Convertibility on current external trade and payments has been widely welcomed. So has the easing of entry conditions for domestic industrial investments. Credit has also been given for the containment of defence outlays and for the reduction in major subsidies.

Proceeding beyond this level of consensus, the NEP and its implementation have attracted a number of criticisms pertaining both to acts of commission and omission. Despite the containment of defence expenditures and reduction in subsidies, revenue deficits continue to be large in the Central budget. Fiscal deficits have been reduced mainly at the expense of capital investments, social outlays and transfers to States, all of which is likely to jeopardise growth and welfare in the longer run. A disproportionate burden of the fiscal adjustment has fallen on the expenditure side. Given that customs tariffs will have to be gradually pared down and excises cannot be hiked up without inviting recession, attention has to be concentrated on direct taxes, particularly on tax enforcement and on widening the tax base since the rates are relatively high; there is as yet no evidence of this.

On industrial policy, it has been argued that too wide a field has been opened up for foreign investment (both portfolio and direct) and for imports of technology. In course of time, this could have serious implications for balance of payments in the current and capital accounts and for the sustenance and growth of indigenous manufacturing and technology development. Very little has been done in the way of restructuring public sector enterprises. The kind of privatization that has taken place has amounted to selling the family silver at knock-down prices and is not capable of introducing any kind of market discipline in the units in which shares have been divested. A viable exit policy is yet to be formulated. The safety net in the form of the National Renewal Fund has had a tentative start; the prospects of being able to effectively use it for retrenchment, redeployment and re-training of surplus labour are ill-defined and uncertain. While much has been talked about in the area of financial sector reforms, a comprehensive approach is yet to be put into action. An agenda for agricultural reforms has not crystallised. No attention has been paid to the restructuring of anti-poverty programmes or to making the provision of basic social services more cost effective. Most importantly, the States have not been co-opted into the reform process. Their fiscal deficits have not narrowed and State Electricity Boards are deeply in the red.

In addition to policy, concerns have extended to performance and prognosis. Inflation is still around two-digit figures even after two years of the NEP. Exports

are yet to pick up, only partly due to the collapse of rupee trade and unfavourable demand conditions in the industrialised countries. Politically, the initial consensus has been clouded over by Ayodhya, the riots in its aftermath, the stock market scam and reactivation of factionalism in the Congress party. While economic policy makers cannot be blamed for factors outside their control, they have been faulted for their initial euphoria and for lack of transparency in making it clear to the public that the reform process will be painful, slow-yielding and vulnerable to uncertainties. Also, inasmuch as several politically hard decisions have been postponed (such as the exit policy and restructuring public enterprises), doubts have accumulated about the sustainability of reforms, given the inherently weak position of a minority government in a fluid political environment.

The present phase of adjustment, as the term itself implies, is essentially a medium-term corrective process occasioned by the crisis in the early 1990s. Even if this particular process is accomplished, in a reasonable span of time and with a reasonable degree of success, it does not follow that India's economic development will be put on auto-pilot for ever thereafter. India's problems of population, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and inequalities will remain with us for decades. The 'long debate' has been about these basic issues among all those concerned with our society, polity and economy. Its antecedents go back to much before the current phase of adjustment and it will continue during and beyond it. It is within the framework of this 'long debate' that adjustment policies will have to be situated and assessed. The question then is whether faster growth stimulated and sustained by more open, less State-interventionist, more outward-oriented and more market-friendly policies can, *in and by themselves*, contribute to the alleviation of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, disease and myriad other deprivations. The critics of the NEP are not persuaded that it would in the absence of comprehensive social entitlements which can be created only by the State. In their view, the 'culture' of the NEP which equates the State with the market wishes away the vast mass of India's poor or, at best, sees no alternative to the benefits of growth trickling down to them in due course. Also, to them, the intense preoccupation with the NEP is a form of 'false consciousness' since it tends to shift attention away from the different kind of structural reforms that are needed to reduce inequalities and poverty. Such criticisms need not necessarily entail hostility to the NEP. They only deflate into perspective the excessive enthusiasm voiced for the NEP by industry, business, the government and its economists.

S. Guhan, a former IAS officer, is now at the Madras Institute of Development Studies.

The extensive literature that the NEP has provoked makes it possible at this stage for the main issues to be framed and for adversarial positions on each of them to be identified and evaluated. No one disagrees that by the beginning of the 1990s, the size and dynamics of fiscal and balance of payments gaps had reached a point where correction could no longer be postponed. Most analysts agree that the crisis was basically created by profligate economic management in the 1980s and was precipitated by the Gulf War in 1990.

tailed technical explorations of reform related issues. Gupta's introduction contains a fair assessment of the impact so far of the reform process. Tarun Kanti Das gives a useful documentation and analysis of the contents and rationale of the reform package. Another paper of special interest is on balance of payments perspectives by Bibek Deb Roy. Gupta and Padmasini Raman analyse the social impact of the liberalisation process. Their major finding is that about 6 to 7 million people might have gone under the poverty line between July 1991 and April 1992 on account of inflation caused by post-reform increases in administered prices. Interesting as the calculations are, they relate to a truncated period and throw no light on what might have counter-factually happened over a longer period in the absence of reforms. It is too soon and data availability is too limited to permit any reliable evaluation of the social impact of the reforms.

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A South Asian Discourse

Jayati Ghosh

CLASS, STATE AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Edited by Berch Berberoglu

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 330, Rs. 275.00

FOUNDATIONS OF PAKISTAN'S POLITICAL ECONOMY: TOWARDS AN AGENDA FOR THE 1990S

Edited by William E. James and Subroto Roy

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 301, Rs. 295.00

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND THE STATE IN MODERN NEPAL

Edited by Laurie Zivetz

Oxford University Press, Madras, 1992, pp. 248, Rs. 250.00

The South Asian preoccupation with assessments of post-Independence experience has been particularly marked in recent years, and these three volumes fall very much in line with this trend. The first two, on India and Pakistan, are explicitly concerned with appraisal and the attempt to arrive at a holistic "political economy" perspective on the economy, polity and society. The third volume, on Nepal, has a more limited focus but is necessarily concerned with wider issues as well. Essentially, all three of these books are attempts to consider what has been the nature of the post-Independence development process, and what are the consequent constraints to future development. This question, if dealt with in a sensible way, would naturally also involve consideration of the whole issues of origins and evolution of the polity, the economy and society, and in particular the nature of the state and the impact of its policies.

The volume edited by Berberoglu on India is a very mixed bag indeed, containing some very perceptive articles along with rather sketchy introductory primers on the historical background and pattern of industrialization and a few articles which already appear rather dated given more recent trends in the economy. The short and somewhat patchy introduction by the editor does not really provide a sufficient framework to make the disparate articles into one cohesive argument. This task is more ably fulfilled by Prabhat Patnaik's piece which highlights the linkages between agricultural and industrial sectors and the continuing relevance, both direct and indirect, of the agrarian constraint to industrialization. Anupam Sen and Bipin Chandra contribute essays on the historical background, in which numerous complexities are (inevitably?) disposed of in relatively simple terms.

Gail Omvedt's piece on changing relations of production in agriculture brings out some important points such as the highly stratified nature of the oppressed within this sector, but it suffers from the use of information dating two decades ago, without much reference to more recent observed tendencies which have been otherwise much talked about in the literature, such as the decline in capital formation in agriculture and the growing significance of non-farm employment. Paresh Chattopadhyay and Ranjit Sau provide rather elementary analyses of industrialization and the nature of monopoly capital in India, which also do not discuss more recent trends. P.N. Mathew's discussion of the diversification of female industrial employment in Kerala is interesting but slightly out of place in this volume, as is Tharamangalam's account of peasant mobilization in Kerala. The short description of the history of labour movement by Kotovsky is too sketchy to make much impact. There is an Appendix in the form of an interview with former Naxalite Dev Nathan conducted by Mark Selden. In all, the volume raises a number of absorbing questions, but systematic attempts to deal with them and to address the nature of the state are rare.

The book edited by James and Roy on Pakistan is more systematic and consistent, but in its own way equally unsatisfying. The approach in the articles varies from a straight political-sociological approach, to a conception of political economy in which the state is treated as somehow outside of the civil society, and juxtaposed rather simplistically with the workings of the "free market" which too is outside the domain of social power and political pressure. Much of the concern is with the origins of Pakistan, which are correctly seen to be a major influence in the subsequent functioning of the society

and polity. The inconsistencies involved in the foundation of Pakistan are stressed in the Introduction as well as the article by Francis Robinson—the fact that the quest for a "Muslim" identity was essentially confined to Muslim-minority states like U.P. rather than Muslim-majority states which eventually made up Pakistan, the lack of either a widely accepted national political identity or a deep-rooted and trusted political organization. The essay by Akbar Ahmed identifies the role of four different groups: the tribal societies of Baluchis and Pakhtoons, peasant based agriculture, the urban middle classes and industrial entrepreneurs, and refugees of varying vintages, all contributing to the potential for conflict and underlining the need for pluralism. Shahid Javed Burki in an insightful essay discusses the structural imbalances that found their origin in the political system with economic implications.

However, the political sensitivity of the first set of essays is not matched by the second set dealing with Pakistan's economy. Mohsin Khan's discussion of macro-economic performance gives what is by now a standard interpretation of development recently popularized by the multilateral financial institutions, in which the villain of the piece is the inward-oriented import-substitution policy rather than more complex configurations mentioned by Burki. Mahmood Hasan Khan's discussion of agriculture admits the difficulties created by the lack of land reform, but argues for placing more emphasis on market forces as the primary solution. Naved Hamid deals with industrial policy with the usual litany of complaints about regulation and licensing. Two more discerning contributions come from John Adams on demographic trends and Shahrukh Rafi Khan on education. Most of these articles contain much that is of interest to any student of the sub-continent, and will strike most Indian readers because of the similarity of many of the problems and presumed solutions. The limitation comes from the feeling that despite this book being the outcome of a joint project, there is only limited evidence of communication between a standard market-happy approach of conventional economics and a more sophisticated understanding based on political and social complexities as emphasized in the first part. In particular, the stress on market-based liberalization measures as the basic economic panacea that is the leitmotif of the second part, ignores the lessons evident from a study of Pakistani politics and society, and the awareness of how market institutions can themselves be subverted in such contexts that is evident in the first part.

A similar point can be made about Laurie Zivetz's book, which is essentially an account of the difficulties facing industrial entrepreneurs in Nepal. There is much engaging description and overall analysis in this book, and in general Zivetz shows a greater sensitivity to political

and social realities that shape economic forces and influence the impact of government policies. But the attitude to the state itself, in the ultimate analysis, is curiously apolitical. On one level the regulations that restrict entrepreneurial freedom are criticized, while simultaneously the government is taken to task for not embarking on a systematic attempt at planned investment in industry. The political configurations that encourage such a government stance are not really analysed in any detail, although there are hints throughout the book. However, these are some fascinating case studies of entrepreneurs as well as a very informed discussion about the general difficulties of industrial investment in such a land-locked, raw-material-scarce economy.

All three of these books throw up some important questions about the nature of economic development in South Asia. One of them, which is dealt with explicitly by Prabhat Patnaik and is a recurring theme in the discussion of Pakistan and Nepal as well, relates to the crucial importance of agricultural dynamism for a successful industrialization strategy. However, the very nature of the political compromise which forms the basis for these South Asian States means that landed property in agriculture cannot be tampered with. This not only restricts the possibilities for growth within agriculture, but also implies that the social base for industrial capitalism is narrow to start with. The process of capitalist development in turn narrows it further, and this tends to threaten the survival of the bourgeois democracy as well. This leads naturally to the second important question, about the nature of the state and the resultant policies. It can surely be no accident that all three countries discussed in these volumes have experienced similar fiscal imbalances, which stem essentially from the small and inelastic revenue base (primarily because of the inability to increase direct taxes) and the incapacity to control burgeoning expenditures. This stems directly from the nature of the states and the composition of the ruling elites, and necessitates in turn either a greater reliance on external financing in the countries concerned, or a reduction in overall growth rates. This fiscal imbalance occurs in the context of severe deficiencies in the provision of basic public goods and services in all three countries despite the massive expansion of total state expenditure. Obviously, perceptive analysts must look for explanations of these phenomena not in simplistic pejorations like "government failure" as such, but in deeper consideration of the nature of the states that are associated with such policies. This would also involve a better understanding of the effects of the current liberalisation measures being undertaken by these very states.

Jayati Ghosh is Associate Professor, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Of Traditional Wisdom

M.A. Chitale

USER-FRIENDLY IRRIGATION DESIGNS

By Nirmal Sengupta

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 146, Rs 185.00

This is a concise treatise about the old traditional irrigation and water harvesting systems of India which the author finds ignored and not having their due place in the current irrigation programmes of the country. He has described a wide variety of water conservation techniques that were in vogue in India before the modern canal systems and the tubewell pumps came on the scene. He gives an interesting account of the traditional methods of stream diversion like Khuls in the Himalayan territories, Kalvais in Tamil Nadu, Pynes in Bihar and the Bamboo-drips in the North-Eastern states and of the storages like Jings in Ladakh, Bundhi and submergence tanks in Madhya Pradesh and the Khadins in Rajasthan.

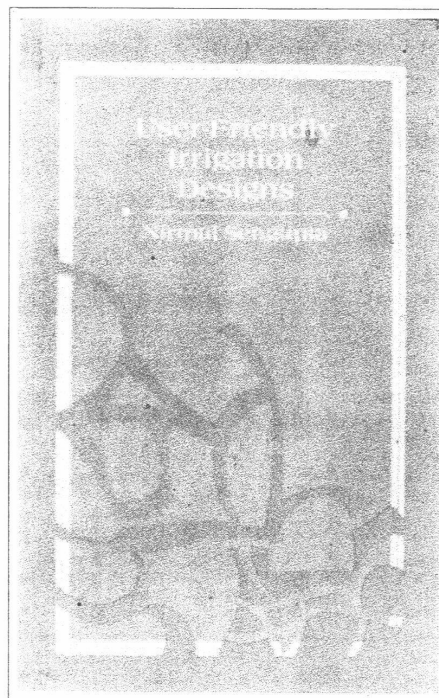
But, by and large, Sengupta's emphasis is on the local methods of storage for water conservation, rather than on water conveyance. He finds that the widespread storage works of various kinds have been the most remarkable characteristic of the Indian irrigation scenario, because of the low rainfall, its seasonability and irregularity.

The author has lamented that the data about the small-scale local traditional

works continues to be quite inadequate and inconsistent in spite of the recent census of the minor irrigation works in India which was carried out by the Ministry of Water Resources. The weakness in the data is because the information is compiled only under broad categories such as 'Private Canals' and 'Other Sources' with no regard to the technological details of the works involved. Such generalised information fails to convey any idea about the potential technological importance of such works. He points out that the difference between the surface gravity tanks and the dug out ponds has been always overlooked. He is also doubtful if the Bundhis and submergence tanks have been properly accounted for at all.

Considering their utility and the sound for basic principles followed in their layouts and designs, he advocates advanced technological support to these old water conservation measures and their integration with the modern irrigation works. Inclusion of the farm ponds and the auxiliary storages on the lines of the traditional water conservation structures within the network of the modern canals will make the modern canal systems 'user

Studies the world over have shown that farmer management contributes significantly in certain areas where bureaucratic management performs poorly. It has been observed that farmers' participation, among other things, reaches more water to the tail-ends and extends the area irrigated by a system (Uphoff 1986; 24-30). Yet, in programmes meant to promote farmers' participation, the farmers are rarely given sufficient scope to exhibit their imagination and innovativeness (Sengupta 1991). In particular, the necessity of design modification is not attended to even in turnover programmes. By citing a few cases of the existing user-friendly designs we hope to show how appropriate system designs facilitate imaginative use and help attain the best results. Unfortunately, we will have to restrict our discussion mostly to the gravity tank systems since this is the only design which has been studied in some detail.



The need is for a holistic approach. User-friendly irrigation systems are not necessarily distinct units. They are designs which may as well be incorporated in the existing 'modern' systems to make them user-friendly. Several interesting features still lie undiscovered in the farmer-managed traditional systems, and can help in making suitable alternations to the modern systems to make them user-friendly. These are the systems which have withstood the test of time, and important lessons on sustainability can be learnt by studying them. The learning process must be made widespread.

friendly' by allowing the farmers to get out of the rigid bureaucratic control of a centralised management system. Farmers will not be dependent for their day-to-day water on the operation of the main system, but will be able to get their supplies from the auxiliary works. This is certainly a very commendable approach. Author's suggestion that all types of water conservation and water management structures should be considered as potential candidates for irrigation systems to be developed is also a welcome proposition.

While canvassing for an integrated approach on these lines, the author has forgotten to take note of the Indian experience of some of the integrated designs which have already been implemented in

India. The Vaigai Modernization Project in Tamil Nadu which was recently completed with the support of the World Bank has strengthened hundreds of traditional tanks and interlinked them through a network of feeder channels drawing water from the main river. The cascade system of Bandharas on the Panchagana river in Maharashtra is fed by the controlled releases of water from a large storage dam on the upstream at Radhanagari. Inclusion of the evaluation of the impacts of such integrated patterns already existing on the ground would have made the treatise much more illuminating.

The philosophy of conjunctive use of surface water and ground water together has also not received adequate attention

In most modern canal irrigation projects, economy in water use is attained by introducing rotational delivery methods. However, rotational delivery is supplier-controlled and a mismatch between demand and supply cannot be avoided. This leads to overuse and under-irrigation, and also results in lower productivity of crops and increase in salinity of soil. In user-controlled systems, the non-correspondence between supply and demand is avoidable, so much so that such modifications have been recommended to increase the efficiency of even the modern canal systems.

One such alternate design to overcome the supply problem is to make provisions for auxiliary storages (internal storage) or farm-service reservoirs at the turnout level that can temporarily store water during excess supply and non-critical crop growth periods. Thereafter the farmers may be allowed to use the water whenever they feel the need.

in the treatise. The philosophy of conjunctive use is already enshrined in India's National Water Policy. The Central Water Commission formally checks up how far the surface waters have been considered for use together with the ground water from the irrigation command area before accepting a project. This approach has considerable impact on the phenomenon of water logging and salinity, but this aspect has not been covered in this treatise. In the matter of salinity control, the work of the Central Soil Salinity Research Institute at Karnal in Haryana has been the path setting one. It also ought to have been properly taken note of in a treatise like this.

The author has treated the user friendly designs almost as synonymous with the physical arrangements which can enable farmers' participation in the management of the irrigation supplies. Peoples' participation in water management is one of the declared objectives of the National

While attempting a comprehensive nation-wide treatment of the subject, the author appears to have been constrained by the published reference material and had apparently not much of an opportunity to check some of the local details with the irrigation managers in the field. For example, Bandharas are not always associated with the Phad system and certainly not in the Kolhapur district. Similarly, use of water by lifts is generally considered as an abstraction and not as a diversion.

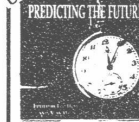
Water Policy. But that is not only a question of physical design and layout. The administrative, legal and institutional framework has a great role to play. In that context, the role of the local authorities like the Gram Panchayats in the past, and their expected role in the future with the increased emphasis on decentralisation, will need considerably greater attention. When the subject of user friendly designs is discussed under the chapter of 'Management and Use', the readers will expect the authors' analysis of the existing "barriers" that came in the way of the proper management of the small-scale irrigation works by the farmers and will get disappointed.

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On the whole the book makes interesting reading and succeeds in making a powerful plea for greater attention to the small size traditional systems, which account for 14 per cent of the net irrigated area in the country. The book is a valuable addition to the current literature on irrigation and is a timely contribution in the year in which the subject for national debate on the Water Resources Day in India is "Performance Assessment of the Water Resources Development".

Dr M.A. Chitale is currently Secretary General of International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage. He was formerly Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, Government of India (1989-92).

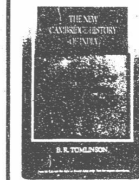
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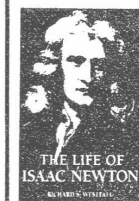
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Overlooking Research Extension Linkages

Shyamal Roy

TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE: EXPERIENCE OF AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES

Edited by N.C.B. Nath and L. Misra

Indus Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 376, Rs. 100.00

The book represents proceedings of two workshops held on the above subject between October 1988 and November 1989 at New Delhi, supported by IDRC Regional Office for South Asia. Leading agricultural scientists from Indian agricultural universities were invited to present papers on a wide range of topics connected with agricultural research and development in India.

The book has five sections. It starts with an excellent "overview" by N.C.B. Nath, followed by a series of papers on "Agricultural Extension", "Agricultural Production Systems", "Post Production Systems" and "Human Resource Development". Under each section, the work carried out by leading agricultural universities in India is discussed.

The papers under the last four sections mentioned above are very informative. They bring out in detail the research-development networks that exist in India and in different states; they highlight the agricultural research being carried out on crops, post-harvest technologies and in the area of human resource development by different state universities and how the knowledge thus gained is being disseminated. The papers however lack analytical rigour. They are more in the nature of annual reports where the research work is reported in a routine manner. They basically mirror the point of view of the university researchers. The critical issues of the linkage between research and development are missing from the papers.

The issues are really something else. Despite a massive agricultural research infrastructure which has been set up in this country over a period of time, a substantial amount of research which has been generated, and the huge amount of money which has been invested, agricultural output has not increased commensurately. Why is this so? Questions that arise are: how are the research priorities determined? How meaningful is the research work? How organised is the feedback mechanism? Is there a regular monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that the feedbacks are regularly

received, actions initiated and follow up measures adopted? Also, what is the extent of involvement of the research scientist in the extension activities and in following through the output of the research to the farm level to obtain proper feedback on specific research recommendations in order to identify priority areas for research?

The crux of the problem is that the research-extension linkages in India are very weak. The scope of the university extension unit is highly limited and the national extension department, which really matters as far as dissemination is concerned, operates, by and large, independently. The reasons are not far to seek. Research and extension activities, in terms of work done, background of the personnel, outlook, experience, status, etc., are not carried out by a homogenous group. The perceptions about each other are different and, in short, characterised as one of indifference and lack of respect. Unless suitable institutional mechanisms are developed to effect a better linkage between research and extension, they will continue to work independently and impact on output growth will suffer. Presently there is lack of pressure from the environment to integrate the two activities. These critical issues have been missed out while reporting on the work done by leading agricultural universities and assessing their impact on output in this book.

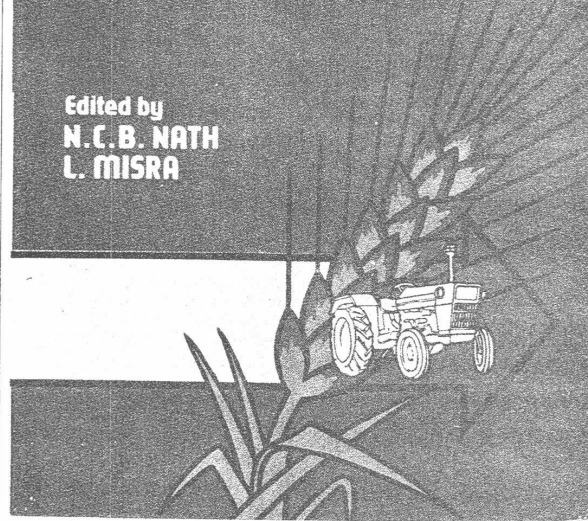
N.C.B. Nath's "overview" section is however a welcome departure. He has posed the reasons for poor productivity of agricultural research as a "challenge" that needs to be met and has raised several important issues in this regard.

For example, how does one efficiently manage such a mega system? How do you motivate people? Achieve excellence? Should one look at private effort as a supplement? Nath also focusses on the direction of research, given the presence of increasing regional disparities, ecological degradation, water management problems, etc. He cites a study to show that only a third of the research problems owe their origin to farmer problems and

Transfer of Technology in Indian Agriculture

Experience of Agricultural Universities

Edited by
N. C. B. NATH
L. MISRA



Nath focusses on the direction of research, given the presence of increasing regional disparities, ecological degradation, water management problems, etc. He cites a study to show that only a third of the research problems owe their origin to farmer problems and field observations together thereby highlighting the lack of congruence between research and customer needs.

field observations together thereby highlighting the lack of congruence between research and customer needs. Similarly, Nath raises issues on crop research, technology interfaces, watershed development, extension education and extension effort, etc. It is an extremely readable section and all policy makers should apply their minds to the issues raised by Nath before deciding on investment priorities in agricultural research.

On the whole the book is very informative. It reports on the vast array of research that is going on in the Indian agricultural universities. However, it does

not adequately address why the research output is not getting reflected in increased production at the farm level. Nath's section does bring out the important issues in this regard. This is, however, the starting point. There is a need for a sustained debate on what sort of institutional change is needed to effect a more productive linkage between research and extension, given the issues raised by Nath.

Professor Shyamal Roy is Professor and Coordinator, Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore.

Perils Of Profligacy

S. Mukherjee

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF ENERGY CONSERVATION

By P.R. Shukla, T.K. Moulik, Shrikant Modak and Pramod Deo
Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., New Delhi, 1993, pp. 150, Rs. 185.00

We seem to be marching towards the 21st century. Whether we march, run or crawl, we have little choice. As time moves on, so do we. It would, however, be interesting to imagine the shape of things to come in the next century. We are likely to fall short of one of the most vital resources—Energy. In the urban sector, power cuts will probably be routine and would lead to severe disruption of services and production. The rural sector on the other hand will also be in the grip of energy crisis mainly due to depleting supply of non-commercial biomass fuels and non-availability of cheap substitute of commercial fuels.

In the context of the present philosophy of development, the role of energy need not be emphasised. A lot has been said about their interrelation, and, by now, we are convinced that without growth in energy supply economic development or even sustenance is likely to be jeopardised. The per capita energy demand in India is low. However it has increased rapidly at a rate of about 6.7 per cent per annum between 1985 and 1990. Consequently, the demand and supply gap of electric energy is ever widening and is expected to be about 38,000 MW by 2000 AD. The additional capacity expected to nullify the demand would cost an astounding amount of Rs. 120,000 crores to be invested within the next four years or so. In view of the resource crunch in the country and limited inflow of funds from international financing agencies, we seem to be in for a massive energy crisis.

What do we do? It is apparent that we will not be able to bridge the gap between the demand and the supply of energy completely, but we can obviously lessen the gap. The book under review highlights the policies and strategies of energy conservation. *Strategic Management of Energy Conservation* is a synthesis of a decade of research of four scholars, Shukla, Moulik, Modak and Deo, having expertise in different disciplines and equipped with wide ranging experience.

In India about 37 per cent of the energy produced is consumed by industries, followed by transport (31 per cent), household (18 per cent), agriculture (10 per cent) and the balance by miscellaneous sectors. It was in the 1960s that the major

energy intensive industries were either established or received the impetus to their growth. Since then the growth of the industries were moderate but the demand for energy increased steadily mainly because the concept of energy conservation never crystallized in Indian industries. The book rightly focusses on the strategic management of energy conservation in the industries. Two chapters of the book are devoted towards the analysis of government policies related to energy conservation including the systems of energy pricing and fuel substitution. A strategic management framework for energy conservation has also been elaborated in a separate chapter.

Strategic Management of Energy Conservation is packed with informative statistical data painstakingly collected, analysed and presented in a "ready to use" form. However, the most charming section of the book relates to the case studies for three industries, namely, Madras Refineries, Ashoke Organic and Silver Cotton Mills. Though the reasons for selecting these diversified industries have not been stated, the case studies throw ample light on the status and philosophy of energy conservation in India. These three cases indicate varying levels and nature of response of management towards energy conservation. Two common factors, perceived by the authors, for positive response of energy conservation seems to be, cost effectiveness and commitment of the top management. These factors may not be 'that common' for the rest of the industries. However, on the other hand, the conclusion that the major barrier to energy conservation is related to the lack of any "felt need" appear to be more appropriate in the Indian scenario.

The authors rightly point out that amongst all the policy measures for energy conservation, the most potent method is probably pricing. Before 1973, commercial energy was cheap and abundant. Its increasing consumption helped usher in the very process of development and changing lifestyles that made the economy energy intensive. Along with the routine upward revision of energy pricing the government has also supported higher rate of energy consumption over decades, especially amongst the

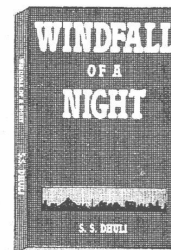
middle class population comprising nearly 200 million people. It is definitely a luxury we cannot afford. One more important reason why the government policy of higher pricing of energy to cut down consumption or induce conservation met with only a limited success is: even now we pay much less for energy than what it really costs. Say for example, the electricity pricing is based on average cost plus minimum 3 per cent return of the invested capital. The average costs do not include the tangible or intangible cost of environmental degradation and consequent health problems, the displacement of population for siting of the projects etc. If these costs are also taken in a logical matrix, the energy would cost much more than it is priced today.

After a detailed analysis, the authors conclude that there is a substantial scope for energy conservation, upto 18 per cent, in India. At the same time, based on audits in 200 industries, Inter Ministerial Working Group envisaged energy saving potential upto 25 per cent with an investment of Rs 3.6 billion and an annual saving of about Rs 2 billion. It has been estimated that the same amount of energy generation would cost about Rs. 6 billion. Statistically these figures are impressive but one wonders how feasible these measures are. The authors present an example where they point out that by using better coal, improving the Plant Load Factor (PLF) and reducing Transmission and Distribution (T&D) losses, a

410 MW station can deliver 181 MW to customers which is being done at present through 600 MW station. This is rather easier said than done. Though there is no doubt that better coal (washed coal) would improve the net efficiency of stations by about 4 per cent, setting up of washery for 410 MW would alone cost about Rs. 126 million. Moreover the coal washing has other environmental implications, which if taken into account, would shoot up the washing cost substantially. Reduction of T&D losses is also a gigantic task especially when CEA statistics itself reveals that it increased from 14.5 in 1970-71 to about 21.5 per cent in 1987-88 and seems to be fairly stable since then. To reduce T&D losses to a desirable 15 per cent would require an additional Rs. 41 million supposing no theft from the transmission system. One would tend to agree that such suppositions are too idealistic under the present Indian scenario.

Though one may not always agree with certain conclusions or statistical data presented in the book, it is probably one of the first to attempt to provide a strategic perspective to energy conservation in industries. The book is, and, will remain, a valuable reference to researchers working in the field of energy conservation. I only wish that the book were a little cheaper than what it is.

Dr. S. Mukherjee is a popular science writer and environmentalist. He works for a large public sector undertaking.



DELIGHTFUL READING

— A COMPULSIVE BOOK

The hero of the novel is Chakravarti, a young Officer in the State Government of Isla Bueno (a fictitious State in India, created by the author) where politicians and bureaucrats rule the roost, making deals and raking in money. Chakravarti, the bent PA to the Health Secretary, is immensely benefited by the deals made by his bosses, until one day when he is falsely accused of betraying

a sensitive document. He is suspended, harassed and threatened by his politician and bureaucrat bosses. For an enterprisingly canny man like Chakravarti this setback proves to be only Godsend, as he finally outwits everyone and becomes a politician himself.

An engrossing book, which demands to be read in one sitting.

Paradoxes Of Politics

Kalim Bahadur

POLITICS OF ISLAMISATION IN PAKISTAN: A STUDY OF ZIA REGIME

By Surendra Nath Kaushik

South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1993, pp. xii + 208, price not stated.

The origins of the demand for a separate state for Muslims in the Indian subcontinent which ultimately evolved into the demand for Pakistan are riddled with much academic controversy. Did the idea of Pakistan emerge from the commitment of Indian Muslims to an Islamic State in the subcontinent? Dr. Kaushik, author of the very well researched monograph under review, seems to think so. Did the Muslim League led by M.A. Jinnah conceive of Pakistan as an Islamic State? Was Pakistan to be an Islamic State as propounded by Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi, the founder of the Jamaat-i-Islami movement in the Indian subcontinent or the State as built by Ayatullah Khomeini in Iran? These are some of the other questions which need to be addressed while discussing Islamisation and politics in Pakistan.

There is ample evidence to show that the founding father of the new State M.A. Jinnah's vision of Pakistan was that of a democratic secular state which would be naturally influenced by Islamic laws and culture as the overwhelming majority of the population would be Muslim. Throughout the period after the passing of the Pakistan Resolution in 1940 and the partition of the subcontinent in August 1947 Jinnah avoided the term 'Islamic State' and instead used the 'Muslim State'. One of the most eminent Pakistani jurists Mohammad Munir in his famous Report had asserted that Jinnah stood for a modern democratic state with sovereignty resting in the people and the members of the nation having equal rights of citizenship regardless of their religion, caste or creed.

There could be no better proof of this than Jinnah's oft-quoted speech at the inaugural session of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947. Most fundamentalists in Pakistan have tried to either ignore that speech or just misinterpret it. This was the dilemma of Pakistani leaders who were western educated and believed in the separation of the State and religion. However, they had used Islamic slogans to mobilise the Muslims and made them believe that

Pakistan would be an Islamic State. After Pakistan came into existence its leaders paid lip sympathy to Islam but implemented very little Islamisation in the country.

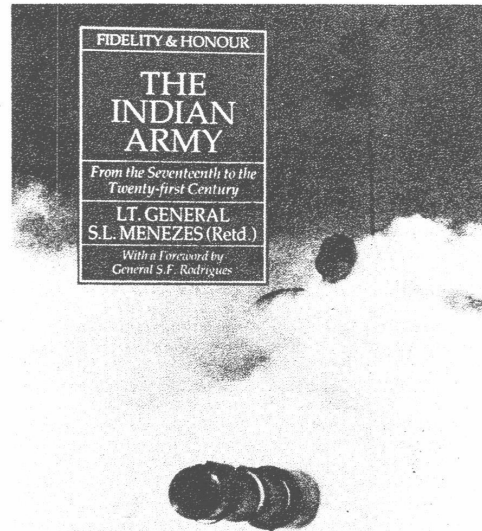
General Zia's military regime during the eighties was the first in the history of Pakistan which put before itself the objective of Islamising the country. Kaushik's work aims at studying General Zia's military rule and his clamour about Islamisation of the country. He draws the theoretical framework of his study with an analysis of Islam's relationship with politics. He has rightly pointed out that throughout history, Muslims, like other people who live in complex civilizations, have evinced paradoxical tendencies in relation to politics. In dissident movements, Islam has sometimes played a crucial role by galvanizing group support for opposition leaders around reformist, and often also puritanical creeds, attacking the corruption and profligacy of the ruling elite.

Kaushik has not gone into an analysis of why military intervention in politics takes place mostly in Third World countries but he has correctly pointed out that in Pakistan the military has imagined itself to be the sole alternative to the political leaders and has arrogated to itself the title to intervene to set matters right whenever the politicians mess them up.

General Zia had taken over power in July 1977 and had promised to hold elections within 90 days. Eventually it took almost eleven years before his rule came to an abrupt end when he died in an air accident. During this period General Zia launched several well publicised measures of Islamisation. At one stage he was claiming to have the mandate of God to cleanse Pakistan's social life and bring in real Islamic society. But in conclusion Kaushik has rightly pointed out that General Zia was neither a politician nor a religious leader in the true sense. He was basically a military General who capitalized on Islam and Islamisation to prolong his transitional martial law regime. His... "crusade for Islamization only brought about unprecedented political turmoil, ethnic and sectarian violence and socio-economic degeneration".

Surendra Nath Kaushik's study is a valuable addition to the literature on a very significant topic of the contemporary world.

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Fidelity and Honour

Maj. Gen. D.K. Palit (Retd.)

THE INDIAN ARMY FROM THE SEVENTEENTH TO THE TWENTYFIRST CENTURY

By Lt Gen. S.L. Menezes

Viking, Penguin India, 1993, pp. 625, Rs. 295.00

A conspicuous (and often embarrassing) characteristic of Indian chroniclers, in particular military historians and commentators, is the high element of self-praise in their assertions: "Our Army is the best in the world" (or "among the best", if a degree of restraint is exercised); "Our officers are second to none"; "Our soldiers are the bravest in the world"; and similar unrestrained over-claims. Nor is it only our chroniclers who indulge in such extravagance; even our Chiefs and other brass do not hesitate to boast about their Services whenever the occasion arises. Such testimonials can hold credibility, of course, only if they are furnished not by ourselves but by others—observers from outside. By any standards ours is a proven Army; it has a good record going back for three centu-

ries. It should not be necessary, therefore, to have to make exaggerated claims on its behalf. Only alienists and other behavioural experts can explain such unnecessary and endemic displays of self-praise.

It is all the more refreshing therefore to find an Indian soldier—and high brass at that—regaling us with a balanced and objective account of the development of the Indian Army from its notional inception three hundred years ago to the nineteen-nineties. General Menezes' book is a *tour de force* of research and record, free of the usual bombast or boast and, despite its nearly six hundred pages of exposition, never dull or heavy reading.

There have been a number of histories of our Army in the past fifty years or more, most written by the British—and a noteworthy one by an Indian (Colonel V.

Longer)—but none based on such painstaking research from primary and other sources. Furthermore, General Menezes' book is a scholarly review of the various factors and circumstances that have formed the ethos and the unique character of the Indian Army as it was in the British days and as it is today.

In the first two chapters the author recounts the circumstances of the early sepoy forces as they progressed from irregular companies in the Bombay and Madras Presidency Armies of the Hon'ble East India Company to the first regular battalion (the "Lal Paltan") reorganised in the Bengal Army by Clive in 1757, though in the process command and responsibility gradually passed from the old Indian Commandants to European officers. Even thereafter, despite the high performance of Indian troops in the Maratha wars of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, there was a retrogressive diminution in the trust and faith placed in Indian officers, who were inexorably relegated to positions of semi-irrelevance as subedars and jemadars, their authority limited to strictly unit matters. Even this diminishment of Indian commanders would not have so greatly affected the morale of the army had the British officers retained their former rapport with their men and their charismatic leadership qualities. Unfortunately this was not the case. A number of factors resulted in regimental appointments being taken by second-rate, disinterested officers, some even scornful of their "native" charges; the older and able officers had been siphoned off by the demands of an expanding civil and administrative machinery as territorial expansion replaced trade as the Hon'ble Company's main business. When this deterioration in the quality of their British officers sank to the level of acts of cowardice and dereliction of duty (as in the First Afghan War) and by the embezzlement of men's funds by their officers (a common enough form of corruption) the old officer-man camaraderie and mutual esteem collapsed—never to be fully restored in the post-1857 armies.

Loss of respect for their British officers because of the latter's indifference, corrupt practices and general drop in standards was perhaps the main cause of the Great Rebellion of 1857; but what has never been adequately understood is how the dutiful, loyal and trustworthy sepoys of the Company could have suddenly taken up arms against their officers on such a massive, determined and savage scale. There were, of course, strong religious and social grievances, yet the sudden turning of the men against their erstwhile *mai-baaps* is difficult fully to comprehend in the context of the times.

In this respect an interesting contribution by the author is a chapter on the numerous mutinies (and "alleged" mutinies) by the Company's European officers and troops, emulated subsequently by Indian sepoys of the three Presidency

One who has had some experience of many of the major armies of the world can unhesitatingly claim that there is no other private soldier in the world who so uncomplainingly, loyally and willingly faces hard work, hardship and even death as the peasant-warrior of India, of whatever caste or creed. That is why the one assertion that can be made about the Indian Army and that would not be a boast or an over-claim, is the sentiment expressed in the author's dedication at the beginning of this volume: "To the soldier of the Indian Army, Better than the Best in the World."

armies during the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth. Based on books and accounts published in recent years, General Menezes has provided us with the contemporary background culture in the army—a proclivity for demands and protests—that is not widely known. Furthermore, it is almost a shock to learn that as far as the white element in "John" Company's forces were concerned (who displayed their mutinous proclivity from the very beginning) in many cases they mutinied successfully, in that their indiscipline resulted in grievances being redressed. For example, in 1763, European troops (British, French and other Continentals) of the Company's forces stationed on the border of Bihar and Oudh, mutinied in protest against blatant embezzlement of their funds by the Company's Council members. At one point European troops even went at their commanding officer with fixed bayonets; but in the end they won out; and payments were made to the troops. Yet, when Indian battalions sought to follow the lead given by European troops, mildly protesting disparities in amounts paid to European and Indian troops, they were put down harshly; a subedar accused of inciting his men was condemned to death and blown from the muzzle of a gun.

The worst atrocity committed on Indian sepoys occurred at Barrackpore in 1824—proto-Jalianwalla in its ferocity. When the 47th regiment of the Bengal Army, beset by genuine administrative problems and religious grievances, refused to force-march from Barrackpore to Burma (all the way across the Gangetic delta of Bengal and the Arakan Yomas) the British Service Commander-in-Chief, General Paget, ignoring shameful petitions by the sepoys, had them surrounded by European regiments and opened artillery fire on them without any prior warning. The memory of that wanton massacre could not have been forgotten by the sepoys when, thirty-three years later, they finally decided that they had had enough.

And indeed they had endured much, particularly after the Afghan and Sikh wars: ill-treatment by officers; cuts in allowance while still serving thousands of miles from their presidencies; and religious slights. A host of eminent British personages such as General Napier, Henry Lawrence, Sir John Shore, the Duke of Wellington and others were able, more clearly than the Council, to perceive that

the whole Indian military scene was moving inexorably towards catastrophe. Shore, an ex-Governor-General, recorded: "I have lived long among the people of India to witness their sufferings, and to become acquainted . . . with their feelings . . . and I am convinced that a crisis is not far distant . . . because of our own short-sighted extortion and misgovernment." The calculated public humiliation of Indian troops by Lt Col. Carmichael Smyth at Meerut on 9th May was only the spark that set alight an inflammable mass of sepoy resentment in North India.

More interesting, and less known, than the many pre-1857 mutinies is the fact that during the century of the East India Company's rule in the three presidencies, there was widespread discontent of the civilian population, often resulting in serious disturbances that necessitated the use of the Company's troops in internal security roles. The author lists some thirty instances—including such major ones as the Sanyasi Rebellion in Bengal, 1763-73; the subjugation of Raja Chait Singh of Benares (1781); major troop commitments in Travancore and Cochin in 1804; the grave Benares riots of 1809-18; operations against the Pindaris (in which at one time 120,000 regular troops were deployed); the Bharatpur succession dispute, resulting in the capture of that redoubtable fort by Lord Combermere (1826); the campaign against fundamentalist Wahhabis (1850); and the campaign against the Moplahs in the south.

The author's summary of the various changes and reorganisations in the post-rebellion era is interesting (and contains tid-bits of information not generally known). The change in recruitment policy discarding (predictably) the high-caste Gangetic valley manpower pool of the Bengal Army who rebelled, and (unaccountably) the lower caste men from Madras who didn't—in favour of the middle-caste men from the north who had sided with the British (and who were, as a reward for their services, henceforth to be referred to as "the martial races"); the gradual fusing of the four armies (the three presidency ones and the Hyderabad contingent) into one; and the Kitchener era "commands" system. A piece of information dug up from the archives that the present reviewer has learned for the first time is that at one stage (1886) "Indian battalions were linked together in groups of three, or sometimes two, battalions each, on the lines of the 1872

Cardwell system of the British Army. . . . The linked battalions could thus supply trained men to the battalions in the field. . . ."

The political developments during the Great War—the "Ghadr" and "Khalifat" movements—and the inter-war period of nationalistic fervour as well as the Indianisation of the officer cadre take us up to the Second World War. It was then that the Indian officer finally came into his own—in the mass if not in individual responsibility. An interesting side-light on that period is the part played by Hitler-inspired Forces and Japanese-inspired Forces (HIFs and JIFs); it appears from the General's account that their overall effect, especially the I.N.A.'s was more significant than has generally been believed.

In contrast to the rest of the text, the final chapters dealing with partition and independence seem unnecessarily long and heavy with accounts of political developments that have been too well recorded to have needed restatement in a work of this nature. The space and effort could have been more usefully (and interestingly) used to make an assessment of the quality and standing of the Indian Army as it is today compared to its status under the British raj. A great transformation has been allowed to pass uncommented—the transformation from a second-class, underarmed, back-up colonial force in the context of imperial requirements to international standing as a modern military force, armed and equipped with the latest that technological progress has to offer. Sociological changes within the Army also merit mention; the eclipse of the old upper-class, elitist officer cadre to be replaced by one based on the whole economic spectrum of society, thus fostering a more egalitarian culture in the officer ranks—and also a more highly professional cadre than the old cultists of the then fashionable, British-aping amateurism.

Mercifully the one thing that has remained unchanged is the Indian fighting man in the ranks, the incomparable Indian jawan. One who has had some experience of many of the major armies of the world can unhesitatingly claim that there is no other private soldier in the world who so uncomplainingly, loyally and willingly faces hard work, hardship and even death as the peasant-warrior of India, of whatever caste or creed. That is why the one assertion that can be made about the Indian Army and that would not be a boast or an over-claim, is the sentiment expressed in the author's dedication at the beginning of this volume: "To the soldier of the Indian Army, Better than the Best in the World."

Maj. Gen. D.K. Palit, a former Director of Military Operations, is a noted Military historian and the author of over a dozen books including War in the Deterrent Age and War in High Himalaya, The Indian Army in Crisis, 1962.

Words Raised To The Power of Two

Rukmini Bhaya Nair

REDUPLICATION IN SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES: AN AREAL, TYPOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDY

By Anvita Abbi

Allied Publishers, Delhi, 1992, pp. 193, Rs. 200.00

In the first decade of this century, Rabindranath Tagore noted a linguistic phenomenon in Bengali which so fascinated him that he devoted two whole chapters of his book *Sabda-Tatva* (Theory of Words) to it, ending with the appeal-

I shall be greatly obliged if scholars of Marathi, Hindi, and other Indo-Aryan languages take up a comparison of similar double-words in their languages with those in Bengali.

Anvita Abbi's book *Reduplication*, published in the closing years of this century, now at last responds substantially to Tagore's long neglected request. Hers is as thorough and linguistically informed an investigation of those mysterious 'double-words' as anyone could wish for. However, I cannot help thinking that Tagore himself would have been quite startled by some of Abbi's findings; he thought, for example, that reduplication was characteristic of the Indo-Germanic languages and particularly prolific in Bengali. Not so, argues Abbi convincingly. Reduplication, as it is found in Bengali and other Indian languages as diverse as Tamil and Kabui, is a linguistic trait inherited from the proto-Munda, Austric languages prevalent on the sub-continent before the Aryan invasion and even before the Dravidian settlements.

It is not the least of the merits of this book that it pushes back our historical memories to a period (circa 3000 B.C.) before Sanskrit came to dominate our cultural consciousness. Even Tagore, a sophisticated, if untrained, thinker on linguistic issues, could not conceive of contiguities between the Indian languages that did not derive from 'Aryan' roots. Focussing on reduplication allows Abbi to show that Apabhramsa, the prakrits and their descendants the modern Indian languages Punjabi, Gujarati, Hindi, etc. were not in fact all that dominant or self-contained. They were profoundly influenced by their contact with the Austric, Dravidian and Tibeto-Burman languages, just as these languages in turn absorbed certain grammatical features from their Indo-European neighbours.

A continuous process of what Abbi aptly describes as 'contact, conflict and compromise' between these four language families finally resulted in the South Asian region developing a fairly stable

character as 'one' linguistic zone or area. Give and take, it turns out, is as important between languages as it should be between people. As every linguist knows, most languages within the sub-continental zone have by now acquired some syntactic properties (e.g. SOV word-order), lexical traits (e.g. verbal compounding), phonetic features (e.g. retroflexion) and pragmatic functions (e.g. use of honorifics, conversational particles) in common. To this select list, Abbi adds reduplication.

But, before any reader of this review agrees to enter such thick mists of linguistic terminology, s/he may wish to ask *What is reduplication?* Why on earth should I spend any time at all reading about an esoteric phenomenon of interest only to language specialists? Well, the second question can be partly answered by pointing out that, as Tagore was quick to grasp, 'double-words' are important because they are rhythmic and expressive. As such, they add greatly to the literary resources of a society, to its poetry and song. Words of this type have more than a narrowly linguistic significance because they contribute both to establishing cultural bonds *within* a community and to defining cultural boundaries that *separate* a community from others that do not use this means of rapport.

Now, Tagore's evidence must always be taken seriously when it comes to culture, yet we cannot assess its proper worth unless we can first identify cases of reduplication in the language(s) around us. Which returns us to our initial query, which can be answered, to begin with, only by a) illustration, b) conducting a thought-experiment or two.

Here are some of Abbi's illustrations taken for convenience here, all from Hindi: *gar gar* (thundering sound), *cham cham* (shining, twinkling), *chat-pata* (tangy taste), *roti-voti* (bread, etc.), *khana pina* (eating drinking), *dekhte dekhte* (seeing seeing), *jagah jagah* (place place, everywhere), *bari bari* (big big, more than one big object), *kali kali* (black black, very black), *pehla pehla* (first first, the very first), *ghante ghante* (hour hour, hourly).

It is apparent from this list that the doubling of words in Hindi, a representative Indian language, is very widespread. Describing aspects of time, referential objects and sense perceptions, it performs

'This is my very first (first) love'

Hindi:	yāh mera pāhla-pāhla pyar he
Assamese:	ei tu mār prātham mārām [-RF]
Bengali:	ei ta amar protham bhalo baśa [-RF]
Dakhini:	ye mera pāhla pāhla pyar he
Dogri:	e mera pella pella pyar e
Gujarati:	a mharo pelo pelo prem che
Konkani:	o mazo poilo-voilo (echo form) mog asa
Kashmiri:	yi chu m'on godnyu kui kui pyar/yi chu mo:n nov novUy lo:l
Marathi:	he majha pāhla-pāhla pāhla pāhla prem ahe
Maithili:	i hāmā pāhli pāhli prem achl
Oriya:	ye mār prātham prātham pyar āte
Punjabi:	e sada pela pela pyar hān
Sindhi:	hī mijo pehro pehro/pehro pehro pyar ahe
Sadai:	i mor pāhla pāhla chāUa (child) hol-ak
Kabui:	mai hai xum pol-ak cui (pol-ak) cuimai nac (this is my first child)
Meitei:	māsi āgi ihanhanbā nunsibāni
Paite:	hlyei kei it māsk (first) pen pen āhi [-RF]
Thado:	Not available
Kharia:	Not available
Mundari:	alye sīda sīda ren hun (this is my first child)
Khasi:	Not available
Kannada:	idu nanna moda modalaneya pri:ti
Malayalam:	Not available
Kurukh:	i eghay pāhla pāhla peyar hkkke
Tamil:	idō ennućyē mudā mudā kadā
Telugu:	ide naa motta modati prema

a number of indispensable linguistic functions. Furthermore, sometimes reduplicatives are fully repeated, sometimes partly, sometimes they belong to a noun or nominal group, sometimes to a verbal; in other words, they have differing structures.

The linguist's task is to introduce some order into such apparently chaotic variety by using theoretical categories of description, and by showing how *function* and *structure* dovetail to create characteristic patterns within or across languages. When s/he is able to do this successfully, the 'ordinariness' of language is transformed into something 'rich and strange', a measure of human intellectual ability. At the level of meta-theory, therefore, the linguist must also argue for the cognitive or social *significance* of the facts that her theory accounts for. In the following paragraphs, I shall try to assess how Abbi meets these challenges in her study of reduplicatives. Although it is indubitably the case that Abbi's book is primarily meant for professional linguists, this review is intended for the general reader. It will therefore concentrate less on the technical aspects of Abbi's analysis than on her general themes.

The 'thought-experiments' I mentioned earlier may be relevant to these general claims. Consider the following situation. You are in a foreign country, and you hear a stranger say "Waiting waiting here all morning I've got so tired. They didn't even bother to offer us any *chai-vai*". Now, regardless of whether or

not you view the grammar of these sentences as satisfactory, the chances are high, if you are a native speaker of at least one Indian language, that you will both identify the speaker as an Indian, and understand his meaning quite clearly.

From the imaginative exercise we have conducted above, we can surmise that that a form like a reduplicative works as an *identity-maker*, as well as a *sense-indicator*. Persons with an insider's view of India as a socio-linguistic area, can immediately monitor such incoming speech and recognise, from their knowledge of their own language, that the phrase 'waiting waiting' signals long duration, while the 'echo-formation' *chai-vai* (indicates 'tea etc.'). So strong is this tendency towards reduplication that it even survives translation into a 'foreign' language, and gives that language a distinctive flavour, and gives the 'Indian English' example I've just cited illustrates.

Abbi draws on data from twenty-three languages to show that there are, predictably, two ways in which reduplicatives modulate sense in the South Asian languages. They either change the meaning of the verb slightly, in which case they are technically called 'aspect' markers, or of the noun, in which case they are 'modifiers'. If reduplication affects the *verb*, as for example in 'waiting waiting', it indicates simultaneity (e.g. *baitite baitite* 'as I am sitting'), non-precipitation (e.g. *barish hote hote rah gayi*—'the rain stopped just as it was about to begin'), iteration and sequentiality (e.g. *woh gane sun sun*

kar thak gaya—'he got tired listening to song after song') etc. If reduplication relates to the *noun*, as in *chai-vai*, it tells us about the subject, and can describe its taste (*khatta khatta* 'sour sour'), colour (*nila nila* 'blue blue'), size (*nanhe nanhe* 'small small'), quality (*nai nai* 'new new'), shape (*gol gol* 'round round'), quantity and number (*thora thora* 'little little', *do do* 'two two') etc. Again, the point to be made from such a detailed presentation of data is that reduplicatives have so infiltrated our grammar on this subcontinent that it would be hard today to imagine our languages without this large and extremely productive class of words.

Tracking the history of reduplicatives Abbi, as I've already mentioned, refers to the three C's—contact, conflict and compromise. I propose that there are three other C's which also describe aspects of her data; these are colour, continuity and comparison. In general, it could be said that reduplicatives are words which add colour to our languages, they emphasise sensations and dwell on nuances. This is particularly true of onomatopoeic words (e.g. *tap tap* for the sound of dripping water in Hindi, *bhaukna* for the sound of a dog's bark, etc.). Abbi herself draws attention to this aspect of reduplicatives when, following linguistic convention, she mentions the 'expressive' functions that reduplicatives perform. They make our world less dull.

As for continuity and comparison, any reader who has had the pleasure of leafing through Abbi's book will notice at once that it is replete with areal maps, charts, figures, etc. Often, these are just the parts of a book that one would choose to skip, but the maps and so on in Abbi's is a well-attested piece of research but they will also vastly entertain the curious reader. This is so because through these maps and chart (see box) a speaker of say, Tamil, can see the continuities, between her language and languages she may have hitherto considered quite 'other' such as Assamese, Meitei or Sindhi. She can compare the reduplicative cadences of her own language with an entire spectrum. She can, in effect, position or place herself in relation to other 'Indians' just by witnessing where 'her' set of reduplicatives stands in relation to those of her neighbours. In fact, I feel that it could even be argued that the simple format adopted throughout this book of placing translational equivalents in several South Asian languages side by side clearly demonstrates the thesis that the 'unity' of India is best displayed in its 'plurality'. The linguistic continuum of reduplicatives shows that though the speakers of different sub-continental languages may use different words, they share forms of talk and perhaps even of thought.

It needs to be emphasised at this point that there is no intrinsic reason why almost all the South Asian languages should use reduplicatives to standardly express nominal and verbal modulation. Alternative ways of 'saying the same thing'

could have led to reduplication being completely wiped out in many of these languages. That this seems not to have happened suggests that reduplication is indeed a durable characteristic of the languages of this region.

Accepting this basic proposition of Abbi's, however, gives rise to a really interesting question which, alas, is not dealt with in any depth in *Reduplication*, although understandably so given the subtitle of the book. This is the complex query—is the widespread phenomenon of reduplication, not just in South Asia, but across the languages of the world, a manifestation of a cognitive 'universal', a preference in the human brain to match words to world in a certain way? If so, that would provide an underlying explanation for why, once a certain area had acquired this linguistic trait, it proves to be so pervasive and resistant to change.

For a quick over-view of the basic issues to be tackled if we enter this difficult territory of cognitive habits, let us briefly consider a second thought-experiment. Imagine a child acquiring her first words. What would you expect these to be? A good guess is that we'd all come up with words like *mama*, *papa*, *dudu* (milk), *susu* (micturition), *bow-wow* or *bhau-bhau* (dog) etc. Not surprisingly, all reduplicatives. Studies by Bowerman and others have long provided persuasive evidence that reduplicatives are a feature of child-language across cultures, and that such children's vocabulary may be quite unrelated to adult usage. Abbi confirms that this is also the case in languages like Kharia and Hindi, and lists still other reduplicatives which are part of the nomenclature of children's games in Indian languages (e.g. *bazaar bazaar*, *daf-tar daftar*).

Do these facts from child language have any relevance for a cognitive perspective on reduplication? In a word, yes. Yes, they do, because they suggest that reduplicatives offer a 'natural' linguistic resource, namely repetition, for expanding a language, for practising with its rhythms and structures, and for simultaneously exploring the dual aspects of iconicity (*bow-wow*) and arbitrariness (*papa*). As Tannen has further argued, repetition is an important participatory mechanism in conversation. Reduplication, a sub-category of repetitive devices in language, thus reinforces in some way our self-preserving tendency to interact, and our socio-linguistic adeptness.

Every good book deserves a good joke or two. So, it could be said that Anvita Abbi's *Reduplication* offers incontrovertible proof that one of the few things Indians have in common is that they repeat themselves! An Orwellian nation, Indians are masters of Double-speak and Double-think. Or, it could be said that we are the original recycling culture of the world. Apart from recycling paper, bottles and so forth, we recycle souls in the process of rebirth. And now it turns out we also recycle words—*turant turant!*

Reduplication in South Asian Languages

An Areal, Typological and Historical Study

Anvita Abbi

More seriously, I would have liked to see answers in this book to certain questions left untouched like the logical possibilities of reduplication. Why, for example, is reduplication not used for forming plurals among the subcontinental languages as it is in Malay? It is not enough to point out that we possess different grammatical markers for plurality. Why did reduplication, which developed a distributive sense in the South Asian languages, not encompass plurality? Was this a prior and simpler use that was discarded? Fuller answers to enquiries of this sort will require that the cognitive implications of Abbi's data be examined more fully, and its theoretical foundations stated more explicitly. For cognitive and theoretical linguists, one of her most telling historical arguments is that reduplicated adverbials gradually replaced simple verbal reduplications. If we suppose phylogeny has consequences for ontogeny, then child language studies should exhibit this pattern and theoretical paradigms like the Chomskians should be able to account for it.

As is perhaps inevitable with the first edition of an inductively rich book like this one, there are several errors in the

transcriptions of the data and perhaps in factual detail. For instance, I noticed mistakes in the Bengali on page 64, 78 etc; and a Malayali informant tells me that Malayalam, which Abbi claims does not reduplicate colour adjectives at all has in fact many of these—*velu vela*, *cuma cuma*, *karu karu* etc. Perhaps these points can be corrected in a second printing. For, there is no doubt at all that this book deserves a second printing, not only because we Indians repeat ourselves, but because occasionally, some of us say things that are worth saying and worth repeating. With this book on reduplication, Anvita Abbi has put herself in that category of people. *Reduplication* makes exactly the kind of detailed contribution to our common culture Tagore was asking Indian scholars for in *Sabda Tatva*. I think he would have been pleased.

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Potent Play of the Pun

Poonam Trivedi

A DICTIONARY OF SHAKESPEARE'S
SEXUAL PUNS AND
THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

By Frankie Rubinstein

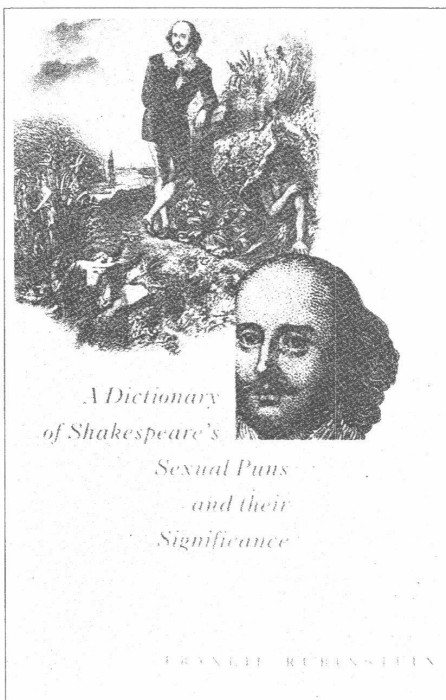
Macmillan, London, 1984, (2nd ed.)
1989, pp. 372, £35.00

While there is not much in today's permissive age that can raise an eyebrow, Frankie Rubinstein's *A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and Their Significance* still functions as an eye-opener. It takes one into the nether regions of the bawdy/body of the English language as used by Shakespeare to reveal and revel in the multiple play of meaning encoded in seemingly innocuous words.

A well-known, much used book, its revised edition is a welcome re-issue and not just because it enables more individuals and libraries to stock up on what has become an indispensable reference guide for the general reader and the scholar/critic alike. The revised edition of the dictionary extends Rubinstein's forensic treatment more extensively to the sonnets, unearths more new puns, corrects and amplifies older entries, incorporating it all in a revised index.

It thus presents the most comprehensive survey of puns, quibbles, slang and wordplay of sexual colouration published so far: it has more than twice as many entries as Eric Partridge's pioneering *Shakespeare's Bawdy*. It also extends Partridge's definition of 'bawdy': from just the terms related to the 'act' to all "the erotic practices of heterosexuals, homosexuals (including lesbians), perverts, castrates and the impotent." It further includes the scatological and the ethnic pun usually couched in the sexually snide. Charting such hidden depths, the uninitiated reader is startled at the ubiquity of sexual quibble and euphemism and not a little disconcerted to find that very common words can carry an uncommon and seamy Other. 'Altar' means arse, for instance, 'brains' is excrement, 'chin' is penis, 'caterpillar' is pederast, 'dulcet' becomes testicles, 'foot' is copulate, 'froth' is semen, 'cheer' is defecation, 'cat' is prostitute, 'gown' is cunt, 'grace' is penis and vulva, 'lean' is pimp, 'milk' is masturbate, 'pretty' is buttocks, and so on and on. It is unfamiliar territory and delving into the dictionary becomes an amusing exposure of one's own inhibitions for there seem to be no limits to the dark underside of the English language.

Yet Rubinstein's *Dictionary* stops short of becoming a peep-show into the pruri-



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ent. The sexual is here explicated in an impressive scholarly apparatus. Each usage of a pun is cited and illustrated by copious quotations from the plays and poems. Pithy critical comments are interspersed which neatly dovetail the disruptive and arcane variants of meaning into the main themes of the texts, conclusively demonstrating that the pun is "intrinsic, not accessory to Shakespeare's thought." Thus many puzzling obscurities which traditional annotation fails to clarify begin to show a meaningful interface with the recovery of their punning dimensions. For example, the seemingly arbitrary references to one 'Deformed' by the Second Watch in *Much Ado About Nothing*, who goes 'up and down like a gentleman' and who 'wears a key in his ear and a lock hanging by it,' are usually explained by their verbal association with Borachio's statement, 'But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?' as furthering the central theme of error or misprecision in the play. However, Rubinstein unfolds a range of sexual meanings for this cluster of terms: 'deformed'

is a castrate, fig. impotent, effeminate; 'fashion' (Fr. *Taille*, fashion, a cutting) is a cut (gelding), or a cut-tail; 'up and down' is pimp; 'key' and 'lock' genitals; 'ear-lock' is a badge of infamy, effeminacy, vanity. These show that the references to 'Deformed' who is roaming free in Messina are, as Rubinstein puts it, "a parody of the play's effeminate lovers,": Claudio, called 'Lord Lackbeard' and Benedict of the 'little wit' (wit is penis) and 'double' (bisexual) 'tongues.'

Interpretative insights are provided when *double entendres* reveal inner motivations. The realisation that 'oil' means semen makes more palpable Falstaff's sexual frustration at the end of *The Merry Wives Of Windsor*: "I think the devil will not have me damned, lest the oil that's in me should set hell on fire," particularly, as 'damned' refers to not possessing a woman. It also gives a piquant edge to an earlier description of Falstaff by one of the wives in which 'oil' is not merely fat: 'This whale, with so many tuns of oil in his belly . . . I think the best way were to entertain him with hope, till the wicked

fire of lust have melted him in his own grease.' Falstaff, as Rubinstein comments, is the sperm-whale, filled with spermaceti, fatty substance used for candles etc, who when entertained (sexually), even merely with hope, melts (experiences an orgasm) in sheer anticipation.

Nuggets of scholarship abound, almost at random. For instance, the entry on 'mud(dy)' adds in parenthesis the little known fact that the name of possibly the most foulmouthed fool in Shakespeare, Lavache, in *All's Well That Ends Well* is, aptly, a corruption of French *lavage* = slops, puddle, water-pool.

The sexual pun via Rubinstein, then, becomes an instrument of subversion, an example of what Terry Eagleton calls Shakespeare's 'textual productivity,' where the restless play of meaning in an unshakable metaphorical flow and flamboyant running threatens and overturns the accepted stability of signs. Conventionally plain and innocent terms can harbour disruptive areas of darkness. They certainly explode the canonised myth of the establishment Shakespeare, of the profound truth-teller somehow above it all. For the pages of Rubinstein's *Dictionary* conjure a more earthy, ribald and populist poet, not only totally *au fait* with sexologies and scatologies of all kinds, but also relishing and larding all situations with an almost incredible vulgarity.

Yet, curiously, the net impact of all this scholarship is a paradoxical sense of reduction even within the enormous expansion of multiple sexual connotations. All the thousand odd entries (about ten per cent of Shakespeare's vocabulary) are reduced to around ten terms referring to largely, the sexual act, sexual organs (male and female), accessories to the act, emotions related to the act and the scatological parts and functions. While the materiality of human life cannot be denied, bawdy/body equations can in no way substitute for the vast gamut of the perception and response of the human mind. One need not be guilty of literalism and find all Shakespearean characters behaving like sex-maniacs (and occasionally the dictionary does come dangerously close to this), to assert that the sexual is only one of the human drives.

Finally, it is with some sense of disappointment that one finds Frankie Rubinstein, though hailing from Bryn Mawr, a nursery of radical feminism, failing to problematise the issue of bawdy which in the dictionary has a markedly masculinist thrust. Or is the fact that, contrary to popular belief, she has recovered more terms for male rather than female bawdy in Shakespeare, an overturning of the sexist tables of traditional Shakespeare studies?

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The Family Tree

H.Y. Sharada Prasad

THE UPROOTED

By S.L. Bhyrappa. Translation by K. Raghavendra Rao of Kannada Novel *Vamsha Vriksha*
B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1992, pp. 341, Rs. 140.00

Vamsha Vriksha created a sensation when it appeared in the early Sixties. Its intensity, its narrative force and its concern for values won wide acclaim, and the novel's artlessness was overlooked. Bhyrappa, prolific in his output since, has come to be recognised as a major figure in contemporary Kannada literature.

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It is a novel with numerous characters, but only one stands out, Srinivasa Shrothri. He is portrayed as a symbol of the traditional culture. Fortunately he is not a stereotype *shita-prajna* who maintains his poise in joy and sorrow, but a human being who struggles with his emotions and steadily grows in stature. His values might come from the ancient books, but his character is the fruit of his own action. In the end Shrothri emerges as one of the tallest creations of contemporary Indian fiction.

Early in life Shrothri acquired a strong sense of dharma and karma. He had married young and was advised, after the birth of a son, to abstain from sex with his wife because of her health. Believing as he does that the only purpose of sex is to obtain progeny to perpetuate the family tree, he manages to keep his passion in check. One of the most quivering passages in the book depicts how Shrothri overcomes an early temptation.

This good man meets his next great test when his grown son is drowned in a flood. But he bears this ordeal with fortitude, because the son has left behind a young son of his own and so the family tree remains green. But Shrothri's travails do not end. The widowed daughter-in-law, Kathyayani, now going to college to occupy her time, falls in love with a lecturer and decides to marry him. Shrothri is bitterly disappointed, as any traditionalist would be, but his respect for human autonomy is such that he leaves it to the young woman to decide for herself. She chooses to follow the reasons of the heart. Her child from the first marriage remains with the grandfather.

Years later, towards the end of the novel, and of Shrothri's life, falls the biggest blow of all. He discovers, while rummaging through papers in the attic, that he is an illegitimate child himself. His parents had long been childless, and his father, a cussed character, did not want the family property to go to his brother or his line. So he forces his wife to conceive out of the marriage bed and drives out the brother and his family. This discovery shatters Shrothri. The one thing that had held him up during all his travails, pride in his ancestry and a sense of obligation to the line, turns out to be a falsehood. His moral code tells him that

he has no right to the property he holds. He searches far and wide for his cousins. When he cannot locate the rightful owners, he makes over the lands to the tenants who had worked on them and decides to take *sanyas*.

But there is yet another twist before fins. The man whom the widowed daughter-in-law, Kathyayani, had married turns out to be a descendant of the lost uncle. Genealogical botany, by implication, does triumph. But Shrothri walks away to live his last years in the Himalayas.

But *Vamsha Vriksha* is not the story of Shrothri alone. Bhyrappa develops a subsidiary theme—the life of Sadashiva Rao, a historian of the modern school who undertakes a monumental account of Indian culture. Rao is obliged in many ways to Shrothri and regards him as guru. But the novelist fails to endow Rao with flesh and blood. The only unusual thing he dares to do, apart from writing his book, is to enter upon a bigamous marriage with a Ceylonese woman who is a true collaborator in his work and who even suppresses her natural urge for motherhood in the consolation that she is mother to Sadashiva Rao's books.

If Sadashiva Rao is a cardboard figure, his brother Raja, who marries Kathyayani, is even more bloodless. Kathyayani's marriage with him doesn't turn out to be the bliss that they had imagined it would be. She interprets her three miscarriages as retribution for her having broken the traditional injunctions. In the handling of this episode Bhyrappa's own sympathy seems to be on the side of conformism. He is not one of your rebel writers.

With all its weaknesses *Vamsha Vriksha* deserves to be known to English readers, and merits a better rendering than the present one. It is not poetry alone that gets lost in translation; prose music also suffers the same fate. It would be normally possible to convey some of the strength of the original if the translator undertook a series of revisions of his first rough draft and the publisher provided him an able copy editor who converted regionalisms into acceptable standard English. In the absence of these, the present text abounds in some hilarious usages.

Take the sentence: 'Lalita was a neat pretty girl. . . Shrothri suggested that though the marriage could be performed soon, the nuptials could be postponed till

after Cheeni completed his B.Sc.' This would baffle English readers unless they knew that in some parts of India where child marriages were in vogue, 'nuptials' was the English word used for a subsequent rite to proclaim that the marriage was being consummated with the girl having come of age. Then the frequent references to 'oil bath'. Only a South Indian will know that it means a prolonged bathing practice in which the head and body are massaged with oil and then cleansed with the help of soapnut powder and several bucketsfull of hot water.

Some metaphors which are sanctified by usage in the original setting do not carry over well into English. In the Kannada country a way of complimenting a fair girl in the pink of health is to say that when she walks the blood seems to drip from her feet. An ungainly figure of speech, it ought not to have been repeated six times in the book (pp. 83, 110, 201, 202, 207 and 212).

Again a translator ought to be acquainted with the nuances of spoken English. When Professor Sadashiva Rao virtually abandons his first wife, she finds refuge under the roof of his brother, but the translator naively tells us that 'she lived with her husband's brother'. When Raja Rao meets his class, the text has it that 'Raja's period started at half past ten'. Again, 'She would remember her husband while watering the jasmine creeper climbing the mango branches. How he would make fun of her while she watered'. And 'the lady doctor gave two pricks to Kathyayani'.

There are awkward sentences and phrases: 'She had a proportionately shaped round face'; 'a woman of light dark complexion'; 'On the whole the train carried a mixed population of some thirty college students daily'; 'A cool breeze was blowing out there. Though it was generally caressing the body gently, it also hit the body sometimes with great love'; 'Nagalakshmi had ceased to speak with anybody virtually islanding herself mentally and physically' and 'Kathyayani became pregnant again. This time also it was aborted'.

It would be snooty to go on with more examples. The point is that if such slack renderings are published, the impression will gain ground that our regional masters do not deserve their reputation and come nowhere near the crop of young writers in English who are acclaimed both for their imagination and for their stylistic sophistication.

Finally, why did the book have to be called *The Uprooted* and not *The Family Tree*, a more accurate and also a more attractive rendering of *Vamsha Vriksha*?

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Vamanan

By C.V. Sreeraman

ORIGINAL IN MALAYALAM

Girijan Menon stood up when he felt calmer. He took out the saffron powder, an offering from the Kollur¹ temple for the Mother Goddess and smeared it on his forehead.

"Oh Great Goddess of Illusion! The Silent Goddess! Oh Devil!" He cried out to the Goddess in agony. Then he took out the *Bhagavatham*² from the top of the cupboard, went to the front verandah and sat in the easy chair. He closed his eyes and recited to himself:

"A person who does not, in vain, use the three virtues (Sathwa, Rajas and Tamas) which control the three elements—light, water and earth—he can easily reject falsehood and in his own way perceive the most noble Truth".

Girijan Menon had not wanted to be in such a high position. His father and two uncles were language teachers. He too had learned Sanskrit. When he was fifteen, he had a serious attack of fever. The

Sanskrit school was located far from his house and as he was too weak to walk that distance, he was left with no option but to join the English school. Likewise, he had applied for various jobs out of which this job was one. He was selected and appointed. He never expected an appointment, nor did he actively want it.

He was reading the *Bhagavatham* when everything happened. Karthavu³ rushed in like a hurricane, whorling in the feeling of devastation which lasted as long as Karthavu sat there. He left the place in a hurry, yet the impact of his visit permeated the four walls of the house.

It would have been better if you had walked around with a barber's razor during the last thirty-five years. You rose to such a high position in your job and had so many opportunities. And yet a Forest Officer could have amassed so much wealth before he retired from his job. Even a forest ranger⁴ would have earned lakhs⁵ of rupees. But you, who had held such a high position. . . ."

Girijan Menon had not wanted to be in such a high position. His father and two uncles were language teachers. He too had learned Sanskrit. When he was fifteen, he had a serious attack of fever. The

tried to read the lines from the book. But Sreekala's weeping intruded and tore at his heart. Earlier, whenever he could not fulfil his resolutions or was nagged by sorrows which haunted his mind like the insistent chirping of crickets he was able to blot everything out with a reminder of the Lord's⁶ words:

"In the routineness of an action-oriented life, everything moves mechanically, round and round, in a predetermined manner." All aspects of life were indeed mechanical. The movement and non-movement were all predetermined. Unavoidable. Irrefutable. Why then should he worry? Today, when he repeated those words to himself he was surprised to note that they lacked the

Sanskrit school was located far from his house and as he was too weak to walk that distance, he was left with no option but to join the English school. Likewise, he had applied for various jobs out of which this job was one. He was selected and appointed. He never expected an appointment, nor did he actively want it.

Sreekala (his daughter) was weeping copiously in the other room. Hours of weeping had not abated her agony. She had overheard every word uttered by Karthavu to him. He opened the *Bhagavatham* and tried to forget everything. He had started reading the *Bhagavatham* years ago, in the Forest Training College hostel. In the chilly winter, covering himself with a woollen rug, he was able to concentrate on the verses of *Bhagavatham* and shut everything else out. From then onwards, he had an abiding fascination for this book. Now also, he

He was a man of integrity who went to great lengths to prevent using public money for private purposes. On the day that Girijan Menon read about this architect, he purchased a kerosene lamp and some kerosene, while he was returning from the head office to his camp. He began to use that lamp whenever he worked on personal matters. He never used the lamp provided at the camp for his own purposes. Whenever the peon took the letters to be mailed he would check and recheck and ensure that none of his personal letters were included in that bunch. If by mistake any personal letters were included, he would take them back and mail them himself.

brilliance of conviction. Instead the words of Karthavu kept recurring in his mind.

"Thirty-five years—armed with a barber's razor. . . ."

Thirty-five years. During those thirty-five years of official life he was not forced to utter even one word against his convictions. Those who knew him well had never tempted him to go against his convictions. During the early days of his official life he had read about another old and well-respected official in Government service. He was the architect who had built the internationally famous dam. While building this dam the architect used to stay in a tent on the dam site. Every day he would sit up till mid-night and attend to official writing work in the light of a petromax⁷ provided by the Government. Later, he would start attending to his own personal work at which time he would put off the Government's petromax and light his own petromax. He was a man of integrity who went to great lengths to prevent using public money for private purposes. On the day that Girijan Menon read about this architect, he purchased a kerosene lamp and some kerosene, while he was returning from the head office to his camp. He began to use that lamp whenever he worked on personal matters. He never used the lamp provided at

the camp for his own purposes. Whenever the peon took the letters to be mailed he would check and recheck and ensure that none of his personal letters were included in that bunch. If by mistake any personal letters were included, he would take them back and mail them himself.

Thirty-five years of unblemished service. He was given all the promotions rightfully due to him. Now, when he had retired from service, he was getting the maximum pension allowed. Still Karthavu had said that he had not attained anything from his official life. At first, when there was a partition of property between his mother and his younger aunt, it was he who gave his mother the courage to buy this house. He had used his own savings of ten years to pay off the liabilities. The next time when the property had to be divided again between him and his sister, it was he who suggested a price for the house and bought it. He paid off the share due to the other claimants with great difficulty. That was not all that he had done. In the beginning he had countless family responsibilities. He never felt disgruntled or dissatisfied when he spent his own money to help the family. He did not find it very difficult. He was happy thinking that he was fulfilling the true responsibilities of a man. In all these

Girijan Menon took a close look at the "Father of the City". He saw a costly foreign pen and a shining cigarette lighter in the pocket of his thin Khadi shirt. The "Father of the City" took out a packet of costly cigarettes from his pocket and lighted one with the foreign lighter. A new type of lighter—very attractive to look at. Someone commented on that.

"Two days back my brother brought it from Sharja. The Customs people are not able to catch him, however clever they are. He makes a small hidden compartment in a brief case and smuggles in whatever he wants." Smart Chap! Everyone laughed to express their admiration for him. Girijan Menon did not feel like joining in their laughter. Is it so admirable to hoodwink the Customs people?

matters he had taken guidance from *Bhagavatham* which said that wealth should be divided into five shares—one share for one's own people, one for deeds of Dharma, the third for deeds of duty and the fourth for acts of pleasure. What about the remaining one share? He tried to remember. He couldn't recall those lines which he knew by heart. He opened *Bhagavatham* to check on those lines—fifth chapter, sixth and seventh chapters. These lines were from the eighth chapter.

Sreekala's weeping reached a high crescendo. He kept thinking Karthavu hadn't even stepped inside to see his daughter-in-law or enquire about his grandson's welfare. All he could do was to repeat the same refrain in many tones—a request for money. Thinking of all that had happened, Girijan Menon closed the *Bhagavatham* and put it down.

He was about to step inside to console Sreekala when unexpectedly a jeep came through the gate and entered his courtyard. Behind the jeep came a foreign car painted in the bright red colour of a Manchadi seed.⁸ The car came and parked near the house. Girijan Menon observed the sticker pasted on to the glass panes of the car declaring the owner's membership in a costly international club. A young man wearing a slack shirt and trousers and some other people got out of the jeep. None of them were known to Girijan Menon. All of them clearly bore the stamp of wealth on them. One of them introduced himself to Girijan Menon as the "Father of the City". He turned towards the others and introduced another person as the Commissioner. At first, Girijan Menon did not recognise them. But, when the names of their organisations were mentioned, none of them seemed to be strangers. The "Father of the City" introduced them all once again in the order of their positions in the hierarchy. He used certain terms to denote those positions. But in Girijan Menon's ears they sounded like Emperor, Petty Chieftain, Ruler of Principality, Village Head. By then, the man who had come in bright red foreign car, raised the car's window panes, locked it and came to the verandah, twirling a key chain. Even though there was a spare, unoccupied chair, all of them started to get up, offering their seat to him.

"You may not know him, Mr. Menon. He is A.K., the owner of A.K. Group of companies."

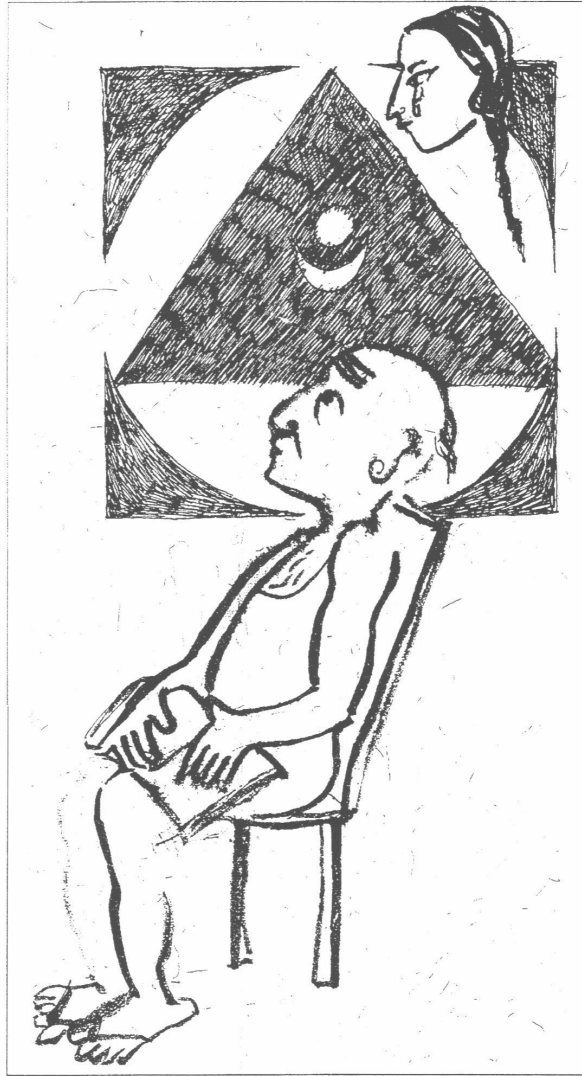
The "Father of the City" introduced him. then he turned towards Girijan Menon and said,

"Girjavallabha Menon... Retired..."

After a small pause, the "Father of the City" resumed the conversation again.

"A.K.'s businesses are all located outside Kerala. Recently, he has established a Clearing Agency in Cochin.⁹ This year he has planted cocoa plants in five hundred acres¹⁰ of land. Can we allow our rich businessmen to spend their whole lifetime and efforts outside Kerala?"

Girijan Menon took a close look at the "Father of the City". He saw a costly



foreign pen and a shining cigarette lighter in the pocket of his thin Khadi¹¹ shirt. The "Father of the City" took out a packet of costly cigarettes from his pocket and lighted one with the foreign lighter. A new type of lighter—very attractive to look at. Someone commented on that.

"Two days back my brother brought it from Sharja.¹² The Customs people are not able to catch him, however clever they are. He makes a small hidden compartment in a brief case and smuggles in whatever he wants." Smart Chap! Everyone laughed to express their admiration for him. Girijan Menon did not feel like joining in their laughter. Is it so admirable to hoodwink the Customs people?

It was A.K. who finally steered the conversation to the subject they had come to discuss with Menon.

"Sir, is it true that you are planning to sell this house and the fields around it?"

Girijan Menon who was at his wits end had hit upon that solution only the previous day. And he had talked about it to one or two persons. But before dawn, applicants had started to stream in. Girijan Menon felt benumbed. A.K. did not wait for his reply.

"My aim is not to build just a lodging house. The Chairman and Commissioner told me that if the plan to construct a one way road is through, the house will be accessible from that road. I wonder

whether this plan will really work out. As there is a large compound, there is enough space to build a drive-in-restaurant. On the southern side, there is enough space for a swimming pool."

Girijan Menon looked helplessly in the Southern direction. His grandmother and mother had been cremated in that field. A special mound had been raised on that spot to plant the sacred basil plant. Earlier, every evening, a burning cotton wick was placed on the mound. Girijan Menon's gaze was now concentrated on the basil plant. In the scorching heat of the long drawn out summer the basil plant had dried up. Only the skeleton remained.

The "Father of the City" noted that Girijan Menon was keeping quiet and once again took a lead in the conversation, "Menon is going through a financially difficult time." He paused to look at others and continued, "The son of Karthavu, our Member from the third ward,¹³ has married Menon's daughter." Then, probably because he felt that they might not know Karthavu, he added, "Karthavu, Proprietor of Vanita Wines. They have wholesale and tavern business in wine. Karthavu's son is a class one senior officer with the Central Government."

The "Father of the City" thought of something and paused for a while. Then he smiled at Menon and added, "I hope you won't mind my saying this, Mr. Menon. After all, these people are not outsiders. At present, Mr. Menon and Mr. Karthavu are not on good terms. Nothing serious... just a small matter of money."

Girijan Menon remained unmoved and poised. The "Father of the City" also gave a temporary rest to his tongue.

"Mr. Menon is facing another problem also. His son had availed of an industrial loan. Now the loan is under liquidation."

Girijan Menon shrank in horror at this blatant public exposure of details of his private life.

"I think that, because of all his problems Mr. Menon will be happy with a reasonable, let us say, a maximum reasonable price."

Girijan Menon sat motionless. All of a sudden, A.K. stubbed his cigarette in the ash-tray and got up.

"Now I would like to discuss a personal matter with Mr. Menon." At first, Girijan Menon did not make any move. But when the pressure increased he got up and led A.K. to a room inside.

"Sir, when I think of your present position... This is why I am saying... Let us come to a decision, between ourselves on the price." Even then, Girijan Menon could not bear to utter a word, "Sir, I will give you the maximum price."

Girijan Menon's eyes darted over A.K.'s face. He still had the vacant feeling which one has when one meets with a stranger.

"Sir, I am Achan Kunju."

Even then, A.K. could not see any

signs of recognition in Menon's eyes.

"Sir, I have worked under you as a forest guard in Bakulthala Forest Camp."

A thousand doubts stirred in Girijan Menon's mind, and in that one moment his face took on different hues. Achan Kunju noticed this.

"Sir, do you remember a case about the rice, jaggery and groundnuts which had been bought to feed the elephants of the camp being sold in the outside market and false accounts being submitted thereafter?"

Now, Girijan Menon's face was devoid of all emotions except one—that of wonder. The pages in the book of time past—some faded, some clear—flitted before his mind's eye with the speed of a tempest.

On a rainy day, in Bakulthala, in front of the rest house called "Hawa Mahal", a man who had taken his hat off in respect and had begged for a shred of mercy. Girijan Menon had roared in anger. His words were, "I do not wish to speak to a thief and a cheat. Clear out, Clear..." After dismissing that man brutally, without any show of mercy, Girijan Menon added a few words more to his report, "Maybe they are wild animals, but they have been tamed. Moreover, they are mute."

A man who had sold the food meant for mute animals and had made money from the deal was worse than a wild beast. The civilised society should not tolerate him. The Chief Conservator of the Forests appreciated Girijan Menon's diction in English. His words, therefore, found a place in the Chief Conservator's Report too. When the misappropriation case came up before the Sessions Judge he too quoted the same words in his verdict. "All right thinking members of any civilised society should fling a stone at such a criminal."

Girijan Menon was astounded. He took a good look at the sticker pasted on the window pane of the car declaring the owner's membership in an international club. His gaze rivetted on that spot, refusing to move any further.

"Sir, you haven't mentioned a price. You may quote any price." Girijan Menon stared at Achan Kunju. In his mind's eye, he saw the short man growing in size. His feet grew larger, his body filled up—growing, growing, steadily, minute by minute till he became omnipresent. His legs searching for three feet of Earth¹⁴ disappeared beyond the horizons. One foot was bound to come back. And without asking for Menon's permission it would be placed on his head, inexorably, pushing him down into the clear water of the swimming pool. Menon would sink, go down, down, brushing against the edges of Mountain Mainaka,¹⁵ into the netherworld, occupied by the serpents.¹⁶

"Mr. Achan Kunju, why, to me, the one who has done the greatest harm to you..."

"Harm? You did a service to me. If you hadn't dismissed me from my job, I would

have got stuck in that Government job on a pay scale of Rs.30—Rs.60 grade, an honest man..."

Achan Kunju burst into laughter. Unable to contain himself, he laughed aloud, again and again.

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1. A temple consecrated to the Mother Goddess, located in Northern Kerala.
2. An epic describing the life of Lord Krishna.
3. Name of a subcaste among Nayars, a prominent community in Kerala.
4. A position lower in the Government hierarchy to that of the Forest Officer.
5. An Indian term to denote "One hundred thousand".
6. Refers to Lord Krishna.
7. A special kind of gas lamp which gives the aura of an electric light; used in wedding processions and other night functions.
8. A red seed growing in a tree found in Kerala, used for decorative and ritualistic purposes.
9. A port town in Central Kerala.
10. Measurement of land used in India.
11. The coarse, homespun cloth used in India, introduced by Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom struggle.

In post-independent India it became the symbol of nationalistic and patriotic feelings.

12. A city in Dubai, one of the middle Eastern countries, commonly known as the "Gulf" countries, after the exodus of people from Kerala, seeking employment in the seventies.
13. A geographical division in a district or Municipality, including two or three villages, for election of representatives to the ruling councils.
14. Reference is to the story of Mahabali, the Asura King who was vanquished by Lord Vishnu in his incarnation as Vamana (The Dwarf). Vamana requested for three feet of Earth to sit and do penance which was gladly granted to him by Mahabali. Vamana grew in size, measured the Heaven with one foot, the Earth with the second foot and asked Mahabali where he should take the third foot. Mahabali, a true devotee and an honest man showed his head. Vamana placed his feet on Mahabali's head and banished him to the Netherworld.
15. A legendary mountain.
16. The Netherworld described as "Patala" is believed to be occupied by serpents such as Takshaka and Vasuki.

Translated by Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan

Calcutta I Care

Amit Dasgupta

RIKSHAW RAGTIME: CALCUTTA RE-MEMBERED

By Jug Suraiya

Penguin Books, India, 1993, pp. 120, Rs. 85.00

When Deepa first went to Calcutta, she was a little more than five years old. Her only memory is that after hours of driving in an Ambassador car with her father, mother, grand mother, brother and a dog, her father took a wrong turn and soon they found themselves trapped in the maze that is Calcutta. Tired and weary, they halted for the night in a friend's house. Her next visit was a few years before we got married, when as a bureaucrat she 'managed' an official tour to meet my parents in Calcutta, and also introduce herself to the city of all cities. She and her friends stayed at the exotic sounding Bamboo Villa Guest House. She returned from that trip much the same way as she had first stepped into Calcutta at the age of five. Tired and weary, with the additional burden of being shocked at the appalling stagnation and poverty. She has never gone back to visit. Nor is she ever likely to on her own volition.

Calcutta evokes strong emotions. No one can be indifferent to it. Calcuttans (or is it, Calcutians?) will draw a parallel with New York. Either you love it, or hate it. There is no half-way street. Regrettably, my wife falls in one category. And I, in another. I am told that it is all very simple to understand the moment you realise that there are in this world only two kinds of people—Bengalies and non-Bengalies, with Calcuttans as some kind of upper-caste Bengali. You can then dismiss Deepa's negative reaction as a typical non-Bengali response. This is not just chauvinism. It is an obsession. And somehow, Calcutta appears to be the only city in India which has evoked such emotions. What is the mystery of this dark and dingy city, with its seeming callousness towards poverty, its consistent opposition towards any kind of improvement, its fetish for decadence and despair? Why is it that once a Calcuttan always a Calcuttan?

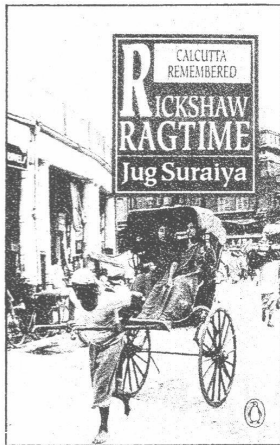
Jug Suraiya's *Rickshaw Ragtime* is a tribute to childhood, to growing up and to an age long gone by. It is a book by an uprooted Calcuttan for fellow-Calcuttans too scared to visit. A flood of memories assail you as you linger at each page and recall how you grew up. How Sunday afternoons always meant lunch at Ta Fa

“SAVE PAPER
SAVE TREES.”



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EYE WITNESS



Sung in China Town with your parents. And once Ta Fa Sung was shut down, a long search ensued resulting in the discovery of Jimmy's Kitchen and Tai Wah. Word spread around and families heaved a sigh of relief. When a change was required there was always the extraordinary kitchen of the Nizam with the famous kati-rolls. How college at Xavier's meant bunking class and having chai at Mataji's dhaba next door to Loreto. Ah, how sweet the namkeen was watching the girls go to class. How old Father Joris chased us down the street shouting "Vien ici, vien ici". How Park Street burst into a spate of colours and lights every Christmas and New Year, and one 25th December, St. Paul's Cathedral celebrated with the full-throated genius of Mahalia Jackson. How Saturdays meant rushing off to the bookstore to get a copy of the *Junior Statesman* and laugh at the exploits of James Pond and the bizarre letters Kookie Kol received. How Mother Teresa is a family name and her Home for the Dying a shrine. How work is some kind of leisure activity and woe to the man who would work when a match is on. Jug takes you by the hand and you linger at every corner savouring the moment, remembering the Chinese sweet you bought at Waldorf's, the Baked Alaska at Sky Room, the musty smell of books at College Street, the smoke-filled rooms and revolutionary talk at Coffee House, the first surreptitiously acquired copy of Mao's *Red Book* and finally, the last look back as the train sped away from Howrah Station as you left in search of a job. Here was a city that taught you laughter through Satyajit Ray's *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* and art through the Academy where night after night Ajitesh Bannerjee gave you the *Good Woman*, Tripti Mitra *Aparajita* and Utpal Dutt *Macbeth*. Here it was that you fell in love and lost and loved again. Where your parents were still young and you still had hope in the future.

Jug has always been infinitely readable. It is however double jeopardy to be a Calcuttan and a fan of Jug to try to

"Like the words of an old song that keep repeating themselves in your head, or a fever dormant in the blood, or an important lover impossible to be rid of, it keeps returning again and again, at the oddest times and in the strangest places. In Balham, London, or King's Cross, Sydney, or Queens, New York, whenever ex-Calcuttans meet, the talk turns to Chowringhee and Chella, Ripon Street and rickshaws. Random, haphazard, raucous, the city lives again. For Calcutta, as many have discovered, is a movable adda."

From *Rickshaw Ragtime*

review his book. At best, one ends up recounting personal experiences. At worst, one recollects how so many of these coincides with Jugs own. But then, as Jug writes:

Over the years, Calcutta has played a medley of themes for me, as haphazard and helter-skelter as befits a chance-created city. Many of the passages have been harsh and jarring, some nostalgic, not a few quirky and off-beat. But all of them have been meant only for me.

Years ago a fellow guest at a party in Greenwich Village, New York, told me that when he visited Calcutta, Satyajit Ray showed him around the city. 'I bet I know your Calcutta better than you do,' he said.

'No,' I replied. 'You know Ray's Calcutta, not mine.' Anyone who has ever been there has his own Calcutta. All you have to do is listen to it, as I have listened to mine."

Rickshaw Ragtime is a collage of events, people and places. There is the rickshaw puller and the body builder, tragic decay at the Marble Palace and the New Market,

incessant penchant for adda and chai, and the nostalgic scent of the shiuli flowers at the Maidan. Jug brings it all back to you only as a lover might, holding each fragile moment in the palm of his hand.

But, things have changed in Calcutta. Father Joris died. Xavier's is co-ed and Xavierians no longer sit at Mataji's dhaba watching the Loreto girls go by. They sit at the Xavier's canteen and discuss physics and economics with their girl friends. Grand Hotel has lost its old look and charm. New Market is being rebuilt after the fire and is to have a new look. Gandhi's statue no longer faces Park Street, but some nondescript part of the city. Jimmy's Kitchen is no longer worth recommending and Sky Room has become a haven for kitty parties. No one sits at the Strand any more and only the bold and the not-so-beautiful venture at night to eat bhel puri at Victoria Memorial. Years ago at Coffee House, I remember hearing a friend recite a favourite poem—"Calcutta, if you must exile me, burn my eyes".

Today, age and weariness have caught up. We live out our banal and mediocre life in a dehumanised environment. Lost

is the gentleness that characterised human relations. Lost also is the time we had for one another. There is only indifference and the complacency of living. We have forgotten tolerance and understanding. We have abandoned the child in our hearts and grown old. Jug Suraiya shakes you by the shoulder and gives you a glimpse of what you left behind. He brings back the memory of that fateful evening waving goodbye to your parents and watching the train chug away from Howrah.

"Like a fly in amber, a distant city is preserved in memory, a remembrance of times past.

The loneliness of the long-distance Calcuttan, caught between two worlds, springs from a realisation of double exile. All emigrants experience the paradox of displacement: You don't have a home till you leave it; and when you do, you find you can't go home again. But in the case of Calcutta this feeling is compounded by a sense of dislocation in time as well as space. Perhaps because—as its critics claim—it is a place with a past but no future, the city is capable of inducing a virulent and chronic attack of nostalgia. In a sense, Calcutta is everyone's childhood, measles, mumps and all."

Thank you, Jug, for giving me back my childhood.

Amit Dasgupta, an Indian Foreign Service Officer, is currently Deputy Director General at the Indian Council of Cultural Relations, New Delhi.

Voice of Sanity

REFLECTIONS OF AN INDIAN MUSLIM

By Saeed Naqvi

Har Anand Publications, New Delhi, 1993, Rs 250.00

Reflections ... contains pieces written by Mr Naqvi over a period on various topical subjects. Says he, "This book is no more than a series of articles I wrote in response to specific situations concerning Hindu-Muslim relations. To that extent some of the articles are dated. ... I seek the readers' indulgence: please consider each article in the situation it was written in. Moreover these are newspaper articles written in an hour or so without much reflection, reading or discussion."

Mr Naqvi is a well-known journalist and a Muslim with liberal views. He has a keen mind and a sharp intellect. His writings are therefore important particularly in the present charged atmosphere in the country.

The pieces on the disturbances in Jammu Milia and Jammu and Kashmir state are particularly interesting. Indo-Pak relations also get a coverage in the book. So do the politics of today. The piece on

Kashmir tells a shameful story of how young teenagers—cricket enthusiasts who who were merely collecting photographs of their favourite cricketers were hauled up and harassed because they had displayed in their room photographs of some well-known Pakistani cricketers. Says Saeed Naqvi, "There are a hundred dimensions to the Kashmir problem but let me place before Governor Saxena just one of them. The traditional alienation of the Kashmiri has been aggravated by recent atrocities committed by the paramilitary forces." Naqvi also makes an interesting observation when he says that "behaviour of the security forces from South India is much better towards the population than those from elsewhere."

The piece on the famous Shah Bano case gives an insight into the character of this lady which is not commonly known. Naqvi writes that while demanding justice for herself, Shah Bano is known to be a cruel mother-in-law who turned her daughter-in-law out of the house. Naqvi interviewed the daughter-in-law, Shaila, and tells her story. Reading it one is left with no sympathy for the old woman.

Another interesting interview contained in the book is with Bala Saheb Deoras. In reply to a question whether he condemns violence, Deoras is emphatic in saying that he does. He continues, "I

want every Muslim here to live in peace. He has got equal rights. But just because he is a Muslim he should not demand something separate from others. Civil rights and other things, everything is common. They should mentally prepare for this. They do not have one language. Urdu is not a Muslim language. It is a common language of so many people."

The piece in the book entitled "Supreme Court Judgement on Non-existent Case" is a sad reflection on the highest court of justice in this country. According to Naqvi the judgement directs Abdul Gafoor to pay maintenance to his first wife, Begum Saira, and their 5-year old daughter Shamim, because she refused to share the roof with Gafoor's second wife. When he met Saira, claims Naqvi, she knew nothing about the judgement and had got remarried. Asks Naqvi, "Were Justice A.P. Sen and S. Nataraajan of the Supreme court informed about this development or were the theoretical concepts so intellectually engaging that the altered facts on the ground were irrelevant?"

Even though at times one may not agree with Naqvi's perceptions and his logic, his voice is a voice of sanity and therefore deserves to be heard.

Madan Gupta

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