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Challenging A Reigning Consensus

Gyan Prakash

INDIVIDUALISM IN SOCIAL SCIENCE: FORMS AND LIMITS OF A METHODOLOGY

By Rajeev Bhargava

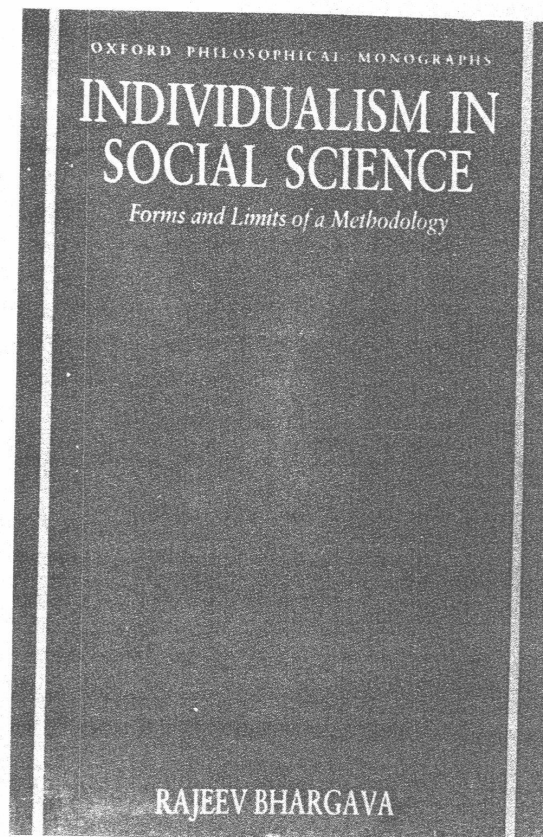
Oxford Philosophical Monographs, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, pp. viii, 271, Rs. 425.00

Do individuals matter more than societies? In one form or another, this question has formed the stuff of everyday chit-chat, elementary civics lessons in schools, and even drunken discussions of undergraduates in college dormitories. But there is also a distinguished history of sober philosophical reflections and disputations on what scholars define as methodological individualism—a doctrine which asserts that all social facts must be framed wholly in terms of individual thought and action. Thomas Hobbes, John Stuart Mill, Max Weber, and Joseph Schumpeter are only some of the distinguished names in European social theory who formulated a powerful case for methodological individualism. In the 1950s and the 1960s, Karl Popper charged the doctrine of methodological individualism with a powerful ideological spark as he elaborated and defended it against what he called the historicism of Plato, Hegel, and most of all, Marx, whom he regarded as the most extreme and dangerous exponent of sociological holism and collective identity. Methodological individualism and Marx returned together once again in the 1980s in the writings of Jon Elster, the analytical Marxist; but this time, Marx was housed in, not exiled from, methodological individualism.

If Elster's methodological-individualist Marx represents an ironic turn in the history of the doctrine, also signified here is an extraordinary tangled state of the debate. Indeed, rather than clarifying issues and highlighting differences, arguments among philosophers have produced a muddle, a confused consensus according to which the individualists and the non-individualists are said to have overstated their disagreement; that, if the two sides are denied their extreme claims, then methodological individualism, rigorously defined and circumscribed, is obviously true but trivial. But the consensual view asks us, in the name of reasonableness and moderation, to accept key assumptions of methodological individualism. Most of all, we are asked to accept that human agency amounts to

individual intention which is defined as a mental category; we are invited to assume that the beliefs, desires, concepts, intentions that animate human agency in history originate and reside in individuals. This is a version of what the French philosopher Jacques Derrida calls the "metaphysics of presence", or a desire for plenitude, a search for pure origin and autonomy that has characterized western philosophy since Plato and structured its notion of subjectivity.

The great virtue of Rajeev Bhargava's book is that it recognizes that the consensual view smuggles in key assumptions of methodological individualism in the guise of sober and sensible propositions: "Precisely those statements and principles which are accepted as trivially or obviously true are controversial and contentious" (p. 6). For, at stake in the arcane philosophical discourse are issues of fundamental importance: Do we understand human practices to originate in individuals, or do we read a social context enunciated in the intentions and desires experienced at the individual level? Should we pose the individual as an opposite of the collectivity, or should we understand individual identity as a part of individuation, that is, as an historical process of differentiation within which a collective identity emerges? Take, for example, the collective Hindu identity. The alternative to an organicist view of the collective Hindu identity is not an autonomous individual, free of collective sentiments and ideologies, but an identity that is formed in between the differentiation of the Hindu along class, caste, gender, regional, and linguistic lines, and arises in specific historical contexts. To make space for an understanding of such an individuation, one that places individual intentions and beliefs in the social and historical processes of differentiation, however, requires the rejection of methodological individualism as trivially true. But this is no easy task because it demands a careful and meticulous dismantling of the philosophical consensus. Fortunately, Rajeev Bhargava proves equal to the task as he



disentangles individualist and non-individualist premises skillfully and excavates the sediments of scholarly thought scrupulously and precisely. Situated firmly in Anglo-American analytic thought, or more precisely in the Oxford tradition of political philosophy, he painstakingly develops the most plausible version of methodological individualism, exposes its crucial and untenable assumptions, and outlines an alternative he calls "contextualism."

Bhargava develops his case by first identifying different strands of methodological individualism acutely and accurately; he distinguishes ontological and semantic versions from explanatory ones while demonstrating that methodological individualism as an explanatory theory involves ontological and semantic assumptions about what individuals are and how they express meanings. Then the semantic and ontological assumptions are systematically foregrounded and shown to be untenable though not on the basis of usual non-individualist arguments. In fact, it is a measure of the author's scrupulous scholarship that he subjects the non-individualist arguments to the same searching scrutiny as those of

Do we understand human practices to originate in individuals, or do we read a social context enunciated in the intentions and desires experienced at the individual level? Should we pose the individual as an opposite of the collectivity, or should we understand individual identity as a part of individuation, that is, as an historical process of differentiation within which a collective identity emerges?

the individualists. As a result, the fallibility of explanatory individualism emerges not because it fails to the non-individualist charge that the social is irreducible to the individual but because it fails to meet the demand that the individualist explanation not be based on laws. Intentionalism, however, apparently meets this demand insofar as it explains social phenomena not by a recourse to laws but to

human action which is intentional, mental, and uniquely individual. Bhargava suggests that if prevailing non-individualist critiques have exposed serious limitations of intentionalism, they have not questioned its ontological assumptions, lending credence to Alan Ryan's characterization that the controversy between the two sides has been a "sham battle".

It is by rendering the limitations of intentionalism's ontological assumptions visible that Bhargava outlines his own contextualist case. Arguing that individual beliefs arise in language, that linguistic meanings arise in and constitute social practices, he relocates intentions in their contexts. To be sure, such a contextualist perspective has had distinguished champions—Durkheim, Wittgenstein, and, more recently, Charles Taylor. Bhargava acknowledges these contributions, but goes on to outline his own version of a contextualist interpretation that articulates intentions with social practice, thus avoiding the danger of behaviouralism that the non-individualist dismissal of beliefs often risks. He makes room for beliefs but identifies their social reference and locates them in both the mind and the action of individuals and social practice. This strategy accommodates intentions and attitudes, and, while stripping them of their individualist baggage, connects them loosely, because of the mediation of the context, to behaviour. Such a conception of contextualism is flexible as it neither reduces beliefs to their functions and contexts nor treats intention as an individual mental state. This affords us a concept of human agency in which neither an organicist Hindu mind or an individual mental state, for example, necessitates a certain course of actions; rather, intentions and attitudes held by individuals appear as social meanings deployed, displaced, even disavowed, and, yes, transformed by the mode of their historical (contextual) emergence in actions.

To develop a philosophical account of human agency in these terms requires considerable intelligence and deftness. This book possesses both as it mounts a sophisticated, rigorously-developed challenge from within the discipline of analytical philosophy to its reigning consensus on methodological individualism. This may not change late-night undergraduate musings on the meaning of individual choice and freedom, but it should reshape the philosophical understanding of individual and human agency.

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Problems of Governance

Ashis Banerjee

INDIA TOWARDS ANARCHY 1967-1992

By N.S. Saxena

Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 201, Rs. 210.00

THE STATE IN CRISIS: DR. MOHAN SINHA MEHTA MEMORIAL LECTURES

Edited by Professor P.S. Sundaram

Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., Bombay-New Delhi, 1992, pp. 206, Rs. 200.00

It is arguable that since the middle 60s the Indian political system has moved from one crisis to another. Attempts at tackling these crises have resulted in precipitating more acute problems. A large part of all this has in fact been the crisis of the Congress party. So closely have the Congress party and the Indian State been identified in the past that the crisis of the Congress invariably looked like the crisis of the state. That is why when the Congress lost power in eight States in the Fourth General Elections of 1967 it appeared as though the entire political system had collapsed. Mrs. Gandhi salvaged the State by enlarging the scope of the Union government and by centralising power around the Prime Minister's office. But then came the Emergency. Mrs. Gandhi's second reign indicated that the Congress had lost the will to rule India as a secular, democratic and federal political system. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi started with a lot of goodwill and brought off some dramatic 'accords'. In spite of his good intentions he was hamstrung by his inability to restore life to the Congress party and broaden the base of his regime. In the current phase the Congress seems to be walking with crutches because it has lost power in the heartland.

As the Congress went from crisis to crisis it could be expected that the non-Congress parties would step in to provide responsible governments in the States and also at the Centre. But such opportunities have consistently been missed. Thus, while criticism of the Congress has been aplenty the alternatives have not been forthcoming. Non-Congress parties have demonstrated as little respect for political institutions as has the Congress. Therefore the political system has gone out of gear.

What is interesting, however, is that the democratic idea has taken root in India. The people of this vast and varied country therefore find various channels to express themselves politically. In the absence of credible national and secular parties they have chosen or created regional, caste and communal formations.

This has led to the fragmentation of votes as well as the fragmentation of the party-system. Further, at the all-India level we now seem to have created a three-way power struggle between the Congress, the National Front and the BJP. This triangular pattern is likely to stay with us for some time to come. Consequently every central government in the near future is likely to be either a minority government or will have to operate with wafer-thin majorities. The struggle for power as well as the stratagems to stay in power will therefore become even more unscrupulous than they have been.

Will all this lead to anarchy? N.S. Saxena through his collection of essays forcefully argues that India is headed towards one. In his view the biggest culprits are the politicians who have systematically destroyed institutions and encouraged corruption. Their short-sighted calculations have promoted *goonda* rule, terrorism, separatism and all other ills. People such as Bhindranwale, Tikait and others have been allowed to hold the Indian political system to ransom. By promoting elements like Ghising or the Bodos against non-Congress state governments the Centre has sown seeds of trouble. In not taking on the secessionists squarely in Kashmir and Assam the Centre and the State governments have postponed possible solutions.

Saxena is a former policeman, an I.P.S. Officer of the U.P. cadre. Having served in various capacities in U.P. and at the Centre he has seen the trend towards anarchy grow before his eyes. There is much to benefit therefore from the comparisons he makes between the earlier post-independence years and the later ones. His criticism of the Congress has been aptly the alternatives have not been forthcoming. Non-Congress parties have demonstrated as little respect for political institutions as has the Congress. Therefore the political system has gone out of gear.

India is to be saved and if the integrity of the upright is to be redeemed. But like some other former policemen who have chosen to write about political matters Saxena too has not been able to rise above the policeman's vantage point. He makes no attempt at political analysis and is unable to see why and how the democratic process in a developing country must reflect a certain level of inchoateness. However, one has to agree with him when he suggests that many major problems arise because they are not properly tackled at their inception or because some undesirable trends are wilfully abetted.

The readability of Saxena's book would have improved if he had paid a little more attention to style. Forthrightness in content does not necessitate neglect towards form. Finally, passages such as the following must—absolutely—be avoided:

"Again, if corruption in public undertakings can be reduced to, say, one-fourth, it may result in the saving of hundreds of crores per year. If this cannot be done it is better to privatise these industries rather than spread corruption."

Even though the second book under review is entitled *The State in Crisis* there is less talk of crisis, anarchy or breakdown between the covers. This book is a collection of twelve lectures delivered over the years in memory of the founder of the voluntary N.G.O. called "Seva Mandir" at Udaipur. The subjects covered by these lectures are so wide that no attempt will be made here to cover the whole range. If one were to weave an ideational thread between these lectures one might put it in the following laboured form. Political crisis in India is the result of:

- the inability of the Indian-decision makers to distance themselves from the militarisation engendered by the bigger powers and the consequent failure to build bridges with our neighbours on an independent footing (Jagat Mehta),
- the inability to link education with the wider issue of social justice (V.V. John),
- the inadequacy of the developmentalist state to reach out to marginalised groups whose interests can only be furthered by genuinely motivated voluntary organisations (Rajni Kothari),
- the absence of democratic socialism at the grass roots (Shirley Williams),
- the centralisation of power and neglect of regional identities and interests (Kuldip Nayar),
- the distortion of the role of the state as arbiter between social groups (Ashis Nandy),
- the practice of counterfeited secularism (Arun Shourie),

- h) following non-agriculture centred developmental model (John Kenneth Galbraith).

This does not cover all the twelve lectures. In what follows not even the eight mentioned above will be discussed. The reason is none other than manageability. All the lectures touch upon major areas of concern.

Jagat Mehta's concern in the lecture is not only about India but about the crucial failure of diplomacy in the post-war world. While he puts the blame for militarisation on the developed world he also feels that developing countries have used the global militarisation argument to arm themselves often at the cost of and against their own people. India, he argues, started off well on the ideological foundations of Gandhian principles and Nehru's non-alignment but then allowed herself to get excessively embroiled in Soviet concerns. India's national interest lies in cutting back on needless military investment, turning inwards to concerns of development and education and improving relations with neighbours including China. He ends with a plea to go back to Gandhi's and Nehru's concerns.

This lecture was delivered before the break-up of the Soviet Union. One wonders whether the same line of argument would hold in the post-Soviet Union world, or which way Mehta would have extended his argument to take on the realities of the new world in which India has to find her way in a far less structured world. In any case, it seems to this reviewer that harking back to Gandhi and Nehru is unlikely to yield much clarity. Under the present circumstances both military and economic diplomacy is in dire need of bold innovation.

Rajni Kothari's critique of planning and development in India is much too well known to need introduction here. As an antidote to the distortions brought about by the formal system Kothari advocates the revival and generation of genuine voluntary work among the people—especially those who are at the receiving end of the formal developmental process. He makes it clear that he is not talking about large NGOs with headquarters and field agencies etc. but is mainly concerned with non-party activist groups which are struggling for the poor and the deprived. Even though these groups, as they exist, are ill organised and operate at micro-levels, it is possible to build up a network of such groups to face the challenge of providing true citizenship to all Indians. In this endeavour the role of women is crucial. The trap to be avoided is cooptation by the State and its agencies. Kothari's concerns will undoubtedly be widely shared but claims to the effect that India is a "fundamentally voluntarist" society seem a little spurious if only because they are wishful and unsubstantiated.

Ashis Nandy's "Images of the Indian State" starts off on a promising note when he suggests somewhat dramatically that over the last 150 years there have been

three images of the Indian State. The first is *state as protector of society*, the second is *state as a moderniser or liberator*, and the third is *state as an arbiter*. Before such grand imagination it is to indulge in technical nitpicking to say that there is not much point in talking about an "Indian State" before independence. However, the essential point that is sought to be made is that the third image has two contradictory possibilities viz. to allow for a renegotiation of power relationships between groups and communities which have hitherto been unequal, and, to be reduced to a sort of market-place for negotiations between those who are already entrenched. The difficulty has been that the first two images of the State i.e. as protector and liberator, have given it legitimacy to encourage the market-place aspect of the third rather than the more positive aspect which would have enabled India to move in a more genuinely democratic direction.

So far so good. But has the "emancipatory role of the state... become a ploy to subvert dissent"? Or has "the image of the state as protector of Indian civilisation... justified the right of the state to reorder the civilisation for purposes of the state"? Or does the legitimacy of the Indian nation-state survive mainly in the

"media, the text-books and middle-class consciousness"? Whatever the extent of the crisis in India things are not quite as Nandy sees them. In fact, a whole range of things happen to be going on in India in spite of the rather tight cages which Nandy seeks to put them in. Ethnic, regional, caste, occupational, agricultural and a plethora of other interests are constantly asserting themselves within the space provided by multi-party and non-party politics in India. The old power structure is being challenged and stretched routinely. The backlash is there as well. In fact the major problem that the state faces today is that the formal system does not have enough room to accommodate the groundswell that is apace. The Indian State which according to Nandy can be traced back to 150 years is in the process of being more and more Indianised. The challenge is to see that it survives in its new form. This challenge can be met by restructuring the State to reach out beyond its old colonial confines.

Shourie exposes the double standards which have informed much of the practice of Indian secularism. He suggests that the individual is the appropriate subject rather than a group or community and that the rights of the individual must be upheld rather than those of any relig-

ious community. Woolly secularism and an attempt to see all religions as embodying the same essential idea have led to misinterpretations of different religious traditions. Each religious tradition must be observed in its entirety. In the end there is no option to the recovery of humanism through secularism. Alas, Shourie has proved to be less than consistent if we go by all that he has written more recently.

To sum up, the two books under review examine different aspects of politics and governance in India. Saxena's book, though a little impatient and angry, will be useful for students of Indian politics especially because so little written is on matters of internal security by professional academics. The second book is a collection of lectures delivered by very eminent persons and, with a name as striking as the one it bears, will tend to pop out of a bookshelf wherever it is. Its ultimate value, though, will remain that of a faithful record of lectures delivered in memory of Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta.

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Classified Without Comment

Partha Sarathi Gupta

BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY PAPER RELATING TO INDIA: 1662-1947
(IN THREE VOLUMES)

I. ALPHABETICAL LIST II. CHRONOLOGICAL LIST III. ACTS OF PARLIAMENT AND
COMMAND PAPERS

Compiled by Adrian Sever

B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1992, pp. 182, 463 & 142, Rs. 1600.00

Anyone who has worked in the State Papers Room of the British Library in London will recall almost with nostalgia, the yards and yards of shelf-space occupied by the bound volumes of parliamentary papers containing a wealth of data on most aspects of the history of Britain and her overseas possessions since the seventeenth century, ranging from statistics, official correspondence on matters of high policy, reports of parliamentary committees and royal commissions on sensitive issues, bills introduced in Parliament but not passed, and Acts which finally became the law of the land.

All these documents were laid on the table of the Houses of Parliament, and were subsequently bound together after each parliamentary session. Before being bound they often appeared in dark blue paper covers—hence the term 'Blue books' for most publications of this type. (The compiler is incorrect in stating

(p. 51) that 'Command papers... either provide Parliament with information in the possession of the Government, or they expound Government Policy. In the latter case they are usually bound in white covers and referred to as 'white papers'.' The second sentence is not true. The term 'white paper' originally referred to Parliamentary reports issued by the British Foreign Office because they lacked the familiar blue covers of the other Parliamentary reports. After World War II the term has been used for policy statements by other ministries also.)

The only place in India where we have as complete a set of these papers as in the British Library, London, is the National Library, Calcutta. To consult these papers for research purposes bibliographical aids like indexes are an absolute necessity. Indexes were published by the British Government at long intervals and in limited copies. In the 1960s, P. & C Ford

published, through Basil Blackwell of Oxford, a 'Breviate of British Parliamentary Papers' for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These are also not easily available nowadays.

In such a situation of scarcity, we have reason to be grateful to Dr. Adrian Sever for having identified parliamentary papers relating to India and listed them in 3 volumes. The same papers are listed in 3 different ways—alphabetically (which comes nearest to being a subject index), chronologically and in the final volume in parts—Acts of Parliament and Command Papers.

The first part of the final volume (Acts of Parliament relating to India 1662-1947) is further sub-divided into acts passed between 1662 and 1800 (ten pages) and between 1801 and 1947 (thirty-five pages). This is because the regular printing of parliamentary papers did not commence until 1801. Once they started being printed, they were usually bound along with other sessional papers laid on the table of the House, and acquired a page reference in the bound volume. The compiler has arranged the Acts of Parliament (whether for the 1662-1800 unit or the 1801-1947 unit) according to the sessional (i.e. parliamentary) year in which they were passed. For the first unit, the sessional year is the first entry in the left hand column, the official citation of the Statute (named after the monarch during whose reign it was passed) is the second entry from the left, and the third (and final) entry is the title of the Act; for the second unit (1801-1947), the same pat-

tern is followed, but there is a fourth column, giving the page reference to the bound volume of sessional papers. To help the reader understand the technicalities of how an Act was cited officially, pp. 46-50 (Appendix A) gives a tabular chart of the regnal years of British monarchs correlating them with the parliamentary sessions. The second part of volume 3 opens with a brief description of how, since 1833, the Command papers have been numbered consecutively in five series. There is a mistake here, at p. 51. The Command papers since 1957 are code-numbered Cmnd, not Cmd, as printed here. The Cmd prefix stops with Cmd. 9889, the last paper of 1956.

This three-volume set is only a classified and comprehensive list, without any commentary. From my scrutiny of the volumes it appears that it will be of use mainly to scholars who have already consulted parliamentary papers on Indian affairs, or are aware of some of the more important papers. Then they will be able to locate many other papers in their field of interest and find the exercise rewarding. For the novice the volumes would have been more useful if the Alphabetical list (Vol. I) had been annotated or had exhaustive cross references. I give some examples by way of illustration.

Under the head Army at p. 8, we read 'ARMY: see also Bombay, Madras, Military, Native Army, Officers, Recruits, Soldiers, Troops'. After this main head a whole range of subheads are listed alphabetically and the relevant parliamentary paper number indicated against them. However, one important document dealing with the dispute between Indian Government and the British Government on the question of the Indian contribution to the costs of training British recruits to the Army in India—the Report of the Carran Tribunal (Cmd. 4473) in 1933-34—is cited on p. 46 under Defence Expenditure. Since this is closely related to the main head ARMY, it would have been a good idea to put 'Defence Expenditure' among the items listed after 'See also Bombay, etc.' as above.

A similar mistake has occurred at p. 36. A whole number of important papers have been listed under Constitutional Reforms from 1918 to 1940-41. However, the first administrative inquiry into the Montford Reforms (Sir A. Muddiman's Reforms Inquiry Committee) is tucked away separately under Reforms Inquiry at p. 142, without any indication that this was closely related to the material listed at p. 36. For an undertaking like this, proof-reading and cross-checking should have been very rigorous. There are some misprints, as in the Esher Committee Report to review the role of the Army in India (Cmd. 943), correctly listed in Volume 3, is cited in Volume I as Cmd. 493.

Dr. Partha Sarathi Gupta teaches in the Department of History, University of Delhi, Delhi.

Tales of Two Giants

Ajit K. Ghose

DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES IN CHINA AND INDIA:
REFORMS AND MODERNISATION

Edited by S.P. Gupta, Nicholas Stern, Athar Hussain and William Byrd

Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1991, pp. 350, Rs 300.00

A comparative analysis of the development experiences of China and India has always held a good deal of fascination of social scientists. The two are not only among the most important countries in the world but also share many characteristics in common. Both are large countries which together account for nearly thirty-eight percent of the world's population. Both embarked on what Kuznets called modern economic growth at about the same time; the modern Chinese state was founded in 1949 and India became independent in 1947. And they started with rather similar initial conditions; both were agrarian economies with semi-feudal structures and massive backlogs of underemployment and poverty.

The social institutions which evolved in the two countries were, however, very different; so were the growth strategies in spite of some superficial similarities (for example, the strategies were inward-looking in both countries). In China, radical agrarian reforms led to the development of collectivised agriculture in the form of the commune system. In the non-agricultural sector, the state was established as

virtually the sole entrepreneur. The industrialisation strategy was derived basically from the Stalin-Preobrazhensky model which emphasized command economy structures, heavy industries and surplus extraction from agriculture through manipulation of agriculture-industry terms of trade. In India, land reforms were minimal and private ownership of land remained the basis of agrarian reactions. In non-agriculture, too, the private sector remained dominant even though the public sector grew in importance over time. And while the industrialisation strategy borrowed ideas from the Soviet model, India's unreformed agrarian structure and market economy framework imposed severe limits on their applicability.

These contrasts were what, until recently, made China-India comparison fascinating, for it offered a unique opportunity to study the strengths and weaknesses of two competing systems of management of economic and social progress in developing countries. The scope for such studies, however, was extremely limited as statistical informa-

In spite of the many common characteristics the social institutions which evolved in the two countries were very different; so were the growth strategies in spite of some superficial similarities. In China, radical agrarian reforms led to the development of collectivised agriculture in the form of the commune system. In the non-agricultural sector, the state was established as virtually the sole entrepreneur. The industrialisation strategy was derived basically from the Stalin-Preobrazhensky model which emphasized command economy structures, heavy industries and surplus extraction from agriculture through manipulation of agriculture-industry terms of trade. In India, land reforms were minimal and private ownership of land remained the basis of agrarian reactions. In non-agriculture, too, the private sector remained dominant even though the public sector grew in importance over time. And while the industrialisation strategy borrowed ideas from the Soviet model, India's unreformed agrarian structure and market economy framework imposed severe limits on their applicability.

tion on China's economy and society was virtually unavailable until 1980. By that time however, China had changed course and its leaders were blaming the pre-1979 social institutions and growth strategy for all its persisting economic ills.

A similar process started in India a decade later. Both countries are now engaged in a similar project—that of transforming their economies into liberal market economies fully integrated into the global economy. In this new context, the focus of comparative analysis has shifted to "hows" and "whys" of the effectiveness of reform policies. However, the initial conditions this time are very different and the two countries started implementing reforms at different points in time and in different sequences. All this makes the new kind of comparative analysis rather tricky.

The volume under review puts together papers presented at a seminar held in 1990. By then, China's reform process was eleven years old while India's reform process had not yet started. There was thus very little scope for comparative analysis of reforms though there was scope for comparing the development experiences of the pre-1980 period. But the papers do not attempt any kind of comparative analysis at all; they focus either on China or on India. And while the papers on China deal with reforms, those on India deal with general problems and occasionally with issues of reform. There is only one paper which attempts a comparative study of the Steel industry in the two countries but here reforms do not enter the story; indeed, the study is descriptive rather than analytical.

There is disappointment on another count. The papers are of uneven quality as is to be expected. It is regrettable, however, that the topics appear to have been selected rather arbitrarily. The topics which are covered for both China and India include financial relationship between central and local levels of government, industrial policy and reforms, science and technology policies and demographic evolution. In addition, there is one study on China's party structure and decentralised development and one on rural institutions and reforms in India. And, of course, there is the study on steel industry which has already been mentioned. From such an assortment, it is impossible to get either a coherent view of China's economic reforms or an idea of the major economic problems facing India.

These disappointments notwithstanding, the reader will find a number of useful papers in the volume. It is perhaps appropriate to note here the most interesting points (in this reviewer's view) which emerge from the papers. The first set of points relate to centre-state (province) financial relationship. This is a problem area in both China and India. The fiscal system is more decentralised and less structured in China than in India. Ensuring macro economic balances, con-

sequently, is easier in India. But the centre-state (province) relationship is tension-ridden in both countries though for somewhat different reasons.

The second set of points relate to industrial reforms. Here the focus is on China for obvious reasons; in the case of India, only some issues of reform are discussed. Industrial reforms in China proceeded through a process of trial and error, but the basic thrust was towards "marketization". Considerable progress has been made towards development of product markets, establishment of enterprise autonomy and promotion of profit-orientation in production; much less progress has been made in developing factor markets and in imposing financial discipline on enterprises. At the sectoral level, though the reforms did not appreciably affect industrial growth, they changed output composition and ownership structure of enterprises, facilitated technological change and improved production efficiency. Interestingly, enterprise reforms created serious problems of fiscal management at the level of the central government; state revenues declined, state subsidies to loss-making enterprises increased and price subsidies to consumers also increased. The state's capacity to invest thus declined while that of the enterprises increased. The result was a wrong composition of investment which led to widespread shortages of goods and services (such as electricity and transport) which depend critically on public investment.

It must be pointed out that two aspects of the Chinese reforms, which are of much relevance in India today, are not mentioned in any of the studies. First, China's reform process started with agrarian reforms once again though this time they led to the reestablishment of private land rights and peasant production. These resulted in a very high growth of agricultural output and, consequently, a substantial expansion of markets for mass-consumption goods. Industrial reforms could thus be carried out in conditions of booming demand. In contrast, India's industrial reforms are being carried out in a recessionary context.

Second, in promoting special economic zones, China appears to have hit upon a formula which ensured, simultaneously, rapid growth of export of manufactured products, growing rental income for the state and growing wage income for the population. In these circumstances, the government could afford to take a long view of industrial reforms in the rest of China; exit policy, labour retrenchment, wage repression, etc. did not figure prominently in the Chinese reforms. Thus while the industrial reforms did not go far enough, they did not produce disastrous social consequences either.

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The Other Money

J.C. Sandesara

BLACK INCOME IN INDIA

By Suraj B. Gupta

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 187, Rs. 215.00 (Cloth)
Rs. 115.00 (paper)

Relative to the mid-eighties, black income now has become a less topical subject. This fact may presently lessen the interest of the reader in this book. But if he ignores it just for that reason, the reader will miss something. For this is a scholarly work, and although it contains a lot that the reader may know, it also contains a few things which he may not know. In the latter category falls the author's critique of the estimates of black income of NIPFP and his own estimates or 'guesstimates'. Secondly, it is possible that even on what he knows, the reader may not have a comprehensive and connected account of the subject, and this book presents such an account.

This book has seven chapters and an appendix. The first chapter discusses the definition and forms of black income. The second chapter highlights the nexus between political corruption and black income. The next two chapters give an account of the sources of black income and the methods deployed to generate it. The discussion here is comprehensive and detailed, covering direct taxes, excise and custom duties, and controls/regulations relating to trade, foreign exchange, prices, distribution, industrial licensing, etc.

The fifth chapter is on estimates of black income, it lists the previous works on this subject and gives a critical review of the estimates of NIPFP. It also offers the author's 'guesstimates'. These are: Rs. 50,977 crore for 1980-81, Rs. 85,205 crore for 1983-84 and Rs. 149,297 crore for 1987-88, representing 42, 46 and 51 per cent of GDP (factor cost, current prices), (p. 146, Table 5.1).

The sixth chapter traces in short the political and social consequences of black income, and at length the economic consequences. The latter relate to distribution of income and wealth, inflation, fiscal aspects, monetary and credit policies, economic structure, statistics, etc. The last chapter reviews the efficacy of the previous measures to tackle this problem, and describes the measures adopted during 1991-92. The appendix gives the rent theory of black income.

This reviewer welcomes this book for several reasons. It is a fairly comprehen-

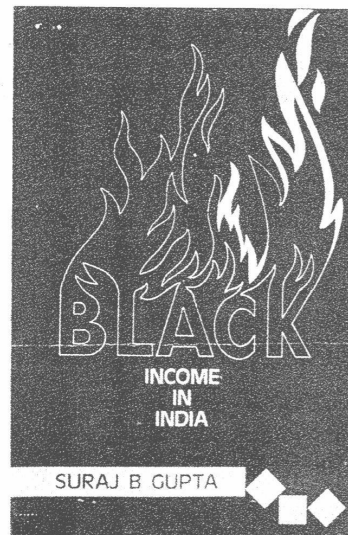
sive book on this subject. It gives a connected account of the topics dealt with. It embodies some original work of the author, especially on the estimates. All-in-all, this book is better than some of the previous works on black income in India.

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This review may be concluded with three comments. First, the author rightly clarifies the commonly used term 'black money', in terms of 'black income', 'black wealth', and 'black consumption'. But he does not include 'black production/turnover'. The author's indirect hint to it on page 16 ("The true role of black money *per se* is to facilitate 'black transactions' of all sorts) is not adequate to justify the exclusion of the 'black production/turnover' meaning from his clarification.

Second, at places the author may not be factually correct. Thus, for example, he asserts, "more importantly, the concentration of wealth (and control over the material means of production) in a few hands has... grown (p. 149). Concentration is fundamentally a measure of inequality, and when so viewed the concentration referred to has declined, over the years, partly because of the faster expansion of the public sector and of the not-so-big and medium houses/companies than of the already established big houses/companies in the private sector.

Finally, while agreeing with the author that NIPFP's estimates are on the low side, the author's own 'guesstimates' (given in para 3) seem to be on the high side. It is difficult to say how high. To



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Beyond Grammar: Protecting State Enterprises from the State

D.N. Ghosh

A GRAMMAR OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES: EXERCISES IN CLARIFICATION

By Ramaswamy R. Iyer

Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1991,
pp. 202+xix, Rs 200.00

The title defines the boundary limits of the scope of the book. This is a pedagogic exercise with focus on six areas of State-owned enterprises: their rationale, organisational form, style of functioning, relationship with the Government, accountability and evaluation. Though these have been the topic of endless debate over the past four decades, it is useful nonetheless to have, in this welter of confusion, a presentation remarkable for its clarity and precision.

Summing up succinctly the related issues on rationale and organisational form in the first two chapters, the author comes to the core problems, the climate of ambivalence that has permeated the diverse strands of relationships between the enterprises and the Government. Two chapters covering sixty three pages give a fairly comprehensive overview of the whole gamut of such relationships, formal as well as informal. A few merit special mention: the origin and fate of the holding company concept, an emotive topic of debate throughout the seventies, the implications of the MOU experiment; complaints and grievances, seemingly peripheral but acquiring sometimes

unpredictably substantive significance. The Supreme Court judgement laying down that the State-owned enterprises are 'State' within the meaning of Article 12 of the Constitution, gives the relationship a complex twist; its implications and fall-out have been carefully dissected. We have two chapters giving clarifications on several time-worn issues relating to their evaluation and accountability. In the end, a few thoughtful observations on the on-going privatisation debate.

Within the framework of logic and rationale of setting up the enterprises, Government has to persuade itself that it respects their managerial autonomy. Certain rules and norms of behaviour have been sought to be redefined and sharpened by the author, but will these be regarded as sacrosanct? In situations, for example, where market and technology are changing fast, Government as owner may be inclined to respect entrepreneurial judgements and calculated risk-taking by the managers of the enterprises, but can it qua government afford to bind itself to inflexible rules that ignore unpredictable political fall-outs affecting the credibility and sometimes even its own stability? Again, in a competitive market scenario

today, success will come to those who are agile, flexible and proactive. It is not as if public enterprises do not have managers with entrepreneurial ability and vision, but in an environment where success cannot be guaranteed, they will dither. Government may in such situations find it more convenient to rely on the private sector, maybe, in some cases, with explicit public support, to deliver the goods. It is illogical to search for, and lay down rules as to when and in what situation such investment should be made in the public or private sector.

Take the issue of privatisation. Government is not a free agent to allow logic to dictate their decisions: its options get severely circumscribed, given the complex of its political or economic alliances and the nature of its relationship with the outside world. Even in the matter of choosing the mode of privatisation, the Governments of many countries, as owners of these enterprises, have little manoeuvrability in view of their indebtedness to the donor countries and multilateral aid-giving agencies. The way this indebtedness could influence the options and even the internal relationship of the governments with their wholly owned enterprises become matters of bargaining and political acceptability among the various stake-holders. We are all familiar with how several countries are grappling with this agonising exercise.

Logic and reason may help create a structure, but what gives it life and drives it is the perception of the roles of the participating agents and dynamics of their mutual inter-relationship. Persons who control the structure and whose talents lie in manipulation may comfortably use it however logically and rationally conceived it may be to prevent such manipulation. There can be no grammar as to how, in a given situation, a Government will behave in relation to public enterprises. Such rules of the game are 'beyond grammar'.

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Right To The Elixir Of Life

B.G. Verghese

WATER RIGHTS AND PRINCIPLES OF
WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

By Chhatrapati Singh

The Indian Law Institute (Water Project Series), N.M. Tripathi,
Bombay, 1991, pp. 158, Rs. 100.00

Water is the very stuff of life and men and nations have killed or gone to war over water rights. With greater and competing demands for water and in the process of national development, issues of water use, equity and water rights have increasingly come to the fore. The Indian Law Institute's proposal to bring out a series of publications on various aspects of water rights is therefore timely and Chhatrapati Singh's slim volume marks a useful beginning.

At the outset, the author discards the distinction between municipal, national and international water rights which he regards as bogus since these distinctions concern legal regimes and not legal principles. This is a rather sweeping statement for international and federal bodies have certain sovereign and constitutional powers to enforce laws and conventions that have evolved over time and a whole body of international law exists and is emerging in new areas such as environmental pollution and in other non-navigational uses. Dr Chhatrapati Singh argues the case for upholding group rights as much as individual rights and he is right to do so. Nations and federating states are also large collectivities vis-a-vis one another.

The volume is based on the ideological proposition that the state is a usurper of the inherent and original civil rights of people to water (land, forests and other natural or common property resources). While this is certainly true in a certain sense it perhaps does not help to adopt an

When populations (and needs) were small and resources large a clash of interests could more easily be avoided. Some people just moved on. Now, when both needs and populations have grown and water is increasingly becoming a scarce resource over vast regions all over the world, the state and international community will increasingly become an arbiter.

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adversarial stance ab initio. For there can be no atomised society with individuals and small groups asserting their will, without inviting anarchy. When populations (and needs) were small and resources large a clash of interests could more easily be avoided. Some people just moved on. Now, when both needs and populations have grown and water is increasingly becoming a scarce resource over vast regions all over the world, the state and international community will increasingly become an arbiter.

Dr Chhatrapati Singh admits this when he says that the law must give the state the power to acquire water resources for public purposes but only if it holds these resources in trust for the common good which would entail taking on a correlated duty for which it may be held legally accountable.

His plea for prioritising drinking water as a first use and a human right is well taken. But this is already there in the National Water Policy which was adopted some years ago. He argues that while the state enjoys powers of eminent domain (as implicit in the Land Acquisition Act), when the state initiates any project or programme in the "public interest" the first users and those even indirectly dependent on them must be protected when the original water use is changed to benefit new water users. The "public" must be defined in relation to public purpose and the "purpose" must truly be a public purpose, encompassing the rights of the original public users.

However, here again, one detects an invasion of ideology in the assumption that Indian experience shows that the "class" of public which generally benefits is the rich and the urban at the cost of the poor and rural or agricultural. There is also some confusion about distinguishing consumptive from non-consumptive uses of water in the lament that "dams have changed the use of water to supply electricity to urban areas and industries". Again, "there are massive floods in areas which did not see floods before due to dam bursts or letting off excess water, and droughts in others which were fertile lands before". This is a gross exaggeration. The agricultural pumping load is rapidly increasing everywhere; and agriculture depends on a variety of industries both for inputs and various stages of processing. The references both to flood and drought cite exceptions rather than the rule. And the poor who succeed in improving their lives through irrigation or mitigation of flood risks or whatever somehow cease to be "people" and are suddenly seen to be arrayed among the ranks of the exploitative "rich". This kind of Marxist logic has long been disproved and discarded. It spoils an otherwise interesting and insightful book to resurrect unnecessary ideological baggage.

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For Cities To Acquire A Soul

Indira Menon

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND URBAN PLANNING,
TRACTS FOR THE TIMES: 2

By M.N. Buch

Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1993,
pp. viii + 81, Rs. 25.00

M.N. Buch, a former I.A.S. officer and the current Chairman of The National Centre for Human Settlements and Environment, takes a critical look at urban planning in India in the context of the new awareness of environmental issues in this slim volume brought out in the series *Tracts for the Times*. The first chapter gives the relevant data on trends in urbanisation in India, with international comparisons. The second chapter deals with land-use patterns and varieties of urban settlements, followed by an analysis of the services like housing, water, sanitation and energy. The attempts at urban planning in India and their shortcomings are next taken up for discussion and some solutions offered at the end.

When we talk self-consciously of urban planning we tend to forget that this is also a heritage that has come down to us over the millennia since the days of Harappa and Mohenjodaro where even the street-scape suggests careful planning. The capital of the Vijayanagara empire was a model of town planning and is, even today in its ruined state, a visual manual for students of architecture. Pilgrim towns, market towns and *kasbas* are all part of the urban mosaic of India with its rich diversity and strong resilience. While traditional settlements have evolved with a built-in harmony between different parts of the social organism, the modern city, with its western orientation, trying to grapple with third world realities, presents an alarming picture of dualism and lack of social cohesion.

Regional planning, which had received high priority in the early years of planning, has been given short shrift and the result has been a steady exodus to the cities, some of which, having long passed their optimum size, are running riot with no one able to control them. Whereas in advanced countries the urban population has become more or less static, in developing countries this influx to the towns is creating tremendous environmental pressures. Most metropolitan cities lack co-ordinated development due to the multiplicity of agencies, often working at cross purposes. Concrete jungles, sprawling slums, traffic jams, pollution and social tensions have become the order of the day. The cruel face of the modern

metropolis was seen during the recent riots and terrorist attacks in Bombay, which have added another dimension to the problem. The author seems to have underplayed the role of real estate agents, slumlords, colonisers, and contractors in shaping the cities of today and frustrating the efforts of the urban planners. These are factors which we can ignore only at our own peril.

The crux of the problem then is to find ways of containing this drift to the cities. The author suggests that the rural overflow be absorbed in the medium and small towns which still have a growth potential. If, however, these were to lose their personality and turn into urban slums, this is not the right solution. Satellite towns which are meant to take the pressure off the overcrowded metropo-

works programmes designed since the 70's. The question we have to ask ourselves, however, is whether we have fully exploited the rural potential to absorb more people, for, rural development of the kind envisaged in the early plans has not taken place. A mere technological revolution is not enough as it has only created enclaves of affluence and its labour absorption potential is still a matter of debate. An equitable distribution of that highly inelastic resource, land, through land reforms, provision of infrastructural facilities and an improvement in the quality of life through community development programmes constituted the essence of rural planning in the early 50's. Had we achieved these, the flight to the cities would not have assumed such large dimensions. The social injustices and caste atrocities, more than economic factors, are responsible for driving the rural people to seek the anonymity of the towns. For them to prefer to live on the pavements of large cities rather than in their ancestral village, there must be something radically wrong with our rural plans. Once in the city, says the author, a trifle condescendingly, "they do contribute to the prosperity of the city, even if they do not share in its wealth". The fact is not that they also contribute their mite, rather, they are the indispensable workforce that the idle rich have taken for granted but would like to banish from their sight as soon as their use is over. We may recall how the late Sanjay Gandhi helped to clean up the city of Delhi by dumping the unseeables in the malaria-ridden areas across the Jamuna.

The author is at his best while discussing environmental issues and has cited some excellent examples of faulty urban planning. South Gujarat, which is very fertile, has succumbed to the pressures arising from its proximity to industrial Bombay, while the agricultural deficiency is sought to be made good in the arid zone of North Gujarat through the Sardar Sarovar Project at a cost we are only too familiar with. In contrast to this, he quotes the example of Lutyens who displayed a rare sensitivity to ecology and tradition when he rejected the ridge and the flood plains of the Jamuna while selecting the site for New Delhi, thus fulfilling the qualifications of a good urban planner,

One of the critical areas of failure in urban planning in India is that whilst most Town and Country Planning Acts do contain a reference to regional planning, no worthwhile regional planning exercise has ever been undertaken in this country.

From
Environmental Consciousness and Urban Planning

lises have not been developed as promised and still hold out a hope for decongesting big cities and providing gainful employment for the migrants.

The long-term solution to the problem of rural-urban migration lies in rural planning which has to go hand-in-hand with urban planning. The author is doubtful about the capacity of the rural sector to absorb more, given the pressure on land and the unfavourable land-man ratio, combined with the kind of makeshift rural

For a city to acquire a soul it must have a focal point or a series of foci, whether they be the ghats of Benaras, the Red Fort in Delhi the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, or the Rockefeller Centre in New York. A focal point gives pride to the city and helps the citizens to identify themselves with the place in which they live.

From
Environmental Consciousness and Urban Planning

namely, "an appreciation of topography, and environmentally sensitive areas within the region".

At this point one feels tempted to ask, like a child listening to a fairy tale, "And then what happened, Mr. Buch?" Lutyens' Delhi is fast disappearing. The flood plains have been encroached upon and the ridge is under threat. Who, may one ask, was responsible for destroying the "soul" of Lutyens' city by plonking high-rise buildings right at the centre (obviously while the watchdog, the Urban Arts Commission was having a nap)? Instead of emulating the European cities which kept the old part of the city intact and situated high-rise buildings on the outskirts, we moved inwards, creating massive traffic and environmental problems. Delhi's rural hinterland has been taken over by the DDA and the so-called farm houses which are really luxury outlets for the elite and have bred a new culture accentuating the social inequalities. Looking at the way New Delhi has developed since the days of the tonga, one is reminded of Churchill's significant words, "We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us".

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Marxist Approach to International Law

Gurdip Singh

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND WORLD ORDER: A CRITIQUE OF CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES

By B.S. Chimni

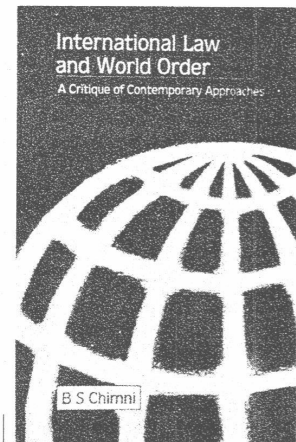
Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1993,
pp. 318, Rs 295.00

The emergence and evolution of international law is linked first and foremost with the acceleration in international relations although identical incentives provided impetus to developments in both the areas. International relations accentuated relations between States when they required cooperation for meeting political, economic, cultural and other internal needs beyond their frontiers. International law came into being the moment States became aware that certain rules of behaviour had to be determined in order to ensure the implementation of their obligations and mutual cooperation. This imperative, still being in force in international law, has created, particularly during the past three centuries a system of formally confirmed norms, institutions and procedures. Recognized by the States as the legal foundation of their relations, the system of international law was expected to function from the very beginning with the support of municipal laws operating within the respective jurisdiction of the States. However, these expectations have proved to be illusory. The reason for this is the very well-known specific nature of the process of decentralized creation of the rules of international law because of the absence of a super-state authority authorized to create rules and ensure their implementation. Therefore, international law cannot be equated with municipal law which is enacted by the supreme authority within a State. The legal nature of international and municipal law does not coincide.

The book under review entitled *International Law and World Order: A Critique of Contemporary Approaches* by B.S. Chimni is purely a theoretical work which critically examines the theories of international law and world order proposed by Morgenthau, Mc Dougal Laswell, Falk and Tunkin. The justification for such a purely theoretical work lies in the belief of the author that much of the disagreement in international legal discourse is, in the final analysis, theoretical rather than empirical. The book carries a foreword by the well-known international jurist Richard Falk. Falk describes the

present study as an explicit critique of Western non-Marxist thinking which also lays the basis for a genuinely Marxist approach rooted in the realities and projects of the Third World. Falk goes to the extent of mentioning that the author displays a real mastery over the complex and diverse material he discusses, and is impressively fair in presenting criticism, taking real account of the most serious efforts of the scholars whom he criticizes. However, in the same breath, Falk unwittingly remarks that the author has wrongly interpreted him.

The present study begins with a critique of Hans Morgenthau's realist theory of international law. The thrust of Morgenthau's approach is that what really matters in relations among nations is not international law but international politics. In his realist theory, Morgenthau makes an attempt to reveal the ineffectiveness of international law and describes international law as primitive law. . . . In the present critique, the author convincingly points out the inadequacies of the Morgenthau approach which focuses itself on the problem of effectiveness alone and fails to take into account the character and essence of law. The author rightly asserts that international law is not primitive law. Morgenthau entirely overlooks the relatively developed nature of international law as manifested in a science of international law, the existence of a profession of international law, and the nature of the subjects which are being regulated. The present study emphasises that the absence of a centralized system is met by institutionalized decentralised mechanisms. States have devised distinct arrangements in functional areas like international trade and finance, transport, human rights, disarmament etc., to enforce agreed rules. These can involve a host of measures including punitive sanctions, the sanction of non-participation, or mere condemnation, and may, deploy diverse techniques ranging from an obligation to provide information to the establishment of inspection and verification systems. National institutions are often assigned an important role in these enforcement systems.



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The critique points out that the most significant contribution of Mc Dougal has been to stress the necessity of, and to develop, an interdisciplinary jurisprudence to inquire into problems unyielding to the formalist mode of analysis. However, the author vehemently criticizes Mc Dougal's conception of inherent indeterminacy of rules and terms it a pseudo allegation. Social practice is the matrix within which alone the problem of determinacy/indeterminacy can be resolved. The author also assesses the contribution of Richard Falk to international legal and world order studies, as well as the bridge he has endeavoured to build between them. Finally, the book unfolds

itself with the clarification and articulation of a Marxist theory of international law and world order. The author maintains that Tunkin misconceived the basis of international law inasmuch as the dichotomous portrayal of the fundamental basis (the economic structure of a particular nation-State) of international economic relations made him posit an unacceptable distinction between 'general' and 'particular' legal norms in determining the character of contemporary international law. The study convincingly asserts that the Soviet understanding of the principles of socialist internationalism is erroneous insofar as its implications for the principles of sovereign equality of States and non-intervention were concerned. Moreover, the author rightly observes that Tunkin and other Soviet scholars did not address the problem of indeterminacy of rules which in the final analysis threatens the very existence of the international legal system.

The present critique concentrates on the modes of theorising, pointing to their inadequacies without referring to the substance, doctrine and history. The book is a useful contribution. It is the attempt of an international law scholar to theorise, in the form of a critique of existing approaches, the theme that international law is the foundation of the world order and needs to be rooted in society and the State.

The utility of the work would have been considerably enhanced if the author had broken the shackles of theoretical jargon. An empirical account of the problem of the appropriation of international law as a hegemonic instrument of the North, especially by the United States, would have been immensely useful and interesting for the readers. The foreword by Richard Falk is illuminating in this regard. There is, undoubtedly, a continuing need for critical study to identify and discredit attempts to impose regimes of double standards on behalf of western States. A true and contemporary challenge before a critique of the present nature would be a critical account of the US-led effort to insist selectively on non-proliferation of nuclear weaponry without being willing itself to accept even such minimal constraints on its own nuclearism as a Comprehensive Test Ban or a No First Use Pledge. The imposition of sanctions by the United States against the developing countries to coerce them to join non-proliferation regimes like Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty and the Missile Technology Control Regime have completely twisted international law and shaken the conscience of international lawyers.

The book is a remarkable endeavour, a critique of the existing influential approaches to international law and is a welcome addition to the existing literature on the subject.

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Custodial Violence and Death

Raju Ramachandran

HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA: THE UPDATED AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT

Vistaar Publications, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 226, Rs. 135.00

The title "Human Rights in India" is a trifle misleading. The Amnesty International Report does not in fact deal with the human rights situation in India in general: it deals with custodial violence and deaths. Human rights have evolved over three "generations": the first generation being Civil and Political Rights, the second generation being Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the third generation being "Solidarity Rights" such as the Right to Development, the Right to Peace, the Right to a Healthy Environment etc. The present Report, (as well as the Reports of Amnesty International generally) deals with civil and political rights.

The Reports of Amnesty International have often attracted unjustified criticism in our country. It has been said that they ignore human rights violations in the western hemisphere, and seek to highlight such violations only in Third World countries. In fact this is not so. As recently as in June 1992, Amnesty International released a report describing the use of torture and excessive force by the Los Angeles police. In the same month, it also released a report describing torture by the Greek police. For several years it has been urging the U.K. Government to independently investigate a range of human rights issues in Northern Ireland, and in 1991 it submitted information about the U.K. to the U.N. Committee against Torture.

The present report gives a list of 459 deaths in custody in India between 1985 and 1992 with details of the victims, the circumstances of arrest, the date and cause of death and action taken, if known. It analyses the patterns of torture in ordinary criminal cases, in cases of political activism and in counter-insurgency. The five pages of photographs tell the entire story. It seeks to identify the sections of society which are most vulnerable to custodial violence. It points out the failure of successive governments to ensure that proper investigations are held in cases of custodial violence, and the failure to prosecute the culprits even when inquiries have identified them.

The report also analyses why the police use torture, and observes, "The main reason why torture continues to be practised on such a wide scale throughout India is that the police feel themselves to be immune—they are fully aware that they will not be accountable, even if they

kill the victim and even if the truth is revealed. Institutional factors which contribute to the persistence of torture include: the negative public image and bad working conditions of the police, the inadequate training and facilities available to them, the high degree of political involvement in directing their activities and the failure of the government to accept responsibility for ensuring that the police operate within the limits of the law".

The Report concludes with a ten point programme for India which is worth setting out:

1. Adopt an official policy to protect human rights,
2. Investigate impartially all allegations of torture,
3. Bring the perpetrators to justice,
4. Strengthen safeguards against torture,
5. Inform detainees of their rights,
6. Train the police and security forces to uphold human rights, and reform the police,
7. Compensate the victims,
8. Provide torture victims with

- medical treatment and rehabilitation,
9. Investigate the causes and patterns of torture,
10. Strengthen India's international human rights commitment.

Incidentally, there is some good news on the compensation front. Over the last few years writ courts have in the exercise of their "public law" jurisdiction been awarding compensation in cases of unlawful detention and custodial violence, but such compensation has been more in the nature of a palliative, leaving the claimants free to pursue their "private law" remedies through suits in civil courts. But civil courts involve expensive and dilatory procedures. A judgment of the Supreme Court delivered in March this year in a case of death in custody holds that the writ courts can award exemplary damages. The principle is stated admirably: "If the guarantee that deprivation of life and personal liberty cannot be made except in accordance with law is to be real, the enforcement of the right in case of every contravention must also be possible in the constitutional scheme, the mode of redress being that which is appropriate in the facts of each case. This remedy in public law has to be more readily available when invoked by the have-nots, who are not possessed of the wherewithal for enforcement of their rights in private law, even though its exercise is to be tempered by judicial restraint to avoid circumvention of private law remedies, where more appropriate."

Raju Ramachandran is a lawyer practising in the Supreme Court, New Delhi.

ESSAYS ON INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Edited by Abdulrahim P. Vijayapur

South Asia Publishers, New Delhi, 1991, pp. 326, Rs 300.00

The subject of international human rights is one of abiding concern and, accounts for a large volume of literature. What makes the present volume of special interest is the fact that it is a joint effort of students and teachers. The Class of '89 at the Masters Programme on the International Law of Human Rights at the University of Essex have brought together the results of their research in this volume.

There is no single theme. The subjects range from the International Law of Armed Conflicts to the Rights of the Child, and from Israel's Deportation Policy to the Status of The Rights of Indigenous Populations. As Kevin Boyle points out in the Foreword the very diversity of subjects exemplifies the enormous range of concerns that are embraced in the present-day study of the protection of human rights through national and international law. This diversity, and that of the origin of the contributors, he says, underscore the universality of human rights and the validity of what might be termed as the motto of the Human Rights Movement, namely, unity through diversity under law.

The editor of the volume is a Reader in Political Science at the Aligarh Muslim University. He has written thought-provoking essays on two closely related subjects: the struggle against apartheid and the human rights of the "untouchables" in India.

R.R.

The Household In Gender Issues

Rita Brara

FINDING THE HOUSEHOLD: CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Edited by K. Saradamoni

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 251, Rs. 225.00

This collection forms a part of the proceedings of the Regional Conference for Asia on Women and the Household held in 1985. The volume under review evaluates the usefulness of the household as a unit for apprehending the status of women in India, Korea, Philippines and Vietnam. The theme, of course, has an academic and a political relevance for Asia and beyond.

The book opens with a preface by the Series Editor, Leela Dube. Placing this volume in the context of the Series, she emphasizes its concern with questioning the appropriateness of the household for an understanding of gender issues.

K. Saradamoni discusses the papers presented at the conference in the introduction, including three that are not included in this collection. She draws attention to some of the limitations of the papers in this volume and areas that have been left out of consideration. The lacunae, in her view, pertain especially to the relation of household size and composition to changes in the wider society. The implications of marriage and inheritance patterns for the status of women is, again, a domain untouched.

The second essay, written by Roland Lardinois, is remarkable for arguing the position that representations of the family and the family as an entity both have a reality such that an either/or approach has to be eschewed. He draws attention to the contested definition of the family in

medieval India in a brief, albeit provoking, appraisal of the struggle between the Dayabhaga and the Mitakshara schools. Drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu's work, he reiterates that formal typologies of domestic groups are meaningless since residence and/or consumption constitute only one factor among others in the construction of practical groups. The centrality of patrimony or funeral rites in defining the joint family and the relative independence of these two principles from that of residence and consumption is noteworthy. On the definition of the Hindu (joint) family, he concludes that 'confusion belongs as much to the definition as to the object itself'.

The lack of unanimity about a definition of the household arising from the diverging perspectives within the social sciences and the enumerative orientation of the official data collection agencies is documented by N.J. Usha Rao in the third essay.

U. Kalpagam combs through secondary data sources—the Census, the National Sample Survey and the Rural Labour Enquiries—comparing information pertaining to women and households over time and across regions. She avers that the data is inadequate for an understanding of issues pertinent to the status of women and changes that may be anticipated in the wake of commercialisation or urbanisation, for instance.

For the anthropologist, matrilineal

societies have been of perennial interest and D.N. Majumdar presents a comparison of three such communities in north-east India—the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos. He notes that decision-making in their households does not vest exclusively with women and examines the differences in this regard within these matrilineal communities themselves. At the same time, he urges that the household here cannot be treated as a self-contained group since it relates to a larger matrilineal unit.

Kiran Mishra's paper on the Nishing tribe of Arunachal Pradesh whose members practise polygyny reports the prevalence of a longhouse that is made up of several mother-centred household units. Conventional assumptions about the family and the household do not deliver the character of the household or the longhouse here. Mishra then recommends an acquaintance with a region and its communities before launching a survey.

The next essay transports the reader to the lives of working class women in Bombay. Every third woman earns an income in Alice Thorner and Jyoti Ranadive's sample of women from chawls and slums. The composition of the household here is shifting and flexible. Family members move back and forth from rural and urban households such that the study of households points towards their encompassment within a family.

How women agricultural labourers in Tamil Nadu and Kerala walk the tight-rope of wage-earning and mothering is profiled by K. Saradamoni. The supportive network is provided by older children, kin, affines and neighbours in the absence of State facilities.

The conception of household headship is questioned in several contributions to this volume. Jeanne Frances I. Ilo shows that the popular culture in the Philippines is relatively egalitarian and recognizes the dual headship of rural households in contrast to the official and legal position. She thinks that a woman's earnings, increasingly, enable her to exercise her choices.

Oakla Cho reports that the social position of Korean women is incommensurate with their actual contribution, irrespective of class. She suggests that the imbalance stems from the patriarchal structure of Korean society and cannot be fathomed by focussing upon the household as the unit of data collection and analysis.

Enthusiasm Untempered by Originality

INDIAN WOMEN: THE POWER TRAPPED

By Indu Prakash Singh

Galaxy Publications, 1991, pp. 132, Rs. 135.00

There has been a spate of contributions of varying quality to women's studies in India. This book is more a product of enthusiasm than of original research. If it was meant to be a textbook it falls short of this objective. The author has written three other books with titles that suggest his feminist concerns. Although the bibliography is 18 pages long, his main sources are newspaper clippings and a few basic books. In fact, only Chapters 4 and 5 have references at all.

Chapter 1 covers the history of Indian women from the Vedic age to the present day in six pages. There are four lines on patriarchy, the main actor, and no mention of economic systems. The current women's movement merits one page. Later in the book (p. 43) the connections are briefly stated between women's and wider peoples' movements and the micro and the macro. The rest of the book attempts to present data on women's oppression. The plight of the girl child, prostitution, violence against women and the 'new configurations' are dealt with in Chapters II to V. Of these, the longest is Chapter IV on violence against women with sub-headings like the following:

"Entity Bulldozing or Patriarchally Propelled Victimisation (inter-gender: man vs woman)", "Chimerical Oppression: Patriarchally Created Pseudo-Victim Propelled Self-Victimisation and Victimisation (extra-intra person)," and Leviathanic Onslaught: . . ."

New terms have been coined: *Satisfication*, patri-politics, femicidealisation and femistigmatisation (two forms of patriarchal process). Relevant cases are recounted vividly with genuine concern for the victims and it is shown that "girls are hijacked by patriarchy". In places the narrative is rivetting as when the pseudo women's liber Osho Rajneesh is exposed and the patri-prescriptions of Swami Sivananda are denounced. The book exhorts enlightened "hupers" (human persons) a term suggested, we are told, by Prof. Upendra Baxi, to attack the problems before it is too late. We hope they will.

Leela Kasturi

From the perspective of an anthropologist looking for fresh approaches to women's studies, this volume as a whole does not break new ground. If the household is an unsatisfactory unit for understanding the position of women what other methods are being or should be espoused is scarcely addressed. Even the issues that arise in individual ethnographic descriptions are allowed to accumulate here without being taken up in a conclusion, presumably in conformity with the prevailing style in edited collections.

Again, probing the limitations of household definitions and women's work as delineated by the agencies of the State is an onerous exercise. However, if the attempt is to go beyond conventional efforts in this direction it may be salutary to investigate precisely how the data generated by the Census for instance has been utilized in planning projects for women.

The essay by Le Thi documents the part played by the State in guaranteeing and enforcing equal rights for men and women in Vietnam. These legal measures are complemented by measures aimed at the health protection of women, their participation in the economy as well as facilities for childcare.

The last paper is a contribution by INSTRAW (United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women). It recounts the Institute's objectives of reconceptualising concepts relevant for the understanding of women's economic contribution and their cultural roles, along with improving the availability of data on the situation of women.

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For this reviewer, Lardinois' suggestion that representations of the family need not be counterposed against households as both have a reality is promising. But this essay, in a sense, does not belong to the volume since women are significant only by their absence in the piece. Yet, one way of bringing the household back into the debate about the status of women would be to explore its representation in women's narratives and popular media which is another way of locating women and the household in society and culture.

I will wind up with two minor observations: The term 'polygynous' is spelled 'polygenous' (p. 137 and p. 140, for instance) and is likely to mislead the reader.

Again, INSTRAW espouses the term 'informal sector' to express non-monetised economic activities. While researchers are free to evolve new terms, the Institute may explain its usage of an existing term—'informal sector'—that is contrary to the current practice of economists who understand it as characterised by monetary exchanges for work or services.

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A Unique Linguistic Mosaic

R.S. Gupta

DIMENSIONS OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS IN SOUTH ASIA:
PAPERS IN MEMORY OF GERALD KELLEY

Edited by Edward C. Dimock Jr., Braj B. Kachru and Bh. Krishnamurti
Oxford and IBH Publishing, Delhi and Calcutta, 1992, pp. 347, Rs 395.00

South Asia presents an excellent paradigmatic example of fusion as well as diffusion of linguistic traits across genetic boundaries. The fusion and diffusion of ethnic, cultural and linguistic characteristics among speakers of the four major language families represented in the sub-continent, viz Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Burman, have given rise, over the decades, to the notions of "Indian Man", "India as a linguistic Area" and, finally, "India as a Sociolinguistic Area".

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The emergence of these notions has encouraged scholars to study language dynamics in close nexus with socially significant variables. Recent years have witnessed several attempts, sketchy as well as sustained, to study and analyse such processes as contact and convergence in bi/multilingual contexts and such related phenomena as language change, shifting verbal repertoires, language loyalty and identity, attitudes towards different languages, as well as such issues in applied sociolinguistics as language planning, modernization and standardization. This new scholarly interest and a growing concern to study the intricate and interrelated patterns of developments within the general ambit of 'a sociolinguistic area' is amply illustrated in the present volume. The volume has been painstakingly and affectionately compiled by three eminent contempo-

rary linguists who have devoted a lifetime to the study of the various facets of South Asia as a linguistic area, as well as South Asia as a sociolinguistic area. The editors have performed this labour of love in memory of Gerald Kelley, and the volume contains some richly deserved tributes to him. The editors go to some length to point out how each contributor to the volume is directly or indirectly linked to Kelley as a friend, colleague or a student. An interesting thought strikes one at this point: just as we have a 'linguistic area' and a 'sociolinguistic area', there might quite conceivably be something that perhaps could be termed a circle or network of linguists. The volume brings together contributions from members of this network.

It is a cohesive and logical presentation of twenty-four learned articles neatly arranged in eight sections under different section-titles. Such a neat and clear-cut demarcation, to say the least, is difficult as there are always areas of overlap and the dividing line sometimes becomes rather fuzzy. Perhaps the only section that can really be separated from the others is the opening one which presents an examination of the notion of South Asia as a sociolinguistic area. The three contributors to the section—Jean D'Souza, Charles A. Ferguson and Colin P. Masica—provide a thorough scrutiny of the concept of a sociolinguistic area from historical, cultural and linguistic viewpoints and examine the traits that might prove useful in the study of such a phenomenon. The traits that emerge from the scrutiny are: multilingual repertoires, ancient literacy, diversity of scripts, dialect variation, register variation, kinship terms, forms of address and politeness formulae. These features present an inexhaustibly rich framework for scholars and researchers interested in the unique linguistic mosaic that is South Asia.

Section II (Verbal and Non-Verbal

Communication) includes four papers. Emeneau studies joking relationships i.e. classes of kin who have joking or jesting relationships. The classic instances of such relationships in the Hindi area are the 'devar-bhabhi' and 'jeeja-saali' relationships. The paper presents data from such languages as Kolami, Parji, Naiki, Gadaba, Kurux, Gondi and Munda, and regrets the paucity of sustained studies of such relationships in other languages. Krishnamurti's paper is devoted to the linguistic exponents of politeness in Telugu, while Ulrich examines another Dravidian language, Kannada, in terms of the sociolinguistic tokens of changes in language attitudes. Non-verbal communication forms the subject of Southworth's paper which highlights the relatively unexplored area of emblematic gestures in South Asia.

Section III (Contact, Convergence and Creativity) is too small to satisfy the interested reader. There are only two papers though, to my mind, this section should have attracted many more contributions. The two papers that are there, however, make very interesting reading. Braj Kachru proposes a tri-modal approach to diversity in terms of areally defined characteristics. The three interrelated sets he proposes are: linguistic area, sociolinguistic area and literary area. The three concepts, taken together, present a rather satisfactory paradigm for the study of literary creativity, cultural awareness and identity-consciousness in contact situations. This paradigm because of the addition of a new concept of literary area to the already established concepts of linguistic area and socio-linguistic area, should prove to be useful for scholars working in the field of comparative literature.

Anvita Abbi examines the process of reduplication, using the techniques of comparative method, to suggest answers to such questions as: 'where and how did reduplicative structures originate', 'what are the social and semantic motivations for reduplication', and 'were reduplicative structures the result of interlingual borrowing or did they develop independently and simultaneously in different language families'. The paper presents copious data and constitutes an interesting instance of the study of synchronic and diachronic language dynamics in contact situations.

Section IV (Structure in Variation) contains three language-specific studies. This section too, one feels, should have inspired more contributors. Tej Bhattia, writing within the specific context of Hindi, takes cognizance of the phenomenon of variation and deals with the problematics of setting up parameters for a pan-dialectal grammar of Hindi. This paper makes particularly interesting reading when coupled with the last paper in the volume. James Gair takes up the much discussed case of Sinhala diglossia. Basing his case on Standard Theory (Chomsky 1981, 1982 and 1986) Gair presents a fresh rebuttal of DeSilva (1974)

and discusses Sinhala diglossia within current theoretical framework, with special reference to agreement and case-assignment. Maninder Verma is even more specific and limits his discussion to non-finite verbals in one variety of Bhojpuri.

Section V (Standardization and Modernization) includes Rocky Miranda's study of the process of standardization in the context of Konkani, the language of Goa that recently got entry into the hallowed sanctum of the VIII Schedule of the Constitution of India. S.N. Sridhar presents an analysis of the process of modernization in Kannada. Section VI (Language Resources and Repertoire) is illustrative of the bewildering variety and complexity of verbal repertoire in South Asia. While Chandar Daswani studies the functions of Sindhi and attitudes towards this minority language, Hans Hock takes up for discussion Sanskrit, a 'dying prestige language', within the context of Uttar Pradesh. Yamuna Kachru discusses the problems of language maintenance, shift and accommodation in, what she prefers to call, 'Hindi speaking India'. Hindi, again, forms the data-base for Rajeshwari Pandharipande who discusses the relationship between language and religion. The paper presents several insightful comments and opens up interesting possibilities for research. A departure from the rest of the papers is presented by Norman Zide's discussion of the transformation of a literary genre—the limerick—in India. Perhaps this paper should have been placed in the next section.

Section VII: (Language and literature) which has two papers. The first is an examination of Hindi stress from a poet's perspective, while the second by Usha Nilsson is an examination of the concepts of modernism and modernization from the historical, literary and sociological viewpoints. She goes on to comment on the Hindi novel with particular emphasis on the women writers.

Section VIII (Afterword: Indian Linguistics To-day) is a critical Survey by Srivastava of the major concerns of Indian Linguistics. The paper has several sharp references to the theoretical traps that some Indian linguists have been unable to avoid. The paper is also important for its rebuttal of some notions about multilingualism and literacy that are prevalent in the west, and which tend to influence the methodology and approach of several linguists working within the Indian context.

This is a useful volume for any scholar who is interested in South Asian linguistics. Some gaps and overlaps are inevitable in such a collection of papers. One could also suggest a slight rearrangement of the papers. On the whole, however, it is an excellent volume for which the editors deserve to be congratulated.

Dr R.S. Gupta is Associate Professor, Centre of Linguistics and English, School of Languages, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

India's Modernity—Trapped In The Other Tongue?

Ayesha Heble

BEYOND LINGUISTIC LIMITS: THE OTHERNESS OF ENGLISH, INDIA'S AUNTIE TONGUE SYNDROME

By Probal Dasgupta

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 228, Rs. 235.00

Is this a book about India's language development or is this a book about India's socio-economic development? Its author, Probal Dasgupta, would probably be very pleased that I asked that question because perhaps the central point that the book makes is that the former cannot be really understood without reference to the other. Our very adoption of English as the language of development, quite apart from its historical inception as the language of colonial domination, is in itself an indication of the particular model of development that we have opted for—"the workaholic frenzy that passes for modernity"—seriously eclipsing our own indigenous genius for creativity or even, for that matter, for thought. What English means in India is a question that goes beyond the limits of linguistics, because it is not merely the semantic aspect of the language that the author is concerned about, but rather the way in which the use of English in itself has an implication that the Indian languages do not. That English is the language of the ruling elite in India is something we all know; what Professor Dasgupta wishes to explore is the laws that control the ways in which it continues to function as such. In doing so he is aware that he is treading "an ill-defined region where emergent disciplines such as pragmatics, stylistics, semiotics, discourse analysis, etc., compete for terri-

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tory, in the buffer zone between the grammatical study of competence and the non-grammatical study of performance". In this sense, he concedes that "it is okay to call the subject matter of this book *sociolinguistics*", although he seriously doubts whether there has been any "valid sociologically oriented paradigm of language studies worthy of hyphenated association with a field of sociology that has produced such workers as Toqueville, Marx, Comte and Weber". Is he suggesting, perhaps, that his is the first?

Having told us what the subject matter of the book is, he also feels the need to explain to us (for which, I suppose, we should be grateful) the enigmatic title and subtitle of the book. He takes the motif of otherness from Braj Kachru's use of the term 'Other' Tongue to describe English in contraposition to the Mother Tongue, but is not willing to give Kachru the full credit for the concept, which was "already caught up in the widely known networks of echoes from Hegel to [Edward] Said", having passed via Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir en route. The term *Auntie*, used in conjunction with a *tongue*, he borrows from a socio-linguistic study by Kamal K. Sridhar carried out in Bangalore in 1989, in which she observes that the use of the term *auntie* "functions as a marker of Western sophistication among the upwardly mobile middle classes in urban and semi-urban India". In expanding the term and applying it to the entire language itself, he wishes to provide an analogy for the relationship between English and its Indian users: "We conclude that English is not 'one of us', but an important presence that one must be polite to...".

The other concept that he puts forward as being central to his theory is that of India as belonging to a FESHified Asia—FESH being his acronym for Formal Elaboration of Social Hierarchy—which has traditionally exhibited the ability to "domesticate an instrumental or Other language as a High (H) term in the system and freeze it into this artificial role, at a distance from the natural or vital heart of the network that defines the identity of the speech community"; he suggests that this is the "type of functional slot English occupies in India's linguistic

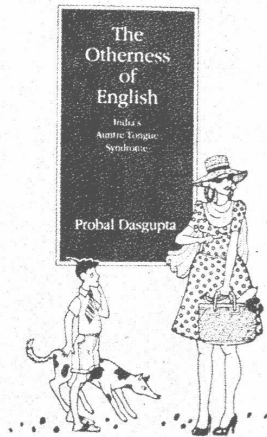
space". He again refers to Kachru in his comparison between the role of Sanskrit in ancient India and the role of English in modern India, which he partly agrees with, but adds his own observation that what distinguishes the two is that whereas the former "exhibited independent, substantial creativity... Our India's English is... quite devoid of independent creativity". He cites examples from the world of Indian pop music, cinema and literature as evidence for this rather sweeping generalisation, though of course he is willing to concede there have been some "stray ventures" who have tried. (Has the Professor read Amitav Ghosh, one wonders, or even good old R.K. Narayan, for that matter; I suppose they would be the "stray ventures"!)

In fact what Professor Dasgupta is saying is not very much more than that English has been an instrument of power in India, but he just says it in a much more complicated way. He very effectively demonstrates the feeling of exclusion that the use of English must give a large section of the population, by quoting a large chunk of Levi-Strauss in the original French and then refusing to translate it for the benefit of those readers who do not understand that language, but surely he must realise that his own use of long and complicated sentences, in which the reader is constantly tripping over sub-clause within sub-clause, might have the very same effect. As an example I shall quote the full sentence from which I have taken the phrase mentioned in my first paragraph above:

"This behaviour on the part of politicians and intelligentsia of a nation full of talent and intellect becomes easy to understand, to forgive, and eventually to overcome if you agree with this book's thesis that our national consensus on letting experts run the developmental process has led us all to surrender to English as the language of expertise, and has eclipsed the serious national discourses—which nonetheless continue to take place at the regional level, in the regional languages, in accordance with dialogical conventions which are deep-rooted in the history of Indian discourse which our official theories have remained incapable of taking cognizance of, because our standard conception of development has forced us to surrender not only our freedom but even the language of our thought to the workaholic frenzy that passes for modernity."

I thought only sociologists talked like that! And certainly not someone who places himself in the field of sociolinguistics, which, as he himself says, "has long been committed to social action aimed at overcoming inequalities of linguistic privilege". Honestly, Professor Dasgupta, your linguistic privileges are showing!

LANGUAGE AND DEVELOPMENT ■■■■ 1



Actually, to be fair, I'd probably agree with most of what he is saying, if only he would cut the verbiage and let the reader come to grips with his thought rather than having to grapple with his language. I was also rather put off by his rather self-conscious manner of addressing the "dear reader" every now and again with an exaggerated air of complicity, but I am willing to overlook that. What is more difficult to accept is that by choosing to write in such a style he is guilty of mystifying a subject which is indeed of immediate concern to all of us; and that subject, ironically, is this very process of mystification through language use itself. Having suggested that his book is proposing a "theoretical answer to the question of

how we can fight our way out of complicity with the Anglo-American managed fundamentalism besetting Indian "modernity", he at least has the grace (and it may be his only saving one!) to admit that "the practice of this book may have failed to implement adequately what this answer preaches". Being the first volume in a series on Language and Development, jointly edited by himself and Udaya Narayana Singh, one can only hope that the forthcoming volumes will not fall into the same trap.

Ayesha Heble, senior lecturer in English at Jamia Millia Islamia, is at present working on her Ph.D thesis in English Language Teaching.

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Because. . .

By Lakshmi Kannan

Kamala washed her hands after dinner and rushed into her aunt Pattu Athai's room. She bumped against her mother on the way. "Hey, easy, easy," said her mother, laughing. "Pricking your ears to hear a story? But you'll have to wait. Akka is having dinner."

Kamala waited for her aunt inside her room. She knew that her aunt would not take very long for she only had *palagaram* at night. Her uncle's garlanded photograph hung on the wall. What a nice face he had. A huge book rested on the single bed in the room. *Ramayana*. My aunt will read out from it but what story will she pick tonight? Kamala crossed over and reached a small table on a side. A medium-sized mirror hung over the table on the wall. On the table was a bottle of hair oil, some letters, a large comb, a smaller comb, a few hairpins and talcum powder. Ah, Athai's comb is so very wide. Naturally. She needs it. For her luxuriously thick and long hair cascaded down well beneath her waist. But she always gathered it up and secured it in a no-nonsense bun with pins. Whenever she let it down free, Kamala loved to run her fingers through that glossy, raven hair admiringly. Hasn't Athai eaten yet? Kamala moved away from the table to a corner where a *veena* slumbered inside a cover. She lifted the cloth cover and peered inside. O, it's so dusty, in spite of the cover. She wiped the dust with her fingers. *Nang!* The note stole out of the *veena* like a secret. Nobody in the house touched this *veena* or played on it. If Kamala asked about it, she always got a standard reply: who'll ever have the nerve to play on the *veena* when Pattamma is around? She is the real maestro while the rest of us are just half-baked amateurs. Kamala would then turn to her aunt and plead: Athai, please play on the *veena* for me. Just once. I'm eager to hear you play, she would beg but Pattamma always refused firmly: No sweetheart, I'd rather not. Kamala had even asked all others at home to persuade her: You praise her so much, all of you. Then why don't you ask her to play, for god's sake? She would get no answer. Nor could she ever catch her aunt playing on the *veena*. Why ever not? Kamala now strummed on the strings slowly—*Saa . . . paa . . . ree*.

"Naughty girl!"

Kamala turned around to see her aunt, smiling.

"Like to learn the *veena*?"

"Yes!"

"Alright. Cover the *veena* properly and come. Hurry or it will be time for you to go to bed."

Kamala settled down comfortably beside her aunt on the bed. She placed the large *Ramayana* on her lap.

"What story will you tell me tonight?"

"But my child, I told you so many times that "*Ramayana*" is a single, long story. Don't we have to know it in its continuity?"

"O.K. Athai".

Pattamma opened the book on the page which held a book mark. "Remember what I said about Kaikeyi who asked King Dasarath for that boon?" she asked Kamala.

"Yes, I do. The wicked queen ordered that Sri Rama should be ban-

Lakshman's wife."

"Does Lakshman have a wife?"

"Of course he has. He is married, you see."

"Then why doesn't Lakshman take his wife to the forest just as Rama takes Sita with him?"

"Oh . . . er . . . you see it's . . . it's very tough in the forest. Life is hard there."

"Why should it be hard? They can all go on a picnic and have fun."

Pattamma laughed aloud. "No, no, my child. The wild forest is full of thorny bushes, snakes and scorpions. Living in a forest is very difficult, particularly for women."

"Wouldn't it be equally difficult for Sita as well? In that case, why does Rama take her with him?"

"My sweetheart, how can anyone separate that couple? Would Sita ever agree to that? She is a devoted wife, a *pativrata* who always insisted that Ayodhya is where Rama lives."

"Didn't Urmila ever get a chance to say that Ayodhya is where Lakshman lives?"

bored. And lonely. Poor girl."

Pattamma cupped her hands around the little girl's face and smiled at her. "Just look at the way your mind works! Urmila wouldn't be bored at all. She'll be very busy serving her mothers-in-law and her father-in-law. Urmila is a noble soul who sacrificed her own married life for the sake of Rama and Sita. You must understand that."

"Yes Athai."

There was a rustle and the swish of a sari. They turned around. It was Maitreyi. "Akka, is she pestering you again with endless questions of why, where and how? She does the same thing with me too."

"No, Maitreyi, Kamala is very intelligent. It's we who lose our patience."

"Come on. It's time to sleep. You'll have to be up early in the morning for school."

"Good night Athai," said Kamala hugging her aunt again. Pattamma kissed her on her brow.

* * *
"O God, what's this here? Kamala?"



ished to a wild forest for fourteen years."

"And then?"

"Then Sita insisted that she'd also go with Rama. Even his brother Lakshman said that he'd go to the forest with Rama."

"Right. Then all of them get ready to go to the forest. The two queens, Kausalya and Sumitra in particular, are very sad. Rama says goodbye to his parents. Lakshman also said goodbye to his parents and to Urmila."

"Who's Urmila?"

"O I forgot to tell you. Urmila is

"Mischievous girl! Even if she said so, that wouldn't have stopped Lakshman from leaving her behind."

"Why?"

"Because he is a rare kind of a man. A gem of a younger brother who is born to serve Rama with total devotion."

"Then why did he marry Urmila?"

"Kamala! If you keep on asking cross-questions like this, the story wouldn't move at all."

Kamala wrapped her arms around her aunt's neck. "I'm sorry Athai. I only asked because I thought Urmila would be so

Kamala!"

"Coming Amma. I'm brushing my teeth," she replied from the bathroom. When she came out Maitreyi asked her:

"Kamala, why is your bed wet? Did you . . ."

The small girl's face flushed. Maitreyi felt her brow and her neck. She noted that Kamala's eyes were red and swollen. Her face was also puffy. "Do you feel ill, my child? But you don't seem to have a fever. Then how did this . . ."

"....."

"Your eyes are so red. Swollen."

Kamala buried her face in the folds of her mother's sari.

"Tell me sweetheart. You can tell me."

"I got a bad dream. Got scared."

"Really? Why didn't you run up to me or to Appa?"

"I did. But both of you were fast asleep." Maitreyi stroked her head. "What did you dream about? Tell me."

"I see a devil right from a distance. He has ugly teeth jutting out of his mouth. I try to run away, to escape, but he takes a deep breath which sucks me in like a strong wind and sweeps me up to him. Then he laughs and cackles loudly. You know Amma, in his hand..."

"That's enough my child. Just forget about it. You know after all, don't you, that it was only a dream?"

Maitreyi gathered the bedspread and took it inside to the back portion of the house to soak it in soap water. Her mother-in-law Kalyani was busy making coffee.

"Hasn't Muniyakka come as yet, Amma?" asked Maitreyi. "No sign of her," replied her mother-in-law, Kalyani.

"I wanted her to help me put out the mattress to dry."

"Why, what happened?"

Maitreyi explained. "Poor thing. She's only a small child. Must have got very scared."

"Muniyakka seems to be late again."

"But I'm not late 'Mma, here I am!" cried out Muniyakka, standing at the back door.

"You're exactly forty-five minutes late, do you know that?" asked Kalyani.

"What can I do 'Mma? There was a dense fog all around when I walked. And my old eyes have gone so bleary. So I couldn't notice him lurking about. If only I had, I'd have given the devil a slip and would have come through the Ulsoor road."

"Now don't reel off your yarn about the devil again. Who was it this time, the 'good' devil or the 'bad' devil?" asked Kalyani.

"What can I tell you 'Mma, it's all a joke for you. Damn the fellow! If he was the Good Devil, why would I take another street and avoid him? I would have sat down and shared my tobacco with him, surely?" said Muniyakka. Kalyani and Maitreyi exchanged glances with each other and smiled.

"So you say that this was your 'bad' devil?" asked Maitreyi.

"Indeed it was. He had hidden himself nicely in the fog. Then he suddenly pounced on me and pulled me by the hair. O lord, how it pained me! Let go of me, you fool, leave me alone, I pleaded. I'm getting late for Amma's house, you swine, I said. They'll get angry, I begged. Nothing worked. The stinker held me by the hair. Give mecoconut, give me jagger, he demanded greedily," she said, picking up the vessels that had to be cleaned and swearing under her breath all the while in fluent Kannada.

"Muniyakka, wash those big utensils first and give them to me so that I can sprinkle water over them and take them in for cooking. I've to hurry up today and offer the *neivedyam* or I'll get late," said Visalam Mami, the woman who worked as a cook in the household.

"Muniyakka, will you come in a minute? Kamala's mattress has to be put out in the sun. She wetted her bed last night. I really wonder why..." Maitreyi was cut short by Muniyakka. "Ah, let her be 'Mma. She is only a child. Come, let's get the mattress."

Inside the house Muniyakka glanced at Pattamma saying her prayers in the puja room. The old woman briefly bowed before the gods before she hurried into the rooms in the interior of the house.

"Has our child gone to school?"

"Long ago. Her bus came on time. It's you who are late today."

"But I told you why 'Mma. From tomorrow I'm going to carry some camphor and a bunch of *neem* leaves in my hand. That'll chase him away, that damned fellow! Here, give the mattress to me. It doesn't need two people. I can handle it alone," she said, carrying it away like a feather. Maitreyi looked at her retreating figure and wondered if the woman was really seventy-three years old. Just look at that body, like a tau

Her nicotine-stained teeth. There was a gap in the middle where she had lost a tooth. It looked kind of cute. There was another gap on the side with a missing tooth. She flashed a captivating smile that lit up her eyes. Her old face...it was innocent and open as that of a child. That's my Muniyakka, my very own Muniyakka. She belongs to our home. Kamala moved closer now and nestled up to Muniyakka till their shoulders and arms touched. She could smell the kulambu along with her tobacco. She could smell dried betel leaves and areca nut. Kamala placed her hand on Muniyakka's lap and leaned over her. Then she bent down and buried her face in her lap. It was so comfortable. Snug and cushiony. The warm body along with the familiar smells wrapped around her cozily. Ah... what a very safe place this is, beside Muniyakka. One can always be secure and unharmed in her presence.

string of a bow, tightly secured. Compared to Muniyakka, we seem to be defeated well before our prime, thought Maitreyi.

She bathed and went over to the back portion of the house. She mixed a hot cup of Horlicks for her mother-in-law Kalyani. "Amma, shall I keep some hot water for your bath?" she asked.

"No Maitreyi, I'm not in a hurry. Let Pattabhi and his father have a bath first."

"All right Amma," said Maitreyi and moved into the kitchen to help Visalam Mami. She cut the vegetables and grated coconut. "When do you have to go, Mami?" she asked.

"I should be there by eleven. We're four of us but we'll take a bus. The Acharya will be coming just a little before twelve. I hope we can see him, with god's grace. You may have to serve the food today. Sorry. It may be inconvenient," said Visalam.

"No problem Mami, don't worry. Pattu Akka and I'll manage everything," smiled Maitreyi. How fresh Visalam looks, she noted, in the washed silk saree in off-white colour, the saree draped well over her tonsured head. The sacred ash shone on her brow. "Yes, Pattu Amma will help you look after everything," agreed Visalam, briskly attending to her work.

Kamala returned home in the afternoon and sat down to eat her lunch. Maitreyi served her and Pattamma followed with a plate of *papad*.

"Why are you serving, Athai? Where's Visalam Mami?" asked Kamala.

"She has gone to see the Acharya."

"The Acharya?"

"Yes. I told you about him yesterday, remember? The Shankaracharya is visiting the city," said Maitreyi.

"Hullo Patti!" Kamala greeted her grandmother Kalyani who just walked into the room. "Have you eaten? How about Thatha?"

"We've eaten. Now hurry up and

turned to leave the room.

"Muniyakka, I've kept some *kulambu* and *rasam* for you in the corridor," said Maitreyi. "Have you brought some cooked millet from home? You can eat them with your millet."

"Yes 'Mma, I've brought some millet today."

"Why're you picking on your food Kamala? Will you have some vegetables?" asked Pattamma.

"No Athai," said Kamala, her eyes resting on Pattamma. "Tell me. Why wouldn't the Acharya see you, Hmm?" Pattamma shrugged. "Oh let it be, child," she said.

"Now look here, Pattu," said Kalyani from the corner in which she sat on a longue chair. "So what if the Acharya refuses to see you? Big deal! You live your life peacefully and come to terms with the culture of your own family."

"Yes Akka," agreed Maitreyi, coming into the room after giving Muniyakka her food. "You're already like an ascetic even by the standards of our times. That in itself is too much. Just ignore the Acharya. If he can be credited with any wisdom, he wouldn't be nursing such backward thoughts. It's sheer cruelty."

"You're absolutely right, Maitreyi," said Kalyani. "A man who demands that all widows should be tonsured in order to qualify to be 'seen' by him cannot really be an Acharya, can he? If he refuses to see widows with hair on their heads, let him go to—!" she hissed, her face flushed in anger.

"In this aspect, I seem to have a ranking that's lower than even Visalam Mami's," said Pattamma, her voice very low.

"What do you mean?" said Kalyani, furious. "You're still young. Why do you get so confused by all these ideas? I remember how everyone used to adore you when you were small. They said you are exquisite as silk. So we called you Pattu (for silk) and brought you up tenderly. You're very gifted too. You're endowed with a talent for music and played on the veena in a way that enchanted everybody. But we're so unlucky. We lost our son-in-law. After that we had to give up a lot for the sake of this wretched society, your Appa and I. A society that forced you to give up your *kumkum*, flowers and ornaments. The damned society further clamped a lame ordinance that widows should not touch a sacred instrument like the veena. It said you shouldn't participate in festivals, shouldn't wear new sarees without washing it, first, shouldn't do this, shouldn't do that... *che!*" Kalyani was gasping for breath, her nose flaring in indignation. Maitreyi placed her hand gently on Pattamma's shoulder. "Akka, why're you so upset today, all of a sudden? How do you think we'd feel, Amma and I?"

Abruptly, Pattamma rushed into her room. She bolted the door from inside.

* * *



Muniyakka came into the room with sounds of "Aah and Ooh", expressing her satisfaction on having eaten a good meal.

"Ayye, just forget about the Acharya 'Mma," she remarked, joining in the argument. "Is he a man at all in the first place, I'd like to ask. A male who cannot admire a woman for her lovely, luxurious black hair. . . how can he call himself a man?"

"Hey! Hush Muniyakka!" warned Maitreyi. Kalyani forgot her anger and burst out laughing at her servant's statement. Muniyakka walked over to the corner nonchalantly and accosted Kalyani: "What's all this 'Mma? Why didn't you get Pattu 'Mma married again as soon as her husband died? You spent sweet time scratching your head. . . thinking. And she be such a young filly. A pretty little bird she was, our Pattu 'Mma. So, Sooo lovely!"

"Hush Muniyakka, not so loud! Pattu will get angry if she hears you," whispered Kalyani.

The vegetables, rice and papad on Kamala's plate remained untouched. She suddenly felt something tugging at her stomach, pulling it in. She lost her appetite. Did not wish to put even a grain of rice in her mouth. She noticed how everyone around her was totally absorbed in a heated argument. She moved swiftly and went out unnoticed, hiding her plate that was laden with food. She threw the contents and washed her hands. She went in and stood for some time outside the closed

door of Pattamma's room. Then she went over to her own room and flung herself on the bed, very tired.

Visalam Mami. Once a week a barber visited their house furtively, walking along the outer side of the house to reach the backyard. He never ever came inside the house. During those days, Visalam Mami would bend her head before this barber, offering the few wisps of hair in a week's growth for the man to shave off. After that, she would have a bath and appear again in a white saree that was tightly swathed over her head, completely covering it. Her face with the sacred ash on her brow would register no change in expression. What is the connection between her and Pattu Athai? My aunt is a tall woman with a fine, statuesque figure. Her serene beauty is enhanced by the luxurious crop of glossy, black hair. Her brow is always wiped clean, without a trace of kumkum on it. I've often told Athai that she looks just like Mumtaz, the wife of Shahjehan. Or Razia Sultan, for that matter. Like in the pictures we see. For someone like Athai, what's this new problem about her hair? What are they all talking about? They say, 'No one can match Pattu on the veena' and yet why has she taken a vow not to touch the veena?

Kamala closed her eyes. It was pouring outside the room. Which was typical of Bangalore. During the monsoon, one could expect a steady downpour in the afternoons and evenings. I can't go out today to play. Will have to

stay indoors. . . Kalyani fell asleep.

Urmila stands at the door of the palace, waving "Goodbye" to Lakshman. Then she goes indoors and serves meals to her mothers-in-law and father-in-law. She massages their feet at night. Then Urmila gets very bored. She runs out into the garden but cannot find anyone to play with her or talk to her. She stands for a while under a tree. Then she puts on her sneakers and goes out on the street in search of another palace, another country. On the way she meets a queen. "Ah, isn't that our Urmila?" exclaims the queen.

"Er. . . I. . . don't recognize you. Sorry!" says Urmila. "It's me, Gandhari."

"Gandhari?"

"Yes. I'm Gandhari."

"Oh!" says Urmila, bending down to touch the feet of the senior queen respectfully. "Please forgive me. I didn't recognize you as you don't have that piece of cloth covering your eyes."

"It doesn't matter at all. I removed the piece of cloth that blinded my eyes and flung it away. You see, I wanted to see the splendour of nature with my eyes. I also wished to see people, see everybody in fact," she smiled. They laughed about their decisions. A devil bared its teeth from a distance. It had long, ugly incisors protruding over the lips but it readily joined the ladies in their laughter. It helped them all along the way of their travel. Sometimes a large, fallen tree would obstruct the path of the royal ladies. The devil would instantly remove the tree and clear the way for them. If the

ladies came across a big river, the devil sucked in all the water, drinking up the entire river to make a land for the ladies to walk on. When a storm gathered and lashed around them, the devil stopped it with just a gesture of his hand. And with the other hand, he diverted the course of the storm, making it turn away in another direction. The devil had rough, matted hair, a long protruding tongue red as blood, with ugly teeth curving out of the mouth on the sides. And yet he was the Good Devil. He always helped the queen and the princess all through their journey.

Kamala tossed around on the bed. She heard the continued patter of rain outside the house. She opened her eyes. A large book, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, lay beside her on the bed. Her father had once given it to her as a present. Kamala got up and looked out of the window. The plants and the trees stood, dripping water. Kamala shivered with cold but continued to stand as she stared out through the watery screen. What a funny dream. Urmila meets Gandhari! Like *Ramayana* meets *Mahabharat*! Shall I tell Pattu Athai about this dream? No. . . Better not. The other day, when she was telling me the story of *Mahabharat*, I'd asked her why Gandhari should blindfold herself just because her husband, King Dhritrashtra happened to be born blind. After all, everything would become dark for Gandhari, I said. Besides she may trip over things while walking. But Athai got angry. 'Gandhari is a veritable goddess of virtue, do you

know that?" she had retorted. Then why should a goddess cover up her eyes? I'd asked. "O you poor thing, you don't get it at all," she said. "You don't understand the meaning of purity or chastity. You're much too small to understand. But one day, when you grow up, you'll understand. You certainly will for you're also a *kamal*, a lotus that blooms in water. You're a pink lotus, or a white lotus, pure and delicate," she had said, cupping my face in her hands. I did not know what to say. I just stared dumbly at her lovely face.

"Are you up Kamala? Here, have your Bournvita," said Maitreyi, coming into the room with a steaming cup.

"Amma, I can't go out to play today."

"Yes. It's pouring cats and dogs."

"What shall I do then?"

"Finish your homework, I suppose. Or draw some pictures. Would you like to play a game of Ludo?"

"I've no homework for today. I only have to learn a poem by heart and recite it tomorrow."

"Learn it then."

"But I already know the poem by heart. I learnt it the same day the teacher taught it in class."

"Amma, who don't you read me a story from the book of fairy tales?"

"O.K. I've some work. I'll be back as soon as I'm through."

"What shall I read? You know all the fairy tales too by heart," laughed Maitreyi.

"Still, I want to hear you read."

Maitreyi read the story of Rapunzel: "The wicked witch snatched the baby girl, Rapunzel, from her parents and locked her up in a high tower. There was no door to the tower. It only had a small window. In course of time, Rapunzel grew up into a beautiful young girl. She had lovely long hair, blonde and lustrous as spun gold. It was really very, very long. Whenever the witch wanted to go up to the tower, she would cry out—*Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair!*—Rapunzel would then let her hair down from the window. The wicked witch would catch hold of her hair and climb up to the tower to reach Rapunzel. Then she..."

"Amma, why do girls with long hair always have trouble? I mean, why do they suffer?"

"What do you mean?"

"Just look. Even our Pattu Athai seems to suffer a lot because of her hair. Today all of you were talking something about not having removed her hair. How terrible! Even Athai on her own part doesn't seem to know the value of her own hair. She argued with Patti and then became very sad. She locked herself up in her room. Didn't open it even for me."

"Kamala!" Maitreyi did not know how to continue. She was silent for some time. "I thought you sharpen your ears

only to listen to stories. Now I know that you eavesdrop on everything we say! You can't understand all that, Kamala. You're only a child."

"But tell me. Is it wrong to have beautiful, long hair? Look at Rapunzel for instance. She has to suffer a lot, all because of her hair. And she is also a fool."

"What!"

"But of course! She's a perfect fool. She knows very well, doesn't she, that the wicked witch will climb up to the tower by holding on to her hair? Then why should she let down her hair at all, in the first place, the silly girl!"

"What's this Kamala? You start off eagerly to listen to stories, then you soon begin to cross-question them, even

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Like in the pictures we see. For someone like Athai, what's this new problem about her hair? What are they all talking about? They say, 'No one can match Pattu on the veena' and yet why has she taken a vow not to touch the veena?

the ones that are good."

"What kind of a story is this? Rapunzel has to wait till the end for some nice young prince to come on his own and set her free from the tower. Besides, the prince only accidentally happened to hear her singing, so he chances upon her."

"So what?"

"Suppose, for a moment, that the prince doesn't come that way? What happens then?"

"He will come. He'll certainly come because Rapunzel is such a sweet, innocent young girl."

"Aa...ah! So Rapunzel has to be shut up in a tower and she should let down her hair for the witch. It's the same situation even in the story of Snow White."

"Now what's your complaint about Snow White?"

"She is also dumb like Rapunzel. The seven dwarfs are so nice, friendly and sensible. They warn Snow White so many times not to open the door to any stranger when alone at home. Still the girl opens the door again and yet again for

her stepmother and gets into trouble. When she finally lies down in a swoon inside a coffin, she too has to wait like Rapunzel for a young prince to save her, to bring her back to life. Both Rapunzel and Snow White are unable to do anything in their lives on their own."

"Come on Kamala, why do you argue and quarrel with every story? If that's your attitude, why don't you go ahead and write your own stories the way you want? I'm not going to read for you any more," said Maitreyi, getting up to go.

Visalam Mami was explaining everything in detail to Kalyani—how she got a *darshan* of the Acharya, the wonderful radiance on his face, the crowd that milled around him and so on. After she finished, Visalam went to the porch to collect the vessels that were washed for the day.

"Mami, did you get all the vessels that you needed?" asked Maitreyi. "Has Muniyakka washed them?"

"Oh yes. Our Muniyakka cannot be faulted. The way she cleans and scrubs the vessels, you can see your face reflected on the shiny surface. She's very thorough," said Visalam generously.

"And very strong too, for her age," said Kalyani from where she sat. "You can calculate for yourself. She is much older than I. And yet it's me who is easily tired. I drag my feet around, always bogged down by respiratory problems. Look at Muniyakka. She is all alone in life. Husband dead. Her three sons have abandoned her and fled somewhere. But she continues, undefeated. A cheerful soul who eats heartily and is a picture of confidence."

"Yes indeed," agreed Visalam. "She has great vitality. If only she gives up her strange tales of devils and ghosts as lame excuses for coming late for work, she'd be a gem of a person," said Visalam, rushing back to the kitchen.

"Maitreyi, she knows so little about Muniyakka," said Kalyani. "For some of us who are old and who've been around for so long, we often get a feeling that we've become somewhat like ghosts. We get a feeling that we haunt this big house like spirits."

"Really? Are we also like ghosts Patti?" asked Kamala, jumping in to get closer to Kalyani.

"There you are! Curious as a cat, as always," said Kalyani, hugging the child.

"Amma, here's your coffee." Kalyani took it from Maitreyi. "Visalam is making dosas for tiffin."

"Amma...vv!"

"Wonders! You've come on time today."

"Yes Mma, heh...heh."

"Didn't you get drenched in the rain? Amazing! Your saree, blouse and your hair...they're all so dry!"

"I just escaped Mma. All by the grace of that *Olle Pichachi*. Throughout the way as I walked, he pulled a piece of a clear blue sky right over my head like an umbrella. He also stopped the cold winds for me. That's why I could run over to your house so soon," said Muniyakka, picking up a bucket of water and a broom. She briskly walked over to the front of the house.

"Kamala, come and eat your dosa," said Maitreyi, handing her the plate.

"I'm not hungry. I can only eat half of it," said Kamala. Muniyakka returned with the broom and the bucket. She looked at Kamala and said, "Ah, I must get the child's mattress that is out in the sun". She went out and was back in a trice, holding the heavy mattress lightly.

"Will you have some dosa Muniyakka?" asked Maitreyi.

"Do you have a little *kulambu* to go with it "Mma?"

"A little *kulambu*? You can have a lot of it."

"You see Mma, I've brought some green gram sprouts with me today. I thought I could swallow it down with some *kulambu*."

"Come then."

Kamala finished eating her half a dosa and went over to the porch that was always used by the servants to have their food. She found Muniyakka sitting in a corner, eating. Dipping one half of a dosa in *kulambu*, Muniyakka put it in her mouth and swallowed it in one gulp. She dipped another half and in it went, easily. Another...and another...Kamala watched, fascinated. The old woman opened an aluminium utensil which had a dent on it. She poured out the green gram sprouts from the utensil to her plate. Mixing it up with *kulambu*, she rolled it up into a ball and threw it inside her waiting mouth. Likewise, ball after ball of sprouts mixed with *kulambu* shot into her eager mouth accurately, like the way one aims for a goal in a game of basket ball. Kamala watched as the woman wolfed down her food, smacking her lips appreciatively with curious sounds of *chup, chup*. Muniyakka was gorging herself on the green gram sprouts. Her kind of food was perhaps very tasty, thought Kamala.

Muniyakka spotted the little girl.

"What are we looking at, my child? Come, come here," she beckoned. Kamala walked up to her and sat beside her. "Did you have dosa, my little one?"

"Yes."

"What did you study in school today?"

"Something. Er...Muniyakka?"

"Yes sweetheart?"

"Have you really seen a devil?"

"But of course! Did you think I lied?" she said, laughing aloud. She gathered some more sprouts in her hand and gobbled them up.

"Don't you get scared?"

"Why should I get scared my child,

when a devil is also someone like us?"

"Oh! How can that be?"

"Because even amongst people there are some who're good and some who're bad. Don't you think so? In a way we are also like these devils, ghosts and demons. Like them we too will vanish some day."

"Then why do you complain so much about your *Kettu Pichachi*?"

"What can I do, you tell me? He bothers me wherever I go and is a big nuisance. Hell, I'm so fed up! The other day I told you in detail about how the bad devil troubles me, do you remember?"

"Ah...? Do you mean the one that suddenly jumps on your back from a tree?"

"Yes, yes, the same one."

"Then he pricks your feet till they hurt?"

"He does."

"And then... and then, he has eyes red as ripe, red chillies and he rolls his eyes about to frighten you?"

"You're a smart little one. What a marvellous memory you have."

"After that the bad devil gets into the body of a tree and makes the branches swing and sway wildly in the windstorm in a devil's dance. Remember, you described how the tree conspires with the devil and howls and sighs with sounds of *Huoy! Huoy!*"

"Exactly! That damned fellow is capable of all kinds of mischief. I'll teach him someday. I must get even with him."

"Can you? Is it possible?"

"Why not? I'll cut a lemon into two, mix some old rice with the red kumkum of *Mariamamma* and some *haldi* and put it on the way of the devil when he walks. If he happens to step or jump over it..."

"What'll happen? Tell me, tell."

"He'll simply shrink up to nine inches or even less! If that doesn't work, I'll sorcerize a black thread and tie it around my neck. And if he dares to come near me, I'll give him a tight slap on his cheek."

"*Ayyo!*"

"What else? Do you want me to embrace him with love? I know all those grand fustian ways of that brat. All his pompoustricks, his jugglery. I know them so well that as the days went by, I too learnt some of his tricks, my child," tapering her last sentence to a whisper, her voice low as she talked secretively to Kamala.

"Oh goodness! Then will you also become like the *Kettu Pichachi*, the Bad Devil, Muniyakka?" The old woman laughed easily. Merrily.

"Isn't that the right thing to do, my child? Only when I become a little like him can I hit him back on his own terms, you see?"

Kamala slowly sidled away from Muniyakka. She asked hesitatingly: "Muni... Muniyakka... you... who're you? A woman or a devil?"

"My dearest child, did you get

scared? I'm your own Muniyakka, my little one. And I'll always be. I'll remain your faithful maid. When you were a tiny baby, I cradled you on my lap and played with you, my precious infant. But if ever that useless devil crosses my way and teases me again, I'll just rip him apart, that's for sure!"

"But why?"

"Because, only then can his arrogance be tamed. To achieve that, we should also nurse some wickedness within us. Otherwise the evil brat will devour us. You must realize that, my little one," she whispered again secretively, smiling at Kamala.

Her nicotine-stained teeth. There was a gap in the middle where she had lost a tooth. It looked kind of cute. There was another gap on the side with a missing tooth. She flashed a captivating smile that lit up her eyes. Her old face... it was innocent and open as that of a child. That's my Muniyakka, my very own Muniyakka. She belongs to our home... Kamala moved closer now and nestled up to Muniyakka till their shoulders and arms touched. She could smell the kulambu along with her tobacco. She could smell dried betel leaves and areca nut. Kamala placed her hand on Muniyakka's lap and leaned over her. Then she bent down and buried her face in her lap. It was so comfortable. Snug and cushiony. The warm body along with the familiar smells wrapped around her cozily. Ah... what a very safe place this is, beside Muniyakka. One can always be secure and unharmed in her presence.

GLOSSARY

Akka: Elder sister

Athai: Father's sister

darshan: a word used for seeing sanctified people like Acharyas or the gods

dosas: A snack made with rice flour and black gram

haldi: Turmeric powder

kumkum: Red powder used by Indian women to adorn their brow

kulambu and rasam: Two common dishes prepared for a meal in Tamil homes

Mariamamma: Goddess Kali, who stands for power

neem leaves: Believed to have the power to ward off evil forces

Neivedyam: Food that is offered first to god before it is eaten. A common practice in Brahmin households

Olle Pichachi: Good devil, in Kannada

Kettu Pichachi: Bad Devil, in Kannada

palagaram: A light snack eaten in the evenings by Brahmin widows who eat only one meal in a day

papad: Crisp, fried snack eaten with a meal

pativrata: A woman who is very devoted to her husband

patti: Grandmother

Thatha: Grandfather

veena: stringed musical instrument that resembles the sitar

(Translated from the original Tamil by the author)

Window-Shopping

Sridhar Balan

NEW WRITING 2: AN ANTHOLOGY

Edited by Malcolm Bradbury and Andrew Motion

Minerva in association with the British Council, Great Britain, 1993, pp. x+380, £ 6.99

In recent years, a number of collaborations have seen the release of a number of anthologies of new writing on the market. Prominent among these are of course the *Granta* series edited by Bill Buford. Though this is published by Granta Publications, Penguin looks after the distribution and marketing and the collaboration has enabled *Granta* to be available at a special price in India. Faber has published and edited the book *First Fictions* which contain first attempts at fiction writing, in the form of short stories, by new writers. Unfortunately, due to inadequate distribution arrangements, this edition is not as widely known in India. And now Minerva in association with the British Council has embarked on a programme of publishing an annual anthology of new writing. To ensure effective distribution, these anthologies are published under the Mandarin paperbacks imprint in Great Britain. The volume under review is the second in the series. The first in the series, edited by Malcolm Bradbury and Judy Cooke appeared in 1992. *New Writing 3* edited by Andrew Motion and Candice Rodd will appear in January 1994 and *New Writing 4* edited by A.S. Byatt and Alan Hollinghurst in January 1995.

As with most anthologies, *New Writing 2* is a mixed bag and of uneven quality. The editors have tried to pack in too much. There are short stories, conversations, essays, excerpts from forthcoming novels and with poetry interspersed throughout the book. It is almost as if the editors, not very sure of who their readers are going to be have tried to interest as wide a section as possible. To a large extent of course, the problem begins by trying to define what is 'new writing'. As Andrew Motion states "New writing, to deserve the name must be more than recently produced writing". This anthology contains young writers (who) have opened themselves up to continental and international influences. "Thus *New Writing* is not only a literary annual of important new work, but also an international shop window. Like all shop windows it can only display a proportion of the wealth of goods available within, a selective if significant sampling of the literature Britain is producing today".

Well, the contents of *New Writing 2* could leave many a reader content to

merely window-shop. Among the pick of pieces is "A Question of Crime" a conversation between P.D. James, Britain's leading detective story-writer and Joan Smith a fellow crime novelist. This is sure to appeal to all serious crime buffs. Both James and Smith discuss the art of writing crime fiction and in the process discuss the work of fellow writers like Ngaio Marsh, Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Margery Allingham, etc. They are quite severe on Christie's portrayal of Hercule Poirot. They describe Poirot as a "very two-dimensional cardboard character. With all his little traits, there's no devel-

"New writing, to deserve the name must be more than recently produced writing". This anthology contains young writers (who) have opened themselves up to continental and international influences. "Thus *New Writing* is not only a literary annual of important new work, but also an international shop window. Like all shop windows it can only display a proportion of the wealth of goods available within, a selective if significant sampling of the literature Britain is producing today".

opment. He goes on talking about his little grey cells for about forty years." Both James and Smith conclude that Agatha Christie got very bored with Poirot and with good reason.

A superb assessment of the impact and legacy of Thatcherism is Hugo Young's "Reinventing the British Disease". Mrs Thatcher seldom permitted sleep. The voice hacksawed its way relentlessly into the public mind, and lost none of its searing power as the eleven years unfolded. If she offered comfort, it would be available only several years later, after the proper suffering had been endowed. She was the most unreasonable, though not unreasoning leader the country ever had. Young is at his best when he illustrates the impact of Thatcherism on sports. "Sport is now dominated by the business imperative. Commerce and television have drained every big

sport of its romantic associations. The emblematic cultural battle of the Nineties is being fought not over the level of subsidy to the arts, but about who should have the right to televise and who to watch big-time football. Should it be shown by national broadcasters and continue to be universally available as part of the television service everyone was used to, or should it be sold to the highest bidder for showing only to those willing to buy it by the hour? The greatest mass medium near-free to the millions faces destruction at the hands of financiers egged on by politicians! Important points for us in India to ponder over.

If English writers have opened themselves to continental and international influences, then it is only too true that English literature and the language have been transformed "with bright colours, strange cadences and foreign eyes" as Pico Iyer has observed in his article, "The Empire Writes Back" in a recent issue of *Time* magazine. With so many writers from the erstwhile British empire contributing so significantly to the English language, it is clear that any anthology of new writing must include writers of non-English origin. Thus *New Writing 2* includes a chapter from Amit Chaudhari's forthcoming novel *An Afternoon Raag*. The chapter titled "The Afternoon Despatch and Courier" is autobiographical in nature. It looks at life in suburban Bombay and has a nice cameo sketch of afternoon tea at the Bombay Gymkhana Club where members would sit on chairs and "childishly ring little brass bells to summon the waiters".

Gillian Tindall, the author of *City of Gold: the Biography of Bombay* in a short story "Different" describes a young girl who is taken to Paris, on the death of her mother, by her father. On the way her father asks her to make the most of it. "It isn't every girl who's lucky enough to be finished in Paris but it's what—ah—Mummy and I always wanted for you". The girl thinks 'Finished in Paris', was a ridiculous phrase. At a formal lunch, when a lady asks her whether she misses her mother, she retorts "Would you miss someone who tried to drown herself in the bath while you were downstairs cooking supper?" Upon the lady remonstrating that one can't drown oneself in the bath, the girl agreed that it "was perfectly stupid of her mother to think she could". In the end she jumped under a train. "Much more sensible of course". The lady quickly turned away.

This is a quick sampling of what *New Writing 2* contains. The editors had imagined that the selection of pieces in *New Writing 2* would be a kind of *hors d'oeuvres* before the main course. Considering the rest of the sampling, it is clear that these *hors d'oeuvres* do not stimulate the appetite for the major books by some of these authors.

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Yet Another Novel On Immigrants

Mridula Garg

TRANSMISSION

By Atima Srivastava

Penguin Books, India, 1991, pp. 266, Rs. 75.00

Transmission is yet another novel about the immigrants in England, never mind that it tries very hard not to be. In the process, it turns out to be as predictable as the story supposed to be written by the protagonist's father in his youth. An unabashed take off on a story of O. Henry's and a most well-known one at that—"The Gift of the Magi"—a story taught in the grammar schools all over India. Makes one wonder. How come all the Indians who migrate to England or America are such stereotyped innocents, they cannot recognise a story every school-child in India could recite from memory of his textbook. It would not be such a pain to read books by immigrants about immigrants, if only one Indian parent could be depicted as an individual and

not a type, to be sniggered at by the second generation Indians. But then, I suppose, they would no longer satisfy the western appetite for a good laugh at the exotic but blundering foreigner! We must remember that books by immigrants of the immigrants are also meant to be for the immigrants. So spare us natives! I concede that if they stop providing this particular brand of comic relief—they might not be published at all.

But then, we must remember *Transmission* is Atima Srivastava's first novel. And a first novel is, perforce, about personal experience, parents, schooldays, fellow students, calf love, street talk and swagger. It is always difficult to review a first novel. One has to pierce the swagger and the hype to look for a possible spark

of individual creativity. Fortunately, *Transmission* has that spark. It has taken the form of wit in this novel. It is wit that shines through the language and the subject and saves the book from falling into the genre of comics. The wit comes into its own, once it leaves the comical stereotyped immigrants and tackles real people, the natives of London and the votaries of television. The very choice of the subject exemplifies that wit. AIDS! Now who can dare to question or run that down. Only a callous, uncivilized third world boor. Everyone but everyone else has to be sympathetic to the victims and the telling of their tales of this modern day scourge.

The protagonist is in love with an HIV positive male.—What glorious sensitiv-

"Where did all those stories come from, Maamaji?" I asked.

"From long ago. Most of them were written by your father."

"What?" I sat up amazed.

"Tell the one about the earrings again, Maamaji" I sang.

"You tell it, Tara di, that was your favourite. Go on, you tell it," I heard Maamaji say. I smiled and listened to Ma protesting.

"Arrey, I don't remember it. The one about earrings? Bali Aur Bunday?"

"What? There was a rich family and a poor family. Each of them had a son who went off to university. Then the poor boy's mother was cleaning for the rich woman and she heard them talking. The rich woman was saying to her friend how good it was that her boy had entered the university and how he must have this and that and the other. How he must have this thing, the Parker pen, to write his exams with. Well, the poor woman went home and thought I must send my son one and two things."

I started to laugh. "One and two things..." She sounded like Peter Sellers doing the Indian doctor. Any minute she would say, "thanking you very much."

"...every time she went to the rich house she would hear them talking so she does this thing and she sends him the Parker pen. Well when the boy returned... he says to her, why are you buying me this rubbish. I don't need the Parker pen, you cannot afford to spend this money. So what he had done was sell the Parker pen and buy his sister these earrings."

"Eh?" I opened my eyes, "You've completely messed it up, Ma."

"What? Oh yes, yes. That's right, because the mother had first of all sold her earrings to buy the Parker pen. That's right. I forgot." She said and began to laugh.

"Honesty that's the whole point of the story!"

From *Transmission*

ity! She sets about making a T.V. documentary on the HIV positive (it was all her fault anyway) estranged wife of the lover. What meticulous modernity! She takes sex in her stride, it is nothing more than opening the zip of the jeans. What liberal permissiveness! Yet she agonizes over the visit paid by the lover to the sick wife, who has just been discovered to have full blown AIDS. What lingering romanticism! In the end, predictably, the protagonist proves to be quite a heroine. She destroys the tapes on the AIDS affected subject, Kathi, because she discovers or realizes that she is being victimised by her T.V. company and is no longer willing to expose herself in their story. Thus she proves herself to be immune to the temptations of the modern-day siren, the electronic media. What fresh-faced nobility! The immigrant has proved to be true blue British at last.

There is wit also in Srivastava choosing immigrants from a number of countries instead of confining herself to her own country, India. The surfeit of interracial relationships establishes, *prima facie*, the universal brotherhood credentials of the author. She is freed from the need to probe into the individual psyches of the characters. How convenient and effective.

And finally, there is the frothy wit of the language. Actually it is the froth which makes the book eminently readable. Is that not the stuff that best sellers are made of. But whoever heard of a best seller being reviewed? It deserves to be sold on hype. A designer novel, says the flap. Well, why not? It matches the wit.

"Listen girl, you're twenty-five, you've got soul, and you're driving a Porsche... What'd you want? *Jam* on it? We laughed. Then we drove."

(These are the last sentences from the novel.)

Well, the reader laughed too, I'm sure. On more than one occasion. It was fun, the book I mean. It takes courage and a great deal of wit to show a twenty-five year old "woman", revelling in the fact that she has taken a grown-up decision. Her first? Congratulations! We wish Atima Srivastava luck. We can rest assured or at least hope that the wit, so abundantly displayed in this first novel and so frothily whipped up, will mature with age and find its mellow place in the next book. Happy selling.

Mridula Garg is a creative writer who has published twelve books including five novels in Hindi and two in English. Her latest work is a play, Jadoo Ka Kaleen which deals with children working in the carpet industry.



In Search of Indian Literature

K.S. Duggal

COMPARATIVE INDIAN LITERATURE

By Indra Nath Choudhuri

Sterling Publishers, 1992, pp. 266, Rs 250.00

Professor Indra Nath Choudhuri of the Sahitya Akademi has been in the news a great deal of late. It would be more appropriate to say that he was dragged into it for no sin of his. An Akademi award voted by a high-powered jury and approved by the Executive Board of which he is not even a member, went awry and it fell to him as the chief executive of the institution to collect the bulk of the flak. I am glad that there is an opportunity to bring home to his detractors the eminence of his scholarship and the unique professional equipment that he has to organise a writers' outfit.

Comparative Indian Literature is an erudite study of a variety of subjects relating to Indian literature by one who has to his credit a doctorate in Comparative Literature from the Delhi University and has been deeply involved in the various aspects of the study for the last eight years as secretary of the Sahitya Akademi.

The range and sweep of the subjects covered in the volume is inevitably diverse. While the bulk of it is devoted to literature as such, its theory and methodology, interdisciplinary research, continuity and change, the problems of translation and adaptation along with essays on thinkers like Rabindra Nath Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, he has provided in-depth perspectives on comparative theatre. Among the more important studies in the field are: the theory of *Rasa*, modern aesthetics, Brecht's *Verfremdung* and Japan's Kabuki.

What has impressed me most is the fresh light that Professor Choudhuri brings to bear upon some of the oft-discussed subjects like Indianness in Indian literature, the role of translation, search for roots in the Indian literary scene, etc.

Discussing Indianness in Indian literature, while he recognises the contribution of some of the thinkers like Freud, Marx, Kierkegaard and Sartre from abroad, he gives due importance to three great forces that shaped contemporary Indian literature in the form of Shri Aurobindo's search for the divine, Tagore's quest for the beautiful and Mahatma Gandhi's commitment to truth. Similarly, while discussing the role of the translator in comparative literature, he illustrates his point with comparative studies of the *Gita Govind* in English and the *Rubbaiyat* of Omar Khayyam into Hindi by Keshab Pathak, Maithilisharan Gupta, Sumitra Nandan Pant and Bachchan. He concludes with a highly profound observation:

The job a translator is to turn strange-

ness into likeness and in the process the strangeness of the original becomes more vivid but this vividness itself liberates us from the cultural prison and gives us the taste of another culture.

In his chapter on Search for Roots, he presents a dismal but true-to-life picture of the helplessness of the present-day writer in the industrial society with muscle and money-oriented politics. Says Professor Choudhuri:

As a result, the writers are mostly uncommitted, powerless, and politically irrelevant. In the present-day situation it has become impossible for the writers to recommit themselves to a 'cause mobilisation' for collective action. We can only hope that by the turn of the century writers will re-establish their position and freedom and human dignity will continue to be the central concern of all good writers.

However, what seems to preoccupy Professor Choudhuri, whatever aspect of literature or art he discusses is his search for Indianness. And despite the claims that we make, Dr S. Radhakrishnan downward, that though written in different languages, Indian literature is one because our source of inspiration—the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the Classics and the *Puranas*—is common and also because we share more or less similar experience, emotional or intellectual, the stark reality in the words of the author is:

While a good deal of literature is produced in India, it has not yet been possible to develop the idea of a unified Indian literature since it is written in many languages. At present, in spite of the individual studies of regional literatures on a broad comparative and critical scale, the idea of one Indian literature is yet to be developed in the proper perspective. Indian literature is still a mere collection of different literatures having diverse linguistic manifestations.

Destination Indian literature is the goal. It is the need of the hour. With the present day means of communication and the reach of the media, it is not asking for the moon. The journey is long and arduous. We need writers and artists of vision and commitment. It is through comparative literary studies alone that we can arrive at the oneness of Indian literature.

K.S. Duggal, a Panjabi writer, is the President of The Panjabi Writers' Association.

Contemporary Film Studies

Shuddabrata Sengupta

MASTER VINAYAK

By M.V. Kelkar

The National Film Archive of India, 1991, pp. 93, Rs. 90.00

SHOLAY: A CULTURAL READING

By Wimal Dissanayake and Malti Sahai

The National Film Archive of India, 1992, pp. 132, Rs. 70.00

AWARA

By Gayatri Chatterjee

The National Film Archive of India, 1992, pp. 162, Rs. 95.00

L.V. PRASAD: A MONOGRAPH

By K.N.T. Shastri

The National Film Archive of India, 1993, pp. 123, Rs. 110.00

All four titles published by Wiley Eastern, New Delhi.

The poverty of film studies in India is a surprising and unfortunate fact.

Surprising, because of India's status as the leading film producing nation in the world, and unfortunate, because it serves to encourage an uncritical climate in which cinema flourishes as a commodity and as an instrument of state policy, but withers as a means of reflection and understanding.

There has been, and continues to exist, a direct reciprocal relationship between the refusal to place cinema in India under any form of rigorous intellectual scrutiny, and poor film-making. This extends to the contexts in which films are produced and received as well. Thus, terms such as 'mass audience', 'Art' film, and 'Commercial' film continue to find currency and perpetuate irresponsibilities in the discussion and production of films. They tend to act as rationalisation for the denial of subjectivity, both on the part of the authors of the films themselves as well as of the audiences that view them. The ephemera of film criticism, and the idleness of the present or would-be film scholars are but extensions of the idleness of the film makers, and of audiences as well. Neither augurs well for the health of cinema.

Any effort that seeks to combat the substantive silence that surrounds cin-

ema in India is welcome. The National Film Archive of India at Pune, on its part, has for some time now attempted to do precisely this by encouraging scholars, and others interested in cinema to write monographs on subjects of their choice, with the aid of the Archive's vast collection of films and film-related material.

That the intentions of such efforts are salutary is indubitable, but that the results are not always uniformly satisfactory is evident from the four recent titles brought out by Wiley Eastern Ltd., two of which [monographs on film pioneers L.V. Prasad and Master Vinayak] written by K.N.T. Sastry and M.W. Kelkar, respectively are published in collaboration with the NFAL. The other two titles are studies

... Popularity is a pejorative term, held under suspicion by those who find pleasure in what is popular as well as by those who do not. The study of the popular has always met with derision. Film writing today is like a parallel entertainment, trying to outdo films with a different array of pleasure (masalas)."

From
Awarā

of individual films, of *Sholay* by Wimal Dissanayake and Malti Sahay [who have earlier jointly authored *Raj Kapoor's Films; Harmony of Discourse*] and of *Awarā* the NFAL]. It could well be said that between themselves these four titles provide a fairly comprehensive range of both the pitfalls as well as the possibilities that characterise writing about cinema in this country today.

The study of cinematic pioneers takes us back to the very origins of film-making and is essential for a proper historical perspective on Indian cinema to emerge. K.N.T. Sastry's monograph however belies this promise. In the manner of a grand and somewhat old fashioned *Katha* about an exemplary hero, it offers us the 'legend' of L.V. Prasad. His 'rags to riches' story, the many travails and tribulations at the beginning of his film career and his many virtues. The panegyric tone of this fulsome chronology denies us access to the concrete domain of Prasad the filmmaker.

The author is so burdened with the compulsion to bestow upon his subject a halo of virtue and greatness that little energy is expended upon the concrete analysis of Prasad's work itself. Instead we are offered ready-made slots—so-

cial', 'progressive-social', 'historical' etc. to fit the works into. There is a surprising lack of attention to details of cinematographic technique, and a surfeit of homages by associates and disciples of the master. Some of these flaws could no doubt have been mended by rigorous editing. As for instance when the same set of anecdotes is repeated in successive chapters. The intention of the repetition may well have been to impress upon us the importance of what had transpired, [as in all 'traditional' stories perhaps?] but they result in a trivialization of the subject matter. The strategies of narrativization appropriate to the construction of hagiographies are inappropriate when disguised as exercises in film studies.

M.W. Kelkar's profile of Master Vinayak is on the other hand a solid, not very ambitious introduction to the life and work of one of the pioneers of the Marathi cinema. Kelkar's efforts at all times is to situate his subject, and his *oeuvre*, in the context of his times. Thus we are offered a sketchy, but useful attempt at a comparative understanding of the *metiers* of Pramathesh Baruah, V. Shan-

... Prasad's biographical sketch reads like the script of a popular film. It is surfeit with travails and tribulations; rags to riches, and towards the end the 'hero', by his sheer dedication to the cause he has committed himself to, emerges a successful personality."

From
L.V. Prasad : A Monograph

taram and Master Vinayak in terms of the interplay of larger cultural forces and the dynamics of divergent personal biographies. Interesting observations are made on the reformist and pedagogic zeal of the early Marathi cinema, its cultural-political roots, and the strengths and weaknesses of this outlook are discussed in a manner that is certainly sympathetic, yet by no means is it uncritical. Kelkar's personal enthusiasm for Master Vinayak is evident, yet he does not let it interfere with his sharply critical evaluation of both the man and his work. If anything, we would wish that the attempts at delving into his subject's psychology and his inner world, were supported by a greater body of evidence than are actually offered by the author. In contrast to the former book, this one offers us, not a pantheon of major and minor deities of the early South Indian cinema, but an active and human world, an industrial sphere in which

grand schemes mature and disintegrate, where talent is never viewed as a quasi-divine attribute, but always as a manifestation of the interplay between human predicaments and the individual energies they give rise to. This human gaze makes Kelkar sensitive to the object of his obvious admiration.

Both monographs provide a detailed filmography and synopsis, which will be of use to those interested in the field of film history.

All acts of analysis are always interpretations as well. Whether we examine the career graph of a director, or the narrative structure of a film, or its relationship to a specific social/cultural context, what we are doing is akin to a combination of excavation, and design; of making the blueprint of a [re]newed structure even as we excavate the ramparts of the old one. This is what can make criticism, and analysis a pleasurable and ludic experience. However the pleasure of analysis, both for the author and the reader is proportional to the extent to which the work is confronted head-on, stripped of the baggage of a common or commonsense glance. This does not mean that we venture into analysis unarmed, bereft of conceptual formulations and attitudes what it does mean is that we should enter only with those implements that permit a fresh, unencumbered gaze, that give a breathing space to curiosity.

The two studies of individual films in this set exemplify the antipodes of the analytical enterprise. One [*Sholay*] enters laden with yesterday's academic vocabulary, the other [*Awarā*] begins with a little conceptual travelling luggage, the merchandise being mainly of structuralist origin, but it does not hesitate to selectively discard or even radically alter elements from it, and even manages to improvise several pieces as it makes its way. If Dissanayake and Sahai deny us [and one would suspect, themselves as well], the pleasures of analysis, by their ponderous exposition, then Gayatri Chatterjee's work may well be characterised as a feverish, celebratory joust, eminently pleasurable, though not always very tidy.

Dissanayake's and Sahai's 'cultural' reading of *Sholay* is not very original. Neither the laborious delineation of the five-pronged genealogy of the Indian popular film [viz. (1) *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, (2) Classical Indian theatre, (3) Folk theatre, (4) Parsi theatre, and (5) Hollywood], nor the thesis that since the seventies Hindi films have come to mirror a violent social anomie, nor the assertion that viewers construct their readings of films in keeping with their individual subjectivities, are brilliant and profound theoretical insights today. In this particular work they take the form of an amalgam of voluminous quotations from mainstream sociology and scattered, feeble attempts at discursive analysis of the film itself. This is bracketed by a lengthy and rather unnecessary exposition of Indian cinema history, [a compen-

dium of facts that can be picked up from any standard cinema history text] with little bearing, as it is written, on what purports to be the central concern of the book, and 'sample' interviews with individuals who have seen the film. The interviews are distinguished by little else but the sheer banality of their tenor.

Ms. Chatterjee's venture on the other hand, wrestles with its many problems in a forthright manner. Here we see, not the turns of a bland empiricism dressed up as interpretation, but an imaginative, even if speculative vision, notable for the conceptual leaps that it attempts to undertake. Yet, none of this takes away from the concreteness of Ms. Chatterjee's endeavour. From the very beginning, she remains sensitive to every detail, be it in the frame or in the soundtrack. There seems to be an insatiable curiosity in her writing, about the elements in the film, be they the nomenclature of characters, seemingly insignificant moments in the plot, the music or details in the decor. Ms. Chatterjee's thirst for meaning offers us a rich yield of insights, some of which are provocative, yet they remain possible to

... Vinayak's personality, as it was revealed in his films was enigmatic to say the least. His need for variety, his aptitude for satire, his reformist interests, all seemed to pull him in different directions. His exterior was totally disarming, with a gentle, intelligent face, pleasing manners and a charming smile. Behind it all lay acute sensitivity and a sentimental nature."

From
Master Vinayak

argue with. This is in contrast to the banal assertions of the earlier study, which, being truisms, are unnecessary to argue with, but they leave us no wiser regarding the object of their examination.

Here, Ms Chatterjee's text bristles with the attempt to interpret the function of romantic love in the Hindi films narrative, the relation between performer and performance, the nature of cinematic encoding and decoding and the necessity for stylistic variations in a single text. Important questions are raised about the ideological ambivalences that underlie the popular cinema's anti-establishmentarian gestures. And all this is done without ever withdrawing from the material-

"... *Sholay* brought to the Indian screen some of the most brutal and repulsive scenes of human violence and depravity. And what is interesting is that these were executed without any qualms or feelings of guilt. There was a matter-of-factness to the acts of violence that was then comparatively new to Indian cinema."

From
Sholay

ity of the film in question. Clearly, here it is the critic's encounter with her material that is making necessary the raising of theoretical issues, a sounder procedure than the attempts to 'fit' one's material into pre-existing and convenient categories.

Ms Chatterjee is aware that her efforts have a frankly provisional character. The nature of her work is not complete in itself and demands a body of research into the questions raised. If anything, we would argue with her adoption of elements within the film's narrative framework [the tensions between 'westernness' and 'Indianness'] as an instrument, not object of her analysis. When the exercise in interpretation adopts even partially the voice of its object, it absolves elements within it of scrutiny. There is clearly a need here for greater distance between the task of analysis and the voice of the text. Further, one would caution against a tendency towards over-interpretation, even while looking forward to more work from this industrious and original scholar.

The monograph on L.V. Prasad demonstrates the dangers of hagiographic writing, and Kelkar's work on Master Vinayak, the need for more such precise historical investigations. Dissanayake and Sahai's "Cultural reading" of *Sholay* takes us into an arid, academic wasteland and Chatterjee's work is an object lesson in the pleasures and perils of interpretation. In both cases, whether one is studying filmmakers or films, it is by embodying the latter principles that film studies in this country can begin to venture out in a positive direction.

Shuddhabrata Sengupta is currently working as a freelance filmmaker and researcher for documentary films, besides writing regularly on films for Indian Express.

All's Well That Sells Well?

K. Ravi Srinivas

TOURISM, ENVIRONMENT, NATURE, CULTURE, ECONOMY

Edited by Tej Vir Singh, Valene E. Smith, Mary Fish and Linda K. Richter

Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 343, Rs. 450.00

The tourism industry is a fast growing sector and may well emerge as a dominant one by A.D. 2000. But tourism and related activities are not always non-controversial, protests against the construction of hotels and beach resorts on Goa's shores are well known. In many places in the Third World tourism is welcomed for the revenue it generates and resented by the local population for the damage it does; its potential to destroy are too often ignored or considered irrelevant.

This book is a collection of essays which discusses various aspects of the impact of tourism on communities and nature, alternative tourism, tourism and wilderness, theoretical perspectives on tourism, economics of tourism etc. It is divided into four parts. In the first part the focus is on mountains as tourist resorts. Tej Vir Singh provides an overview of the issues and points out the need for further research. In his provocative essay on the malaise of mountain tourism, Tej Vir Singh rightly points out the need for applying the Ecosystem concept and argues for a sustainable tourism policy. To this reviewer, his essay is a cry in the wilderness as the government seems all set for tourism at any cost and the questions he has raised remain unheard. The impact of tourism on tourist spots in the mountains are dealt with by J.R. Allen with the case study of South Asian Mountain Culture, of its adverse impact on parks and wild life sanctuaries in Zimbabwe by Graham Child and on the Rowiang Valley in Nepal by Rudei Baumgartner who discusses the impact of tourism over a few decades. All of them stress the fact that within a few decades the community undergoes a change which disrupts the existing social order.

In part two tourism is discussed in the context of socio-cultural environment. Veronica Long discusses the attempts made to mitigate the cultural impact of a resort development project in Mexico while Kevin Presister discusses the theory and management of tourism impact with examples from the U.S.A. Margaret Byrne Swain discusses ethnic tourism in China with examples of ethnic minorities being viewed as living museums. Ethnic items become marketable and the people become 'the other' for tourists. How tourism has affected the traditional Shilin Sani community is discussed in detail. Tour-

ism here has destroyed the diversity and richness of their tradition and reduced it to mere artifacts to attract the tourist. The inducement to stay ethnic comes from outside and their culture is 'managed' to a lucrative end. One wishes that a similar study on indigenous people of India and their culture could be done. In the recent past Festivals of India, *Ajma Utsavs* have played a similar role. Therefore we see idols of deities adorning the drawing rooms of the affluent while advertisements portray women wearing ethnic 'chic' designs to promote synthetic dress materials. All's well that sells well is the adage of our times. The final and culminating obscenity is discussed by Rudi Hartmann—Dachau the former concentration camp where during the Nazi holocaust thousands were tortured and killed is today a tourist centre thronged by the curious tourists!

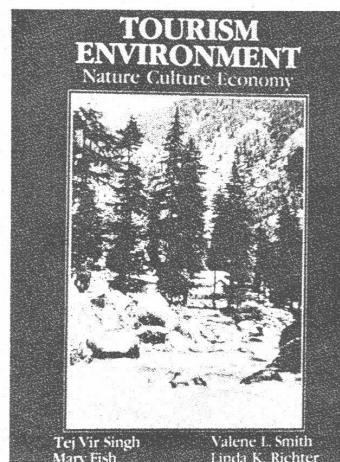
The third part focusses on the economic dimension discussing cost-benefit aspects for tourism development, socio-cultural costs, links between agriculture and tourism. J.B. McMinn's essay discusses in detail the disruption of natural and social eco-systems due to mass tourism. He examines various psychological and philosophical aspects of the issues and suggests remedial measures to over-

come the negative consequences.

Part four discusses the question of what is appropriate tourism. Erik Cohen in his provocative critique on alternative tourism writes, "the criticism of established mass tourism appears too radical; consequently the arms of alternative tourism are too highly set and hence unrealistic". Frank Bilson provides an alternative perspective on integrated tourism in Senegal and H. Leo Theus provides an extensive bibliography of tourism in South and South-east Asia in the last essay.

The book is relevant and interesting but the grouping of the essays leaves much to be desired. Had the essays been arranged thematically the book would be more readable. The editors have done a good job and the book can be recommended for anyone interested in the impact of tourism. The book also indicates that not much work has been done in this field in India as there are not even three essays or case studies from India in this volume.

K. Ravi Srinivas writes on environmental and development issues in Tamil and English. His contributions have appeared in Development Forum, Biotechnology and Development Monitor and Third World Monitor.



Three Nuggets from NBT

Shobhit Mahajan

CHALLENGE OF AIDS

By Khorshed M Pavri

National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1992, pp. x+118, Rs. 25.00

CANCER

By S.M. Bose

National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1992, pp. xii+86, Rs. 25.00

ENDANGERED ANIMALS OF INDIA AND THEIR CONSERVATION

By S.M. Nair

National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1992, pp. viii+104, Rs. 28.00

One of the most remarkable things about post-independent India has been the extraordinary development of science and technology. We boast of indigenously developed space and nuclear technologies, of world class research institutes and of course of the third (or maybe even the second) largest scientific human resources in the world. Paradoxically, coexisting with all this scientific development is a thoroughly unscientific way of looking at the world. For a variety of reasons, a genuine scientific culture has not really developed in our country.

One of the symptoms (and maybe even a cause) of this lacuna has been the non-existence of any kind of popular science writing. There are hardly any popular science magazines, newspapers have no regular science columns, and even the electronic media has by and large ignored science. This is the state of affairs not only in English but in most Indian languages as well, with the notable exception of Malayalam. There has been precious little written to popularize science among the general audience.

In this dismal scenario, there is at least one bit of good news. National Book Trust has recently brought out a series of books on Popular Science to fill this void. The books under review are a part of this series.

Challenge of AIDS is an attempt to demystify what is undoubtedly one of the most baffling issues to confront science in recent times. Not only are we nowhere close to developing a treatment for AIDS, we don't even understand the causes very well. The book covers a wide range of topics related to AIDS; from the origin of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) to strategies of combating the pandemic. There is a lot of information here about the virus, the tests to detect the virus, the human immune system and the natural history of AIDS. The book has a

very good discussion of the problems faced in developing vaccines for AIDS and the efforts going on in this field. The author, a former Director of the National Institute of Virology has been at the forefront of AIDS prevention programmes and is thus eminently qualified to write about it. The public health aspect of this deadly epidemic is dealt with in some detail and the need to dispel several prevalent myths about AIDS is stressed. Unfortunately, the style is somewhat uneven.

Did you know that in India, in the present century alone, the cheetah, the lesser one-horned rhinoceros, the pink headed duck and the mountain quail have become extinct? Or that there are only about 200 lions surviving in the Gir forests of Gujarat? These and many other fascinating facts are compiled in Endangered Animals of India and their Conservation. The book aims to create an awareness about the various rare and endangered species in India.

The level of the book oscillates between that of a reasonably well informed reader to that of a complete novice. The presentation could have been more readable, and some of the material (like the tables) is more relevant to a monograph than to a popular exposition. Nevertheless, the

book covers a lot of ground and deserves to be widely read. It is only by understanding the issues involved in this twentieth century "plague" can we ever hope to confront it.

Susan Sontag has argued that two diseases, T.B. and cancer, have held a special place in our thinking about illness. What T.B. was to the last century, cancer is to our times; a disease both intractable and capricious. Indeed, the mythology associated with cancer has contributed immensely to its becoming the metaphor in medicine for the mysterious. *Cancer* is a book written with the aim of dispelling some of the common myths associated with this dreaded disease. The meaning of cancer and its common causes are discussed and some of the warning signals for the onset of cancer are described. After discussing some of the general methods of treatment and detection of cancer, the bulk of the book describes common types and sites of cancers. With the help of several illustrations, the symptoms, treatment and precautions of the various kinds of cancers are detailed. The most important message that comes across is that an early detection of malignancy is the best bet for its cure. With modern diagnostic tools like Magnetic Resonance Imaging detection is becoming more and more convenient. On the curative side, radiation, chemotherapy and surgery have shown results. But ultimately, it is in prevention that the hope for controlling cancer lies. The book is readable and informative, though here again the author seems to be confused about the audience. The book seems to be written both for the general public and paramedics. The general public and paramedics constitute two entirely different segments of readership and they are best segregated. Confusing them leaves both of them dissatisfied with the work. The information content of this work is good but the presentation is not

up to the mark.

Did you know that in India, in the present century alone, the cheetah, the lesser one-horned rhinoceros, the pink headed duck and the mountain quail have become extinct? Or that there are only about 200 lions surviving in the Gir forests of Gujarat? These and many other fascinating facts are compiled in *Endangered Animals of India and their Conservation*. The book aims to create an awareness about the various rare and endangered species in India. A general introduction to our wildlife heritage and depletion is followed by a detailed compendium of the animals whose existence itself is threatened. This section is fairly detailed with descriptions of the animals, their habitat and habits, and the dangers faced by them in their struggle for survival. The text is supplemented by good line drawings as well as some photographs.

One message which comes across clearly from reading the book is that not only is our wildlife heritage extremely rich but it is also threatened by a variety of factors. Thus conservation is a very urgent need and can be successful as Project Tiger has shown. One of the most successful conservation efforts in the world, Project Tiger launched in 1973, has resulted in an increase from 1800 animals to over 4000 in only two decades. The author does not devote too much space to discussing some of the more contentious issues in conservation. One would have liked, for example, a more thorough treatment of the issues relating to the rights of local populations to livelihood vis-a-vis the protection of the animals, and the involvement of the local people in any integrated conservation programme. These quibbles notwithstanding, this is a useful reference book which will hopefully encourage thinking about conservation amongst the readers.

The problem with all the books is essentially one of presentation. There is a lot of information which could be of great interest to the reader, but the style is not reader friendly. The hallmark of good popular science writing is always simplifying without trivializing and writing in a way to hold the informed lay reader's interest. Unfortunately the books under review do not come up to these expectations. Nevertheless, reasonably priced, well produced and on topical subjects, these three books are a welcome addition to the small number of popular science books published in India. One hopes that National Book Trust will continue bringing out books on science for the general public and also translate them into Indian languages. This small step will play an important role in promoting a scientific temper in our society.

Dr. Shobhit Mahajan is Lecturer in the Department of Physics & Astrophysics, University of Delhi, Delhi.

■ ANTHROPOLOGY

Above the Forest: A Study of Andamanese Ethnoanemology, Cosmology and the Power of Ritual

Vishvajit Pandya

On the basis of extensive field-work, the author looks afresh at the Andamanese in particular to reinterpret the belief systems of the Onges. Their world and cosmology is a construct of the essential unity of 'nature' and super-nature and the author presents a holistic view of the cultural content and concepts of the cosmological structures and hierarchical system of the Onges.

Oxford University Press, 1993, pp 319, Rs 295.00

■ COOKERY

Rasoyi: The Handbook of Indian Cuisine

Based on the T.V. series organised by Indian Women's Association, in collaboration with Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation and Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture. This second edition incorporates additional chapters covering snacks and pickles. The recipes chosen here representing cuisine from 12 of India's states are simple and all the ingredients are easily available.

Wiley Eastern Limited, 1993, pp 67, Rs 45.00

Vegetarian Creations

In the light of current recommendations for using more grains, fruit and vegetables, and the negative publicity directed at animal foods, the vegetarian way has never made more sense. This cookbook offers hundreds of nutritious everyday recipes as well as many ethnic classics handed down through generations.

Wiley Eastern Limited, 1992, pp 271, Rs 150.00

■ ECONOMICS

Development Economics: A New Paradigm

Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi

This book provides insightful comments on economic thinking relating to development issues. The author reveals the weaknesses of the free market theory but argues that development economics must evolve and take on new dimensions founded on rational analysis.

Sage Publications, 1993, pp 207, Rs 200.00

Migration and Remittances: Inter-Urban and Rural-Urban Linkages

Jayasri Ray Choudhuri

Starting with the hypothesis that the income transmitted by migrants to areas outside the cities where they work as a significant phenomenon, this study focuses on the role that such remittances play in regional development.

Sage Publications, 1993, pp 261, Rs 325.00

Unconventional Economic Essays: Selected Papers of Amit Bhaaduri

The nineteen essays selected for: this vol-

ume, and written over nearly a quarter century, span a wide range of topics in macro, micro and development economics. The author is internationally known for some of the economic writings collected in this volume even though he has been a well-known critic of mainstream neoclassical theory.

Oxford University Press, 1993, pp 280, Rs 350.00

Inequality Re-examined

Amartya Sen

The claims of equality in social arrangements constitute the subject matter of this original and incisive monograph. The author also examines the demands of incentives and efficiency in the context of inequality assessment.

Oxford University Press, 1992, pp 207, Rs 275.00

■ HISTORY

Indian Responses to Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century

Edited by Alok Bhalla and Sudhir Chandra

The papers included in this volume by scholars of different disciplines were first presented at a series of seminars on Nineteenth Century India and Nationalist Consciousness held recently.

Sterling Publications, 1993, pp 260, Rs 295.00

Colonialism in an Indian Hinterland: The Central Provinces 1820-1920

D.E.U. Baker

This study assesses the impact of the colonial system on a hinterland of the former Indian Empire—eight districts of the Central Provinces, now Madhya Pradesh.

Oxford University Press, 1993, pp 374, Rs 375.00

■ INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

EC92, United Germany, and the Changing World Order

Edited by K.B. Lall, H.S. Chopra and Thomas Meyer

This volume, containing seventeen papers by European and Indian scholars is divided into three parts. Part I focuses on the role of United Europe in the post-Cold War World. Part II deals with the processes and issues ensuing from German unification and Part III focuses on changing patterns of European security, the future of NATO, and European arms reduction.

Radiant Publishers, 1993, pp 209, Rs 300.00

India, Germany and the European Community

Edited by K.B. Lall, H.S. Chopra and Thomas Meyer.

The European community has been India's largest trading partner for nearly two decades and will be increasingly important for India in the 1990s and beyond. This volume contains ten papers by Indian and European scholars on the

implications of German unification and European Union for India.

Radiant Publishers, 1993, pp 164, Rs 200.00

European Union and Transformation of Europe's Economy

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This book containing fifteen papers by European and Indian scholars is divided into three parts. Part one deals with the European Union and the role of institutional structures in reshaping European Economy. Part two deals with the Economic Community and Eastern Europe and part three deals with the EC, GATT and the Third World.

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■ LITERATURE

The Mission Earth Dekalogy

Ron Hubbard

The first seven of a Series of ten science fiction books by a best selling author—*The Invaders Plan, Black Genesis, The Enemy Within, An Alien Affair, Fortune of Fear, Death Quest and Voyage of Vengeance.*

Lancer Paperbacks, 1992-1993, pp 385-480 (approx.) Rs 70.00, Rs 85.00 (each)

Sarojini Naidu—Selected Poetry and Prose

Edited by Makarand Paranjape

This book brings together for the first time, selections from her poetry and prose. Her prose is little known, some of it being published here for the first time.

Harper Collins Publishers, 1993, pp 232, Rs 295.00

Alien Homage—Edward Thompson and Rabindranath Tagore

E.P. Thompson

Edward Thompson, a young English poet and Wesleyan educational missionary met Tagore in 1913 and subsequently set himself the difficult task of writing the first major English-language critical study of Tagore's poetry. The present study draws upon the extensive correspondence and manuscripts in the Thompson collection.

Oxford University Press, 1993, pp 175, Rs 200.00

A Weaver Named Kabir: Selected Verses with a Detailed Biographical and Historical Introduction

Charlotte Vaudeville

The present book is designed to provide all that is essential to understand and appreciate Kabir in English. The first part comprises Kabir's biography in history and legend and later parts provide excellent modern translations of his verses, as well as brief selections from the verses of his contemporaries.

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Strategic Management of Energy Conservation

P.R. Shukla, T.K. Moulik

Shrikant Modak and Pramod Deo

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Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., 1992, pp 150, Rs 185.00

Management Education in India

Edited by J. Philip and D. Shankar Narayan

This book is based on the proceedings of the first ever National Conference of the Heads of Management Education Institutions in India held at I.I.M. Bangalore in 1988.

I.I.M., Bangalore, 1992, pp 240, Rs 175.00 (hardbound)

■ SOCIOLOGY

Power, Poverty and Poison: Disaster and Response in an Indian city

James Manor

This absorbing book provides an understanding of the political, social and economic conditions prevailing in urban India today by treating the 1981 Bangalore illicit liquor tragedy as a 'microcosm'.

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Religious Fundamentalism: An Asian Perspective

Edited by John S. Augustine

It deals with a burning current social problem in our country and brings to light the insights of various Indian intellectuals in the understanding of this.

South Asia Theological Research Institute (SATHRI) in association with Christian Conference of Asia and World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1993, pp 204, Rs 85.00

We are the Original People

Marieke Clarke

This is the story of a development project in an Adivasi village in South Gujarat. It is also a study of relations between different groups: Caste Hindus, Adivasis and development workers.

Ajanta Books International, 1991, pp 257, Rs 295.00

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This book studies health care in India from varied perspectives with a special focus on maternal and child health.

Horizon India Books, 1992, pp 320, Rs 300.00

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Edited by Peter Berman & M.E. Khan

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CHARLOTTE VAUDEVILLE

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CHARLOTTE VAUDEVILLE is an internationally reputed French historian of medieval north Indian literature and religion.

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RALPH RUSSELL taught Urdu for many years at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. He has co-authored (with Khurshidul Islam) *Three Mughal Poets: Mir, Sauda, Mir Hasan*, as well as *Ghalib: Life and Letters, Volume I*.

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BHASKAR DUTTA,

SHUBHASHIS GANGOPADHYAY

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The Indian Statistical Institute Conferences on Economic Theory and Related Mathematical Methods were conceived with the goal of fostering research and discussion in the application of theoretical methods to economic development. This collection of papers, all outcomes of the presentations and lively discussions at the first three meetings, is being published with the same purpose in view.

The chapters fall into four broad subject categories: macroeconomics, industrial organization, planning and public policy, and intertemporal economics.

The book should thus fulfil the dual aim of informing scholars and encouraging young researchers to further such work.

BHASKAR DUTTA, SHUBHASHIS GANGOPADHYAY, DILIP MOOKHERJEE AND DEBRAJ RAY are at the Planning Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi.

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Separatism Among Indian Muslims

FRANCIS ROBINSON

In the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri Masjid in December 1992, the theme of this book has a fresh urgency. The problem of why Indian Muslims under British rule organized for politics as a community is one of the most important in the recent history of the subcontinent. Muslim insistence on a separate identity led eventually to the creation of Pakistan, and to the troubled history of this region since Independence.

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FRANCIS ROBINSON is Professor of History, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, University of London.

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PATRICIA UBEROI

Family, Kinship and Marriage in India attempts to capture the great variety of family types and kinship practices that are to be found in the South Asia region, and the several theoretical formulations which posit an underlying unity in this variety.

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PATRICIA UBEROI teaches sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and is one of the editors of *Contributions to India Sociology*, Delhi.

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Dalit Movements and the Meanings of Labour in India

PETER ROBB

Labour conditions and the disadvantage suffered by those of low social-status (Dalits) are two issues of great academic importance and pressing practical concern in India. Dalits have been caught up in different modes of work; this book brings new perspectives to bear on the change, including those of Dalits themselves. It reflects on the social and economic disabilities against which Dalits have campaigned, particularly the link between occupation and inherited status.

The result is a collection of very high quality and importance, diverse in subject, rich in echoes and contrasts. It contributes to a new direction in its field, and has much to offer to scholars of several disciplines, and to all those eager to understand more of India's past and prospects.

PETER ROBB is currently Chairman of the Centre of South Asian Studies and Senior Lecturer in the Modern History of South Asia at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London. He has written and edited several books on Indian History: most recently, *Society and Ideology*.

320 pages

Rs 290

In Theory

AIJAZ AHMAD

Since the Second World War, nationalism has emerged as a principal expression of resistance to western imperialism from the Indian subcontinent to Africa, from Latin America to the Pacific rim. In the aftermath of decolonization and with the emergence of independent states in Asia and Africa, many of Europe's former colonies banded together to form a common bloc, aligned neither with the advanced capitalist 'First World' nor with the socialist 'Second World'. In this historical context, the category of 'Third World literature' emerged, a category which has spawned a whole industry of scholarly and critical studies, largely in the metropolitan West, and notably through the work of migrant 'Third World' intellectuals residing in the West.

Setting himself against the growing tendency to homogenize Third World literatures and cultures, Aijaz Ahmad has produced a spirited critique of the major theoretical statements on 'colonial discourse' and 'post-colonialism' dismantling many of the commonplaces and conceits that dominate contemporary cultural criticism.

AIJAZ AHMAD is Professorial Fellow at the Centre of Contemporary Studies, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

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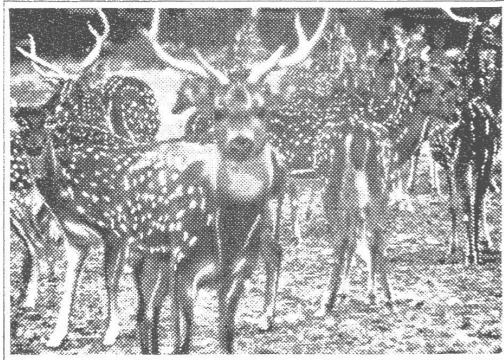
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