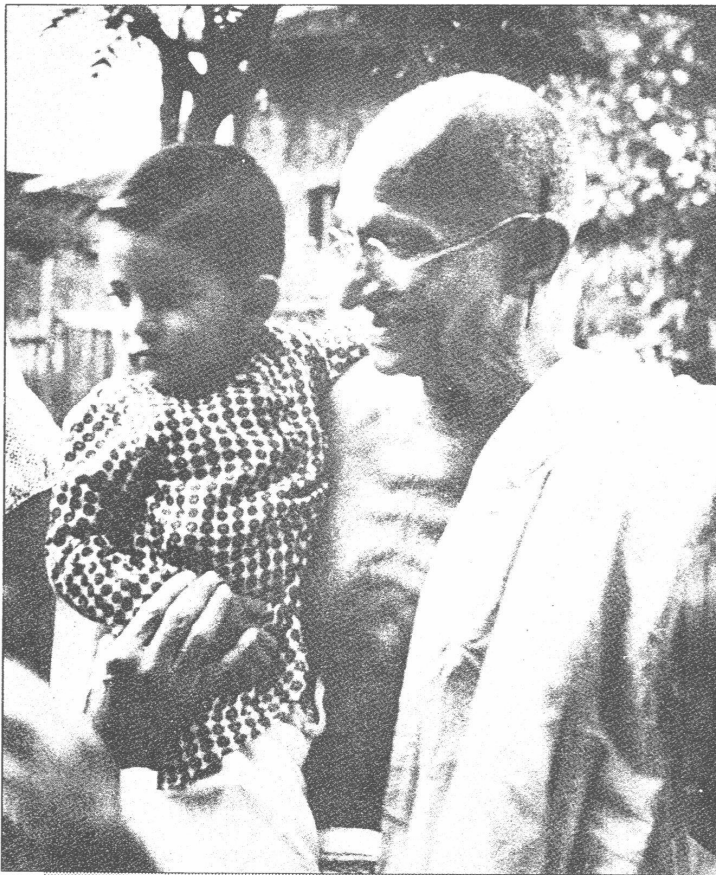


THE BOOK REVIEW

OCTOBER 1993

VOLUME XVII - NUMBER 10



RAJEEV BHARGAVA
Metaphor Against Modernity... 3

HARISH KHARE
A System's Legitimacy At Stake... 4

SUDIPTO MUNDLE
*Capability Approach To
Egalitarianism... 6*

R. CHAMPAKALAKSHMI
A Sculptor's Viewpoint... 9

GIRISH KARNAD
Indian Drama At A Peak... 12

E.S. REDDY
Imprint On A Generation... 13

K.S. DHILLON
Laboured Defence... 22

Price Rs 10.00

C o n t e n t s

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| EDITOR | |
| Chandra Chari | |
| ♦ | |
| MANAGING EDITOR | |
| Uma Iyengar | |
| ♦ | |
| ASSISTANT EDITOR | |
| Preeti Gill | |
| ♦ | |
| EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD | |
| K.R. Narayanan | S. Gopal |
| Raja Ramanna | Nikhil Chakravartty |
| N.S. Jagannathan | S.S. Marathe |
| Romila Thapar | Meenakshi Mukherjee |
| K.N. Raj | V.P. Dutt |
| Mrinal Pande | Tejeshwar Singh |
| Chitra Narayanan | Ashok Vajpeyi |
| ♦ | |
| Design and layout | |
| TULIKA PRINT COMMUNICATION SERVICES | |
| C-20 Qutab Institutional Area, New Delhi 110 016 | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Subscription Rates | |
| SINGLE ISSUE | Rs 10.00 |
| ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (12 Issues) | Individual: Rs 100.00/\$30/£20.00 Institutional: Rs 120.00 (Inclusive of bank charges and postage) |
| LIFE DONORS: | Rs 2000.00 and above |
| Please address all mail to: | |
| Post Box No. 5247, Chanakyapuri New Delhi 110021 Telephones 605252, 6874768 | |

The Book Review is a non-political, ideologically non-partisan journal which tries to reflect all shades of intellectual opinions and ideas. The views of the reviewers and authors writing for the journal are their own.

All reviews and articles published in The Book Review are exclusive to the journal and may not be reprinted without the prior permission of the editor.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>RAJEEV BHARGAVA <i>The Reason of Metaphor: A Study in Politics</i> by Donald Miller</p> <p>HARISH KHARE <i>Between Dream and Reality</i> by Hari Jai Singh <i>Indian Politics Under Mrs. Gandhi: Reflective Essays</i> by P.N. Kamath <i>The Indian Challenge</i> by Gisela Bonn</p> <p>SUDIPTO MUNDLE <i>Inequality Reexamined</i> by Amartya Sen</p> <p>MANIK SEN <i>Themes in Development Economics: Essays in Honour of Malcolm Adiseshiah</i> edited by S. Subramanian</p> <p>GEETANJALI GANGOLI <i>The Politics of Textiles: The Indian Cotton-Mill Industry and the Legacy of Swadeshi 1906-1985</i> by S.R.B. Leadbeater <i>India's Textile Sector: A Policy Analysis</i> by Sanjiv Misra</p> <p>R. CHAMPAKALAKSHMI <i>Ellora—Concept and Style</i> by Carmel Berkson</p> <p>GIRISH KARNAD <i>Bhasa: The Shattered Thigh and Other Plays</i> Translated from the original Sanskrit with an introduction by A.N.D. Haksar</p> <p>E.S. REDDY <i>Raising Up A Prophet: The African-American Encounter with Gandhi</i> by Sudarshan Kapur</p> <p>SUGUNA RAMANATHAN <i>Jesus</i> by A.N. Wilson</p> <p>KAVITA A. SHARMA <i>India Gate And Other Stories</i> by Lakshmi Kannan</p> <p>MANJU KAK <i>Birju : A Short Story</i></p> <p>G.J.V. PRASAD <i>Another Life And Other Stories</i> by Mohan Rakesh</p> <p>ANURADHA MARWAH ROY <i>Shreya of Sonagarh</i> by Uma Vasudev</p> <p>T.C.A. RAMANUJA CHARI <i>Governor's Role in Indian Constitution</i> by Anirban Kashyap</p> <p>KULDEEP MATHUR <i>Managerial Transformation by Values: A Corporate Pilgrimage</i> by S.K. Chakraborty</p> <p>K.S. DHILLON <i>Operation Blue Star: The True Story</i> by Lt. Gen. K.S. Brar (Retd.)</p> <p>PARSHOTTAM MEHRA <i>Japanese Agent in Tibet: My Ten Years of Travel in Tibet in Disguise</i> By Hsiao Kimura</p> <p>Book News</p> | <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>20</p> <p>22</p> <p>22</p> <p>24</p> <p>26</p> |
| Cover Photograph Courtesy Nehru Memorial Museum and Library | |

Metaphor Against Modernity

Rajeev Bhargava

THE REASON OF METAPHOR: A STUDY IN POLITICS

By Donald Miller

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1991, pp. 268, Rs. 225.00

There is more to post-modernism than meets the eye either of its admirers or its critics. The admirer, standing too close, is soon bewitched and ultimately blinded by its magical dazzle. Scornful of all magic and witchcraft, the critic, rather than judiciously take a few backward steps, runs so far away that he can't see in it any light at all. One mistakes its dazzle for illumination, the other sees only darkness.

Both are mistaken because post-modernism contains a consummate blend of brilliant insights and unimaginable piffle. And it requires unusual grit and patience to winkle out precious insights from heaps of PoMo guff. The rewards for those who persevere are jolly good, however, for with a bit of luck, the perceptive comments of some post-modernists are worth their weight in gold; many times more than the alleged discoveries of the smug flag-bearers of Truth and high Morality.

Don Miller's book is not a typical post-modern work, in part because it contains an uneven distribution of sense and non-sense, sense outrunning non-sense by yards. There is much to learn from it because by developing trenchant critiques in the tradition of Counter-Enlightenment and Romantic movements it sharpens our idea of what is wrong with modernity. But occasionally it slips into a different post-modern mode that is vain, callous, pompous and utterly self-indulgent; its criticism is inspired by a fiercely sceptical and intolerant demon bent upon consuming all constructive ideals. There is, I'm afraid, nothing here to learn.

Miller's principal claim is that the nature of metaphor is severely misunderstood and therefore its role, grossly under-appreciated. Once it is restored to the dignity it richly deserves, we have a novel and strategic entry into social theory and the cultural sciences; familiar interpretations will be revamped, common dispositions and assumptions re-examined, and many of our blind spots unearthed. This,

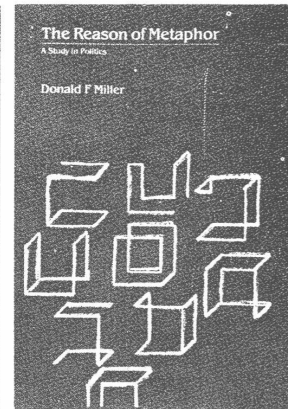
the author claims, has implications for conventional views on language and communication, social planning, modernity, on the relation between religion and politics, on the nature of the self, on an understanding of the state and the very form of political activity. The first part of the book constitutes reflections on the role and significance of Metaphor. The second larger part prides out some of the implications of these thoughts.

On the place of metaphor in human activity, at least four positions that Miller does not always distinguish are found in the book. For the first, metaphor has no room within rational discourse and therefore no proper place within the natural or the social sciences, in philosophy or even in normal, everyday human interaction and ordinary discourse. For the second position, the proper place of metaphor is art and poetry but in revolutionary conjunctures, in life as well as in thought, metaphor performs a crucial function. Metaphor is not part of rational discourse but neither science nor life is wholly rational and thank god for that! For any creative transformation cannot be explained in rational terms and in these times a recourse to metaphor is both inevitable and desirable. The third position is distinguished from the second in that it not only grants metaphor a significant role in life and knowledge but also refuses to relegate it to irrational or rational discourse. It works with a broader conception of rationality and therefore recognises that metaphor has its own rational structure; there exists a reason of metaphor. Finally, for the fourth position, all thought is metaphor and since social reality is shot through with thought, all reality is ridden with metaphoricality. I find the first and fourth positions absurd, the second position understandable but ultimately wrong and find myself in great sympathy with the third position. Much of the book articulates this very sensible third position, and does so in a manner

that is vigorous, engaging and refreshing. But at times it irritatingly exaggerates the dominance and importance of the first position, our common enemy, and then slips dangerously into the fourth position which is a lot of bosh.

But perhaps I have made the cardinal mistake of taking Miller too literally. When he asserts that all thought is metaphor he does not literally mean that all thought is metaphor. To do so is to miss the polemical point behind the statement. Against the view of metaphor as extraordinary, idiosyncratic, exotic and rare, Miller emphasises its ordinariness and pervasiveness. Alright, here is the insight but is there also the expected, accompanying piffle? I am inclined to say, yes. As part of his attack on what he calls Literalism, Miller launches a full-blooded offensive on the very distinction between the literal and the metaphorical and then unhesitatingly puts all his ontological eggs in the metaphorical basket. Now, surely this attack is meant to be taken literally. So, Literalism cannot after all be discarded wholly. It must survive in some form for words to mean anything at all. Miller can't have it both ways. Either Miller defends the literalist thesis that all thought is metaphor and relies on the literal/metaphorical distinction to sustain this claim or by forcing this distinction to disappear he must not ask us to take this claim literally. As an undergraduate student I was frequently reprimanded by my tutors for talking in metaphors and was forced to unpack them. I resisted, succumbed, couldn't care less when I failed but occasionally revelled in my success. Miller's book not only admonishes my teachers but also tries to convince me that on unpacking a metaphor one is bound to stumble upon another metaphor. Metaphors upon metaphors upon metaphors! But this view can be sustained by donning the tinted glasses of yet another ideological vision which I propose to call metaphorism. Metaphorism is the reductive thesis, meant to be taken literally, that all thought is metaphor and like another extreme thesis, relativism, contains the seeds of its own destruction. It is simply incoherent. And I shall introduce here, that horrible unfashionable word, false. For as an ontological statement, this synecdoche must be false; it has taken the part for the whole, as all synecdoches do.

But perhaps I am still being unjust, for Miller distinguishes between metaphor as a generic label for the complete set of the ways in which things are related and classified and metaphor proper, which denotes merely one of these modes. The assertion that all thought is metaphor is meant literally only when metaphor in this context is understood in the generic sense. This may well be so and certainly now his thesis deserves to be taken seriously. But does Miller's sweeping attack on the literal/metaphorical distinction permit this? I fear not; it must not allow a single literal statement. So we are caught



between the horns of a major dilemma. Either we take Miller's thesis literally but reject the wholesale denial of the literal/metaphorical distinction or we accept the distinction in some form and save Miller's thesis. I believe Miller's thesis needs to be saved not because it is correct but because it is interesting and mistaken, and interesting and mistaken largely because it is meant to be taken literally. There is no getting away from literalism.

Let me come straight to the point. There exist two kinds of Literalisms, one which a social theory such as Miller's must bury and the other which it must try to realise. Alas! Miller does not always distinguish the two. For him, Literalism unambiguously presupposes a specific, utterly indefensible view of language: that it expresses universally applicable thought, that objective enquiry reveals that every word has unique meaning, that language records the presence of a word which is already classified by nature independent of human activity. Such literalism, which for Miller is a constitutive feature of Modernity, is obsessed with correctness, with a search for single truth, with homogeneous, monolithic, absolute definitions, with rigorous boundary maintenance, with consistency and universal application. The literalist, it follows, has an antipathy towards contradiction, paradox, dilemma, ambivalence or ambiguity which we dismisses as error. A literalist, Miller argues, thinks in totalities, breeds a rigid system of classification, hangs on to inherited Truth that he deifies, and encourages control through an ideology of transparency. Now there is a motivated or unwitting naiveive in all this encouraged by the failure to see the contingent nature of the connection between Literalism and all the features/dangers identified above. Versions of Literalism exist that systematically avoid all these

attributes. In any case, I have serious doubts if any version of Literalism has ever assembled under its tutelage all of these features.

Let me restate my point of view. There exists in Miller's book a thesis worth saving, namely that most human thought cannot be judged by extremely harsh canons of logic and truth, by the extremely austere, rationalist conception of good thinking developed by philosophers of science in the West and that most of it shares with metaphor its playful, flexible and polysemic quality. It follows that human activity can be understood more by attending to the metaphors than by focussing on the world as viewed by the logician or the scientist. Miller has much convincing things to say here, and he says it with conviction and flair. But between the straight and narrow path of logic and the vertiginous labyrinth of metaphors lies the exuberant world of living human thought which can be understood only if the normative constraints imposed by some form of literalism are respected. It is this which Miller only half-recognizes.

I have so far discussed only the more theoretical part of the book. Even more interesting is the second section where Miller reflects engagingly on questions of modernity, religion, identity, politics and on the relationship between the West and the non-West. I do not have the space to go over the entire contents of this section. But let me offer a glimpse of what it contains. Consider, for instructive illustration, his views on identity. From Miller's discussions it is clear that he encourages not a rigid, frozen, either/or identity but one that is at ease with being multiple. This is a wonderfully sound prescription and any view from which it flows must be reasonable and requires support. A few years ago at a seminar the term "left-liberal" was somewhat reluctantly proposed as a term of self-identification. Within seconds, all hell broke loose. The seminar could hardly proceed any further. The presentation was interrupted, it was demanded that the person concerned must first clarify if he was left or liberal. Further discussion was possible only after a small group of generous, open-hearted friends installed some decorum in the hall! In another seminar, a participant widely believed to be a Marxist but in fact quite "at ease with being multiple", plunged a fellow-participant into an existential crisis of sorts by his gently elusive stance. Unable to bear the uncertainty, the man walked up to him and asked if indeed he was a Marxist. His reply was quite revealing: "I am a temperate atheist who respects genuine believers, a critical modernist who is not hostile to all traditions, a modest humanist who recognizes the dangers of superhumanism, a sophisticated materialist who fully recognizes the inevitable idealism of social life, a concessive collectivist who respects the distinctiveness of individuals". "If Marx was all this", he said,

"then certainly I am a Marxist".

Yes, the tendency to label people is an epidemic. But I am not sure that it is culture-specific, and that its origins are western. Miller firmly believes so. He claims that while the modern West labels people, judges them with total certitude in terms starkly black-and-white, traditional Indian view is not so obsessed with boundries, is indifferent to labels of either oneself or others. I am afraid, we are on the verge of lapsing once again into a dangerous simple-mindedness. For this malaise of stereo-typical labelling is cross-cultural and far older than Miller is prepared to grant. My own beloved country is no less crippled with this disease. I am not denying that the modern West has its own indigenous varieties, some of which have crept into the thoughts and practices of non-western people but to ignore our own homegrown variety is to romanticize ourselves to a degree that leaves me blushing with acute embarrassment. The West, traditional and modern, has worked with stereo-types about people from other cultures just about as much as non-western peoples. The trouble is not that we all begin with fossilised views about the unfamiliar other—this is unavoidable; the problem is that these views get articulated with relations of dominance after which it becomes extremely difficult to rid them. Moreover, it is one thing to say that the West has worked with black-and-white labels about the non-western peoples, quite another to say that there is something *per se* in modern western thought that absurdly exaggerated claim. Surely, there is much in the modern West that also generates multiplicity and fluidity. Likewise much in Indian thought is inflexible and rigid. Our identities are fluid but not so fluid that they can pour neatly into any bottle. Indeed, as we now know, many of our seemingly brittle identities are really hard to crack.

So, what is my assessment? I like the book but am irritated by its tendency to overstate its case. I wonder if complexity and wisdom have not been surrendered occasionally to the lure of rhetorical impact. I am also ambivalent about its overall style, perhaps because I have not yet fallen for the charms of a dynamic intellectual collage; a hectic flurry of claims gush purposefully but unsteadily, in and out of the book. This leaves me quietly longing for unfussy exposition. Finally, I remain convinced that while it is true that modernity is enmeshed with the discourse of technocrats, bureaucrats and deft but cynical politicians, both its radical potential and steadying influence are still unexplored. There is a modernity of the powerful but there is equally an alternative modernity of the weak and the marginalized. Mercifully, obituaries of modernity are biased and premature.

Dr. Rajeev Bhargava teaches at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

A System's Legitimacy At Stake

Harish Khare

BETWEEN DREAM AND REALITY

By Hari Jai Singh

Allied Publishers, Delhi, 1992, pp. 371, Rs. 200.00

INDIAN POLITICS UNDER MRS. GANDHI: REFLECTIVE ESSAYS

By P.M. Kamath

South Asian Publishers, Delhi, 1993, pp. 166, Rs. 150.00

THE INDIAN CHALLENGE

By Gisela Bonn

Allied Publishers, Delhi, 1992, pp. 335, Rs. 325.00

On December 6, 1992, after the Babri Mosque was vandalised, a large number of concerned and sensitive Indians concluded that things would not be the same again in the republic of India. The sense of unease deepened on June 16, 1993 when a crook of a stock-broker summoned the gumption to accuse the Prime Minister of India of receiving tainted money from him. Within six months the polity, its agenda, its concerns and its priorities changed so dramatically and so qualitatively as to confound any observer or historian undertaking a survey of more than four decades of the Indian scene. Yet, it is tempting to try to understand how and what we did and did not do to come to such a sorry pass. Gisela Bonn and Hari Jai Singh attempt this formidable task, albeit with mixed results.

The two commentators, casting themselves essentially in a historian's role, approach the task from their respective vantage positions. Bonn came to India first in 1957, was welcomed into and enchanted by the charmed circle that ruled the roost in Lutyens' New Delhi and was enchanted by it; she befriended almost everyone who mattered. Hari Jai Singh, on the other hand, earned his spurs the hard way, climbing steadily the career ladder in newspaper journalism.

Bonn set out unapologetically to write sympathetically of the Nehru-Gandhi family's India. Like many western women who met Nehru, she, too, probably fell in

love with him and his "almost classically handsome face". He impressed her as "a highly sensitive and restless human being." She also subscribed to almost all the fashionable myths about Nehru and his "caste of Kashmiri Brahmins". In Indira Gandhi she detected a liberal soul, capable of listening to any criticism. She thought Rajiv Gandhi's "job as a pilot had taught him to work with facts and not with visions, speculations or dreams." This fascination with the family remained essentially unsoured.

Bonn does not take kindly to those western critics of India who would harp "on the oppressive miseries of the country and (who) had few appreciative words for the progress independent India had to show for itself." After all, "the slums of Calcutta were not the whole country."

Jai Singh, on the other hand, writes with considerable insight into the complexities of the problem. Though at times his book reads somewhat like a collection of editorials he would have liked to write but could not as editor of *The National Herald*, a newspaper established by the Nehru family.

Of the two, Bonn's work is more useful to a historian because she had access to the policy-makers and is, therefore, able to provide flashes into the elite's perceptions. There is young P.N. Haksar spelling out for her the unambiguously modernist agenda the Nehruvian regime had set for itself: "We have to fulfill certain tasks which we are faced with as a

BETWEEN
DREAM
AND
REALITY
THE INDIAN PAR...

THE INDIAN CHALLENGE

INDIAN POLITICS UNDER MRS GANDHI
Reflective Essays



result of the process of science and of the march of secularisation and democratisation. We are concerned with a radical transformation of our world, of our way of thinking and our social structure, see that once science had made superstition obsolete, consciousness and conscience will be strengthened."

The *leitmotif* is repeated later by a relatively older and more confident Haksar: "It was not due to a lack of technical ability but due to our inability to adapt to new conditions that our social changes never became so evident. It is only the forces insisting upon antiquated traditions which manifest themselves in our attitude towards minorities, people of different faiths and the casteless."

To this modernist agenda Mrs Indira Gandhi would add the potent dose of social justice: "The most urgent (problem) is the most important one: to remove extreme poverty and to combat economic backwardness. This problem is closely linked with superstition, outdated modes of work and a traditional pattern of behaviour in our society. As long as we are

not able to remove these, we shall never reach our goal: social justice." Above all, there was a sense of confidence in our collective ability to accomplish a national agenda. "History cannot be made through imitation," Mrs. Gandhi told Bonn, "our transformation has to be the result of our own intellectual abilities."

Bonn touches, unfortunately all-too-fleeting, upon the trials and tribulations of building a nation-state in a society mired in traditionalism. After all the country was held together, reorganised on a linguistic basis and the infrastructure of an industrial economy put together. But for all her proximity to the ruling family and for all the access she had to policy-makers, Bonn does not offer any insight into the obstacles and difficulties the modernisers faced in presumably trying to change the face of an ancient land.

Yes, there were satisfying moments; like when the Hindu Code Bill could be enacted and which Nehru considered his biggest contribution to India. But land reforms, for example, proved "to be prob-

lematic". Her curiosity is not aroused to ask why laws passed in 1961 could not be implemented till 1972. Even then only mere legislative energies were summoned to amend the existing legislation but the political will to implement the new, improved laws was missing. All that Bonn notes is that "the beautiful dream of social justice thus receded more and more into the distance." Nor does she seem to be aware of the incipient agrarian conflicts as a result of the half-hearted land reforms.

Jai Singh, on the other hand, notes how the attempt to distribute land among the Harijans and other weaker sections "disturbed the traditional structure of unjust and exploitative social relationships, intensifying pulls and counter-pulls and socio-economic unrest." Any change in status quo was resisted and the landlords were quick to raise private armies like the Lorik Sena, the Bhoomi Sena, the Brahmarshi Sena, the Kunwar Sena, etc. in places like Bihar. And the progressive, modernist state watched helplessly, that is when it was not siding with the landlords.

Given her proclivity, not surprisingly, to give the Nehru-Gandhi family the benefit of the doubt, Bonn is inclined to absolve Mrs. Gandhi of her "emergency experiment". Though she calls it "disastrous", she rather puts the onus on the opposition leaders for driving Mrs. Gandhi into a corner. She is, therefore, unable to understand the toll that authoritarian interlude must have taken on the ruling family's commitment to the country. Therefore, it is not surprising that she does not notice that at the end of the day there was a retreat from the grand, overarching, activist and interventionist state. She only notes that in her second innings Mrs. Gandhi had adopted "a new style of functioning." This is her way of saying that Mrs. Gandhi had decided "to disown ideology in order to devote herself all the more intensively to a not-so-spectacular management." Stability, rather than "a seductive ideology", was to be the new mantra.

This, of course, meant, as Jai Singh notes, that "the leadership at all levels sided with those who opposed real economic and social change." Worshipping the new gods of stability, the ruling elites not only lost their reformist zeal but also became active partners in organized looting. Jai Singh notes the convergence of interests among "black marketeers, smugglers, petty criminals, anti-social elements, unscrupulous traders and businessmen, and the many opportunists among officials and politicians."

However, while Jai Singh does note the creeping defiance in "the ruling class" over its excesses and absurdities, he does not quite diagnose how the elites managed to get away with their loot. In a perceptive moment, he detects that Rajiv Gandhi often conducted the affairs of the government "like a restless zamindar"

but does not pursue this line of enquiry, particularly how the Nehru-Gandhi family's proprietorial attitude towards India took a toll on the Congress and other political institutions.

In that respect P.M. Kamath's collection of newspaper articles makes rewarding reading. He zeroes in on Mrs. Gandhi's personality: "Mrs. Gandhi's speeches during the (emergency) period reveal a psychology of her total identification with the country. She recalled enormous sacrifices made by her grandfather, father and her own family for the national cause. 'Indira is India' was not merely a populist slogan; she believed in it."

Kamath, the political scientist, however fails to do justice to the role of psychology of the individual leader, and, in turn, falls victim to the charming personality of Rajiv Gandhi. Indira Gandhi's successor is credited with having "initiated a new politics in India". Kamath notes that "those who came to mock him as an amateur have stayed to praise."

Above all, none of the three books prepares the reader for the politics of liberalisation that almost overnight overturned the assumptions and priorities of the Indian polity. The very elite which for four decades benefited from the previous regime pretended to be innocent victims of misguided policies and rhetoric. Nothing symbolises better this turmoilation than the ease with which Dr. Manmohan Singh, who for over two decades lent his talent to put in place a "wasteful socialist" regime, became the high priest of a new economic order.

The intra-elite conflicts are out in the open. When in the wake of the securities scam, V. Krishnamurthy was forced to resign and subsequently arrested, all the establishment apologists rushed to his defence. Now, much to the consternation of the establishment, he has blotted his copy book by casting aspersions on some of the holiest cows of New Delhi.

These personal quarrels are only symbolic of the elite's refusal to come to grip with the central dilemma, as spelt out by Jai Singh: "The luxuries of rockets, weaponry, five-star extravaganzas cannot coexist with slums and abject, inhuman living conditions. Indian planners, economists and political leaders have to address themselves afresh to the ever-present, challenging problems of poverty and development. For, while Indian leaders talk of the 21st century computer-based India, they must give serious thought to about 60 million households who struggle for their very survival in the country."

Since the regime refuses to address itself to the dilemma, it refuses to acknowledge the need for change and the necessity of renewing the system's legitimacy. A sure recipe for chaos.

Harish Khare is the Chief of News Bureau, Times of India, New Delhi.

Capability Approach To Egalitarianism

Sudipto Mundle

INEQUALITY REEXAMINED

By Amartya Sen

Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992, pp. 207, Rs. 275.00

Amartya Sen has the remarkable ability to convey abstract and often extremely complex philosophical arguments with such simplicity and elegance that reading him is not unlike the experience of reading a novel; except when he is resorting to symbolic logic, a language alien to the art of writing novels. His readers have now come to expect this of him and *Inequality Reexamined*, Sen's second book on inequality, fully lives up to this expectation. In the book Sen develops two distinct but related themes. In the first part of the book he puts forth the thesis that all approaches to the ethics of social arrangements which have stood the test of time are egalitarian in the sense that they call for equality of *something*. In the second part of the book he argues the case for seeking the equality of human capabilities as a particular egalitarian approach.

In developing his first thesis, Sen points out that the idea of equality as a natural principle of fairness or justice is so appealing that all important normative theories of social organisation have been rooted in one way or another in the idea of equality. He points out, this is true even of libertarian theories which have generally been seen as philosophical approaches which defend inequality. Thus Robert Nozick in his *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, for instance, demands the equality of right to liberty as an organising principle for a good society while James Buchanan lays great emphasis on equal legal and political treatment for all individuals in his *Liberty, Market and the State*. The diversity between different ethical approaches, according to Sen, arises not because some approaches call for equality of different things, e.g., right to liberty, legal and political treatment, income, utility weights and so on. Sen calls these focal variables. Thus one approach is different from another because it demands equality in a different focal variable.

This diversity in the choice of focal variables in different ethical approaches is confronted by another diversity, i.e., the inherent diversity among human beings. Sen points out that as a consequence, demanding equality of some focal

variable may require acceptance of inequality of some other focal variable. Thus, Nozick's ethical approach, which demands equality of right to liberty may require accepting inequalities in the distribution of wealth and income. One must therefore choose between combinations of equality in some focal variable and associated inequalities in other variables.

Sen then goes on to argue the case for his own preferred focal variable, i.e., the equality of capabilities or freedoms to achieve certain functionings. The functionings which human beings value can range from such elementary needs as having enough to eat or avoid premature death to quite complex achievements such as having self-respect, taking part in the life of a community and so on. Like other focal variables, capability is also characterised by a great deal of pluralism. Hence, the actual choice of functionings which are taken into account and the weights attached to each will obviously affect the measure of capability.

Comparing the capability approach to the welfarist formulation and utilitarianism in particular, Sen points out that the latter might be particularly inappropriate in the presence of entrenched inequality such as those of gender, race, caste, property, etc., which cannot be easily eradicated. It makes good sense under such conditions for a person who may be thoroughly deprived to accept his or her lot as a living strategy and not pine for what is impossible. Such a person's deprivation may then be substantially

muffled in the mental calculus of desire and fulfillment in the utility metric. Taking specific examples of entrenched inequality such as class, gender, etc., Sen explains why the capability approach would work much better in the presence of such ineradicable diversities between human beings.

Sen also argues that the capability approach calls for an egalitarian distribution of capabilities without any significant curtailment of the aggregate of capabilities for all individuals taken together, i.e., the size of the capability cake is no less important than its distribution among individuals. If the feasible set of capabilities of all individuals taken together is significantly curtailed through inefficiency then the capability set of each individual is also curtailed even though the egalitarian distribution is preserved. In other words, the capability approach requires efficiency as well as equity. Basing himself on this complementarity between efficiency and equity, Sen develops a critique of Rawls's enormously influential theory of justice as fairness. Rawls had emphasised the holding of 'primary goods' such as income, opportunity, etc., in the 'Difference Principle' which he employed in his theory of justice. Sen points out that this focus on equality in the *means* of freedom may conceal significant inequality in the actual *extent* of freedom enjoyed by two individuals similarly endowed in terms of 'primary goods'. Such inequalities may arise out of inter-personal variations in the efficiency with which an endowment of primary goods is transformed into capabilities to achieve various functionings. On similar grounds Sen claims that Dworkin's focal variable, namely, 'equality of resources', is also more limiting than the capability approach.

Finally, commenting on economic measures of inequality such as income inequality and the closely related income or expenditure based measures of poverty, Sen recognises the value of such income/expenditure based measures of inequality or poverty for empirical purposes given the nature of available data. He also recognises that the distribution sensitive measures of poverty are a distinct improvement over the conventional head count ratio which is still being rou-

tinued by the Government and Planning Commission for various purposes. However, he points out that even these measures, including his own index of poverty which he had developed in his first book on inequality, are quite limiting in the presence of other social inequalities such as gender inequality within the family or when there are substantial differences in the availability of public goods or publicly provided merit goods. For example, between two individuals equally poor in terms of private income, but one located in Kerala and the other in Bihar, the latter may be more socially deprived than the former who is likely to have greater access to facilities like public distribution of subsidised foodgrains, public health, publicly promoted education and literacy programmes, etc.

Sen has been developing the capability approach and its applications for a number of years now through a series of earlier papers and books, including his *Commodities and Capabilities* and his joint work with Jean Dreze on *Hunger and Public Action*. There is no doubt that the approach has had a major impact on the thinking of development theorists and international development agencies as well as policy makers in some developing countries. Perhaps the most recent instance of this is the Human Development Index used by the UNDP to rank countries in its Human Development Report. The growing emphasis on human resource development and human rights is also very much in line with the capability approach to egalitarianism.

For practical purposes it is perhaps useful to make a distinction here between focal variables which are friendly to each other and those which aren't. It is arguable, for instance, that the kind of social arrangements which would be required to support Nozick's equality of right to liberty may not be different from those which would be required to support Buchanan's demand for equality in the legal and political treatment of different individuals. At the other end of the ethical spectrum, policies and arrangements which promote income egalitarianism are also likely to promote equality in the space of capabilities. Indeed, the former could be nested within the latter. Undoubtedly, sometimes there may be trade offs between friendly focal variables, e.g. given a resource constraint, should the extra rupee be spent on irrigation or primary education in an agrarian region with a high Sen Index of poverty as well as low literacy? Nevertheless, recognising the large overlap between policies which promote economic equality and the equality of capabilities has considerable practical value. This needs to be kept in view even while establishing the difference between these two focal variables.

Sudipto Mundle is Reserve Bank Chair Professor, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi.

Sen has been developing the capability approach and its applications for a number of years now through a series of earlier papers and books, including his Commodities and Capabilities and his joint work with Jean Dreze on Hunger and Public Action. There is no doubt that the approach has had a major impact on the thinking of development theorists and international development agencies as well as policy makers in some developing countries. Perhaps the most recent instance of this is the Human Development Index used by the UNDP to rank countries in its Human Development Report. The growing emphasis on human resource development and human rights is also very much in line with the capability approach to egalitarianism.

Festschrift On Development Economics

Manik Sen

THEMES IN DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS: ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF MALCOLM ADISESHIAH

Edited by S. Subramanian

Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992, pp. 357, Rs. 390.00

This volume is a *festschrift* to one among the doyens of Indian economics, a teacher, administrator and founder of the prestigious Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), and is edited by one of India's brightest young economists, currently a Fellow at this Institute. Most of the contributors to the volume, though not all, have also been associated at some point or the other with MIDS. It is therefore somewhat surprising that except for a perfunctory preface, precisely one paragraph long, there is neither any reference to Adisesiah's voluminous works nor any attempt to select topics which relate in a systematic way to the interests of the person supposedly being honoured by the volume. Also, for a *festschrift* to someone as distinguished an establishment figure as Adisesiah, the list of authors is surprising because it contains few who could claim to have derived any deep intellectual influence from him and excludes most who could.

Yet, this is an interesting volume which, incidentally, is less heterogeneous in authorship and content than is suggested either by its title or by the blurb put out by its publishers. With only one exception, the contributors are all economists, and, with only two exceptions, they are young (less than half the age of the person being honoured). The book contains both theoretical and empirical contributions, but successfully avoids being the sort of mish-mash that this often leads to, particularly in a *festschrift*. With all the theoretical essays devoted to issues relating to choices in welfare policy in developing countries, and most of the empirical essays also dealing with policy related issues in areas such as infant mortality, social security, employment, and the provisioning of infrastructure, there is, at least at first sight, considerable contextual unity. Even more interestingly, all the empirical essays, though of general relevance, are set specifically in the Tamilnadu context adding a richness usually lacking in all-India analysis. These

empirical essays prove that first-rate economics can be done without losing sight of problems close to hand, and this alone justifies the volume's stated purpose: to honour the distinguished founder of an institute like the MIDS.

The lone essay by a non-economist is one on Tamilnadu's demography by Christophe Guilmoto. This is a scholarly piece which weaves through more than a century of census data, examining its reliability and delving into the intricate connections between demography as merely statistical data and the fact that even innocuous concepts such as age, sex, work and migration categories can be affected by the historical circumstances in which they came to be constituted. K. Nagaraj's essay on infant mortality in Tamilnadu is also about demography, but, perhaps because it comes from an economist, it is less concerned with subjective biases in data and more forthright about results obtained through statistical comparisons. The essay itself is fascinating, taking up life and death issues comparing the Tamilnadu case with the rest of India and with Kerala. On most demographic indicators, including infant mortality, Tamilnadu appears to have done significantly better than the rest of India but significantly worse than Kerala. And Nagaraj's is a comprehensive attempt to investigate the reasons for this and to derive policy measures to reduce, particularly, the high post-natal infant mortality in Tamilnadu. The contrasts with Kerala in this context are perhaps the most interesting because these show up at almost every level of disaggregation despite the fact that Tamilnadu has the better immunization record. Nagaraj identifies several possible reasons including social ones such as who cares for children when mothers go to work, and health policy ones such as the mix and quality of preventive and curative measures. The conclusion appears to be that relatively simple government interventions in the areas of ante-natal care, water supply, civic hygiene and provision of creches

can prove more effective than conventional immunization efforts.

This general theme, of relatively low-cost but universal government provision of social insurance, is also the focus of S. Guhan's essay on Social Security Initiatives in Tamilnadu. Guhan, who had a long and distinguished career as an administrator before joining MIDS, was entrusted in 1989 with the detailed design for the implementation of the Manifefto provisions relating to social security of the then newly elected DMK government. In this essay he sets out the philosophy and discusses the cost-effectiveness of that programme (consisting of old-age pension, accident and survivor benefits and maternity assistance to the bulk of the poor) which in many ways anticipated the idea of a social 'safety-net' now much heard about in the context of the on-going 'structural adjustment programme'. Guhan notes that such social security measures, taken for granted by those in the organised sectors, are almost non-existent among unorganised workers and shows that a credible minimum universal protective programme can be designed at a relatively low cost involving less than 2 per cent of government revenue. The critical question as he rightly observes is whether those in power will be able to muster the will to raise the necessary resources—a question which remains relevant today as the government continues to cut its own social spending and seems set to spend available social sector aid either on those already privileged or on schemes which are populist rather than protective.

The essay on Economic Efficiency and Social Goals in Electricity Supply in Tamilnadu by U. Sankar and R. Hema is another which has direct relevance to the current economic debate. The new orthodoxy favours a complete elimination of any subsidy in electricity tariff and the decision seems to have been taken that privatisation of the bulk of future additions to power capacity is the only feasible option. That such a perspective may be too simplistic as a solution to the undoubted current problems of inefficiency is the main message of the paper. The problem of 'cream skimming' by private operators is highlighted and the need to extend greater autonomy to State Electricity Boards is stressed (irrespective of whether these are to be in competition with or monopoly purchaser from private sector utilities) with a plea to rationalise tariff structure without eliminating cross-subsidies completely.

The two other empirical contributions, on Interlinked Transactions and the Market for Water in the Agrarian Economy of Tamilnadu by S. Janakiraman and on Determinants of Rural Non-Agricultural Employment in Tamilnadu by D. Jayaraj are both competent and informative analyses of important aspects of rural Tamilnadu. Jayaraj's is a rich village-level analysis of an area in which there

has been considerable recent research with a tendency towards broad generalisation. The study warns against simple conclusions, pointing out that the growth of rural non-agricultural employment need not exclusively be either a sign of prosperity or distress and that in reality both these forces are intertwined simultaneously. Janakiraman documents the emergence of private transactions in ground-water irrigation and focusses on how such transactions are interlinked with transactions in the credit and product markets and how these lead not to stagnation, as in some models, but to dynamism but with an unequal sharing of gains.

Of the theoretical pieces, Paul Seabright's Model of the Role of Brokerage in Financial Intermediation also deals with an aspect of economic policy drawn from rural Tamilnadu—that of rural credit. Seabright notes the phenomenon of the rich borrowing from banks and lending to the poor and attempts to assess whether the existence of such middlemen is desirable. The problem is posed in terms of possible informational advantages possessed by such intermediaries over banks and in terms of the conflicts that banks may face between maximising profits and excluding such intermediation. Certain interesting conclusions are obtained—for example that the interest rates which will induce banks to lend more to target groups would be lower if banks are allowed to maximise profits rather than when they are asked to minimise lending to middlemen. But such a result depends crucially on assuming away wilful default which is generally greater among larger borrowers.

There are two theoretical essays by the editor of the volume. The first, entitled Basic Needs, Positive Freedom, and the Possibility of Rights-Respecting Social Choice, is in the tradition of Social Choice Analysis popularised by Amartya Sen and falls midway between economics and ethics. Here, the focus is on two distinctions—between freedom and liberty, the former defined more narrowly than the latter; and between paradoxes in social choice which are due to feasibility problems arising out of resource constraints rather than more traditional ones due to the need to respect individual quirks of preference. Subramanian makes a case to restrict freedoms to basic needs fulfilment and not surprisingly finds that a wholly liberty based view could prove to be inadequate and misleading when one is also concerned with the actual capability of agents to function. The second paper (written jointly with S. Gangopadhyay) is on Optimal Budgetary Intervention in Poverty-Alleviation Schemes. This paper uses the now well known class of poverty measures due to Foster, Greer and Thorbecke (which with suitable parameter choice can stretch from the usual head-count poverty measure through the poverty gap to a Rawlsian concern only for the poorest) and asks how optimal inter-

vention with a fixed budget alters with parameter change in the poverty measure. However, despite its attractive policy oriented title and the heavy mathematical armoury used, the conclusions fail to rise much above the immediately obvious. For example, if the number below the poverty line is to be reduced spend the budget selectively on the richest among the poor; if the poverty gap is to be minimised the distribution of the transfers among the poor does not matter; and if a Rawlsian perspective is taken spend it only on the poorest. The more important questions of the costs of information and of the incentives consequences associated with different transfer or employment programmes are merely mentioned, not investigated.

The most ambitious essay in the volume is by Kaushik Basu on *Some Simple Analytics of Inflation and Unemployment in a Dual Economy*. This takes on the fairly standard neo-classical policy prescription of justifying a wage subsidy in the presence of a dual labour market. Basu assumes the case where such a subsidy is provided but financed entirely by running a budget deficit. The usual model is therefore extended by modelling the government and the wage-inflation trade-off explicitly. This latter trade-off is seen to take the form of a Phillips curve relation discussed more usually by macroeconomists and not in the context of micro-policy. And Basu's conclusion is that although such a subsidy may be fine when the macroeconomics is ignored it may be causing too much inflation end up being counter-productive when the trade-off is taken into account. As typical with Basu this is an elegant paper which neatly integrates two central ideas in macro-derived—that therefore such subsidies should not be given—is, though in keeping with the new orthodoxy, not necessarily the obvious one. There would be no inflation if instead of deficit financing the resources for the subsidy were raised by taxing profits, and, in Basu's model, this would also not have had any deadweight costs. The traditional view would then survive and the focus would return not to the specious question of whether deficit financing is always good but to whether the rich will tolerate extra taxation even if this is for the common good.

All in all this is a good collection fairly representative of the high state of development economics in the country. The only disappointment which remains is perhaps one that is typical of the subject as it is currently practiced—the less high-brow empirical work has far more real content and is also often less misleading than the highbrow clever stuff churned out by our capable theoreticians.

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

Economics With A Human Face

Geetanjali Gangoli

THE POLITICS OF TEXTILES: THE INDIAN COTTON-MILL INDUSTRY AND THE LEGACY OF SWADESHI 1900-1985

By S.R.B. Leadbeater

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 312, Rs. 285.00

INDIA'S TEXTILE SECTOR: A POLICY ANALYSIS

By Sanjiv Misra

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 278, Rs. 275.00

The crisis within the Indian textile industry has been the subject of intense debate in the recent past. The Textile Policy of June 1985 has been one of the more recent attempts to find a way out of the existing impasse.

The two books under survey are written under the shadow of this story of decline and degeneration. S.R.B. Leadbeater provides a historical perspective into the ideology of the national movement and the nature of the nation-state after independence. Sanjiv Misra studies the policy of the Indian state and the role the state has played in hastening the crisis in the mill-sector. The ethos feeding the two books forms the common plank between the two. The two authors feel that the economic controls by the Indian state which have, Leadbeater suggests, their historical precedents in the Swadeshi Movement during the nationalist phase of our country, have led to the current situation in the textile industry. The only way to overcome this is to continue on the path illuminated by the 1985 Textile Plan, which supports the exit policy and removal of state controls on the industry.

Misra in his well researched book is vocal in his support of this plan which he hails as a "radical" step, with its new manifest orientation towards competition and efficiency. He describes the policy in some detail. The new policy recommends removal of barriers to entry and exit, complete flexibility in use of cotton and man-made fibres, equal treatment of composite mills and powerlooms for fiscal purposes, closure of non-viable units in the public and private sector, no further nationalisation of sick mills, removal of controls and regulations on the textile industry.

Leadbeater traces the genesis of the decline that has, according to him, necessitated this radical step. His thesis runs

on two lines. First, that the national movement under Gandhi, was organically linked to the notion of swadeshi. In conceptual and practical terms, swadeshi meant the support of the handloom (<hadi) sector. By their active support to the national movement, the mill owners were embracing an ideology that was antithetical to their economic interests. Secondly, he examines the nature of the Indian nation-state, which had made its bias towards the decentralised textile sector clear through its controls on the mill sector. According to Leadbeater, government policies have done more to divide the industry than to provide a regulative frame-work.

Misra's book takes off from this point. He suggests that India's textile experience remains different from other Asian countries, which have shown remarkable growth in the past few decades. In India, the regulatory state policy, tilted in support of the informal sector, have destroyed the textile industry. Powerlooms have proliferated legally and illegally, since they have enjoyed concessions denied to the formal sector. Powerlooms have been excused from fiscal duties if processed without power and have enjoyed 30 per cent lower duties if processed with power.

There are however some inconsistencies in the arguments. If, as Misra explains at some length, powerlooms, handlooms and mills produce different varieties of cloth, surely the nature of demand and supply would have some bearing in the fall in the fortunes of the mill industry. Fiscal levies are, no doubt, important factors in deciding the fate of an industry. But for Leadbeater and Misra, they assume an importance that is altogether hegemonic. Surely, powerlooms and handlooms would have been doing much better than they are now if fiscal concessions were as important as Misra and

Leadbeater consider them.

The two authors, however, hold strongly that the only effective way to combat the existing situation is to effectively impose the exit policy. Misra dismisses the pressure on labour unions to counteract sickness as lacking conceptual clarity. "In any dynamic and competitive industrial sector, at any given point of time, there are bound to be a certain number of casualties, consisting primarily of uncompetitive and inefficient units, which the normal play of market forces eliminates in the larger interests and long term health of the system as a whole. But for the undeniable social costs... such 'sickness' is not entirely unwelcome for the overall well-being of the system."

This is the lynch-pin of Leadbeater's and Misra's thesis: the almost total lack of concern for the "social costs" of economic policies. This stems quite clearly from their attitude to the workers in the mill industry. Leadbeater, in his analysis of the fortunes of the mill, at no point mention the workers who have contributed so vitally to the economy of the mills. For him, the rise of the composite mill sector in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is the story of the brilliant moves of the entrepreneurs who founded mills: for instance, the Sarabhais, the Lalabhais in Gujarat, the Chettiars and Naidus in South India. In this discourse the working class remains invisible and unspoken for. Their contributions are not mentioned in the rise of the textile industry. No wonder then that today they have no voice when these mills face decline. They are mentioned only as the "social costs" of change by sociologists and economists.

The mill workers are, however living, breathing, sentient human beings. For them, words like "over all well-being of the system" are inadequate and even insulting. A preliminary study of 32 medium and large scale units in Bombay conducted by the Workers' Solidarity Centre against Joblessness and Industrial Closures, a Bombay based labour research centre reveals a 21.44 per cent decrease in the permanent work-places (from Veena Mathew, "What About the Workers?" *Sunday Review, The Times of India* 9.7.92) between 1980-90, out of which 10-15 per cent are textile workers.

Few among us could however deny that government policy in India is, at best inefficient and at worst, paralysing. But, one needs to consider whether the exit policy and removal of all controls will work effectively for the textile industry. N. Vasudevan, general secretary of the Blue Star Union, Bombay, has a different, but equally valid perspective which needs to be considered seriously. As he puts it, "...even profit-making concerns will be declared sick as the industrialist stands to gain through the sale of lucrative urban land, a situation which the textile industry has witnessed." (Quoted in Veena Mathews, *Ibid.*)

It appears, therefore, that the question

of industrial sickness is less simple than it appears. Again the link between the unorganised and organised sector has to be carefully studied. Leadbeater and Misra recognise the role that khadi has played in the emotional and cultural life-style of the Indian people. As Misra further admits, a little reluctantly, handlooms are labour intensive. For these reasons, he holds that an effective textile policy should keep in mind the role of the handloom sector. Accent, however, he feels should be on carefully designed, promotional programmes and not on regulatory ones, which control the activities of the other sectors of the society.

At first glance, it would be difficult to disagree with such well considered logic. Yet it is the underlying ideology informing this approach that I find difficult to accept. For Leadbeater and Mishra, the cosmos of the handloom worker is an anachronistic one. Mishra clearly states that if the handloom sector has to be encouraged the price for this should be paid by the public—"carefully designed promotional programmes" should transfer public resources directly and efficiently to the weavers—and not by the private sector. The private sector, in consonance with the new market-friendly, pro-consumerist ethos should not be touched.

Some questions arise from these. Who are the consumers likely to benefit from these policies? As inflation rises, prices

escalate, and the only consumers who matter any more are those with purchasing power. The public money diverted to protect the anachronistic world of the handloom workers are raised primarily through indirect taxes which none can evade. Should the burden fall harder than now on the already groaning tax-payer?

Some economists continue to feel that we need more, and not less, state control, though of a new more efficient kind. Amartya Sen argues that there is a good case for removing irrational control, or creatively using the market mechanism. But we also need more state intervention in some areas. Market considerations alone can lead to a miscalculation of real costs and benefits to the society (Quoted in *The Times of India* 4.7.93).

What is needed, perhaps, is economics with a human face. This might well be unfashionable in the existing world of consumerism and market forces. But the social costs of ignoring this can well be colossal. There is a case for including social factors in economic analysis. This can only enrich economics and government policy.

Geetanjali Gangoli is a research student in history at Delhi University. She is currently working in Action India Women's Programme, an activist group, concerned primarily with women's issues in four resettlement colonies in New Delhi.

A Sculptor's Viewpoint

R. Champakalakshmi

ELLORA—CONCEPT AND STYLE

Text and Photographs By Carmel Berkson

Abhinav Publications, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts,
New Delhi, 1992, pp. 391, Rs. 1200.00

Studies on Indian art have not progressed much beyond concerns with styles and their chronology. This is so despite the emphasis laid on the need to relate philosophy, aesthetics and the historical context to art in India in the works of pioneers like A.K. Coomaraswamy, Stella Kramrisch and Nihar Ranjan Ray. More recently, it has attracted the attention of students of art and artists themselves and the result is a fresh look with different perceptions of art and its conceptual basis in India.

Significantly, the present work, authored by Carmel Berkson, a sculptor and photographer, concerns itself with a sculptor's (artist's) view and understanding of art in early medieval Deccan with Ellora as its focus. The work amply demonstrates the need for the historian and the artist to come together for making such studies more meaningful and relevant to the periods concerned.

The present work does not attempt any serious explanations of the historical context in which Ellora's remarkable rock sculptures were produced. Beyond providing a general chronology of the 6th and 9th centuries A.D. for the art of Ellora and placing the best of Ellora art in the heyday of the Rashtrakutas, or seeking the sources and regions from which the artistic impulses came to Ellora, the book makes no claim to be a study on art history. However, it does prove the point that one of the major aspects of the study of art is the artist's vision of his own art and the concepts which governed his vision. In the process, the author makes a sincere effort to understand the Brahmanical and Buddhist philosophies and relate them, as a common body of thought, to the rules of composition, narration and execution of the sculptures, their stylistic variations and progression.

Introducing the subject with the environmental significance of Ellora, the author regards a vision of the caves nestling within the mountain scarp at Ellora as an apt metaphor for the fundamental relationship of the Absolute with the world. By penetrating within the mountain, which is the symbol for an unchanging, ineffable still Reality, the artist, we are told, makes a symbolic return to the Absolute, to achieve the longed for re-

union with original matter. The transcendental Absolute becomes manifest in the caves in a variety of forms static and mobile and the worshipper is helped to share the artist's universality and comprehensions through them. This idea is kept alive throughout the book, as it sets the author's parameters of stylistic, aesthetic and conceptual analysis, constantly referring to the significance of re-integration of the devotee with the Absolute.

The conceptual basis of the study is thus derived from the Buddhist concept of *Sunyata* and the Brahmanical *akasa*, whose affinities are pointed out. *Sunyata* and *akasa* do not represent more void or space but are pervaded by fullness and bliss i.e. filled by *Brahman* (of the *Lipanshad*s). The space is here the space within the shrine, the panels and the caves. The manifestation of the Absolute is revealed in the images, the shrine and the cave, which together represent the microcosmic image of the macrocosm.

For Carmel Berkson, what is relevant is that the Brahmanical Absolute is fixed, unchanging, eternal and unmoving yet dynamic and pregnant with motion. The centre (*bindu*) represents this Absolute in the circle, an archetypal symbol, concretized as the *yantra* and *mandala*, the oscillation between the centre and the circumference (*rik*-diameter)—representing all that emanates from the still, quiet centre, i.e. phenomenal life, returning to it inevitably. The Buddhist view admits of no fixed centre or circumference and on the contrary emphasises relativity. For Berkson both are relevant in her assessment of the configurations of the sculptured panels, especially where the centre, circumference and the diagonal are concerned. To this is added the concept of *Maya*, which is taken not as illusion but as focusing on the interconnectedness of the relative and the Absolute, the Absolute which interpenetrates the transitory phenomena including *Maya* in itself. Hence architecture and sculpture of cave reflect artist's involvement in the eternal quest to fix the relationship of the relative to the Absolute. The Ellora panels are believed to describe this relationship.

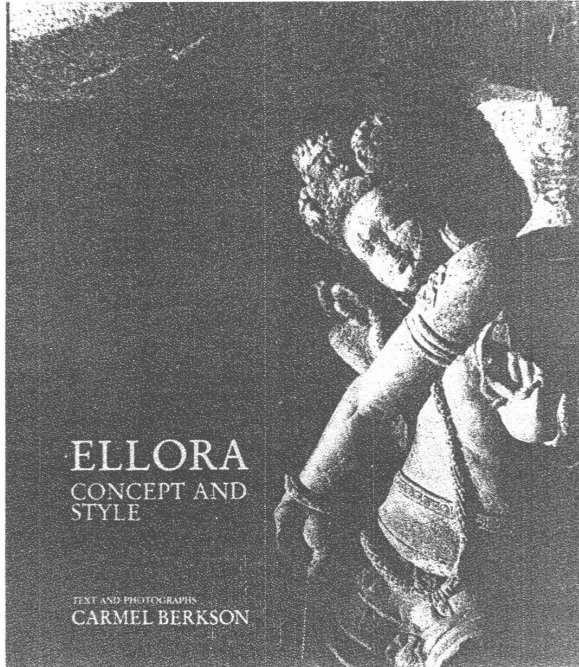
Berkson also uses the concept of *bhakti* as representing the more intuitive approach to the numinous i.e. the deep thirst

“SAVE PAPER
SAVE TREES”



THE HINDUSTAN TIMES GROUP

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES,
HINDUSTAN,
EVENING NEWS,
KADAMBINI, NANDAN,
EYE WITNESS



of the "masses" for passionate contact and interaction with the deity. For this deity, name and form are provided by the epics, *Puranas*, *Agamas* and *Tantras* and a plethora of images as intermediating symbols bring the personal god to the common man. In Puranic religion the Upanishadic *Brahman* is transformed into the Brahmanical Siva, Vishnu and Devi. Although the conceptual basis worked out by the author is important as it serves to make interesting correlations, Berkson's suggestion that it is the *bhakti* of the Tamil Alvar and Nayanar and their poetry (verbal imagery) which influenced the art of Ellora (the Deccan and even north India) is unacceptable as such a spatially far reaching influence for Tamil *bhakti* poetry would be difficult to establish for this period.

Of the thirty odd excavations in Ellora, Berkson is concerned mainly with the Brahmanical and the Buddhist caves and not the Jain caves, which, according to her, post date the others.

The author begins by setting forth what she calls coordinating conditions, universally applicable to the art of the caves, regardless of styles in transformation *viz.* (1) the mountain (environment); (2) the geometric framework or understructure, which is strict for architecture and flexible for the panels, the geometrical understructure being in perpetual balance with the surrounding landscape; (3) the thresholds: leading the votary from outside to inside i.e. to the integration of the self

with the Absolute; (4) energy: which is imbued by the artist into the images, the intensity of the compressed energies, which are continually activated both centrifugally and centripetally, being crucial for an analysis of the sculpture; (5) rhythm: i.e. transferring of rhythmic pulsations of nature and of the artist himself into the sculptures through lines, flat planes, volumes, light and shadow; (6) configurations: both the traditional inherited configurational vocabulary and the innovations made, resulting in a metamorphosis of style, without panels, however, entirely breaking with the past; (7) dynamic patterns: the panels have no single or fixed pattern. It is flexible, dynamic and even ambiguous and it is the observer who is forced to take responsibility in fixing them into a configuration. In other words, the viewer is an active participant in the aesthetic process.

Despite the underlying grid (*panjara*) the composition is not stable and appears to be in a perpetual state of change; it never comes to rest except in the innermost shrine e.g. *Linga* or Buddha; (8) the play of opposites: interaction of volume and space, as voids are as important as volume or mass and solidity of stone. This interplay undergoes significant changes, without losing their interconnectedness until the pre-medieval reduction into one of two equally sized volumes or one that dominates, in the dyads of Dasavatara cave; (9) Motion/stasis equation: i.e. simultaneous interaction of

mobile static conditions, symbolic of the continuous. This is achieved through innumerable techniques such as juxtaposition of agitated masses and flat planes, various combinations of curves and angles and diagonally oriented forms. Motion/stasis is in fact considered to be the core description defining the art of Ellora; (10) Light and darkness: Here there is no substitute for visual experience for conditions (interplay of light and shadow) change from moment to moment and from season to season, the transformations resulting in a fantastical chimeral appearance.

The author attempts no fixed chronology for the evolution of styles at Ellora, as, in her view, transformative styles do not occur in linear fashion, and no strict divisions in terms of dates and characteristics can be made. That the boundaries were fluid is well brought out in her assessment of styles as the classic, the late classic, the pre-Medieval and the Archaic. The terminology and division are strictly hers, as no earlier art historian or artist has made such an in-depth analysis or classification of the panels except to place Ellora after Ajanta i.e. post 7th century A.D. and call the style medieval or early medieval in general. Within Ellora, the author recognises an evolution, apogee and regression within a span of about four centuries from the 6th to the 9th.

A brief survey of Berkson's analysis of the styles will help to understand what a sculptor's vision can do to explain the aesthetic and stylistic significance of the art. In the classic style (6th-7th centuries), the composition adheres to the underlying grid of horizontal and vertical lines as seen in the Ramesvara cave (No. 21) panels e.g. the Ganga and Yamuna river goddesses whose equipoise and positioning represent a geometrical fusion with the cult *linga* in the sanctum in a triangle. As female deities, they, however, share the quality of female spirits (*Vrikshikas*), an affinity with folk traditions, association with fecundity, vegetal and marine life i.e. the world of abundance. These *Vrikshikas* exhibit influence from the Aurangabad sculptures (Tara in Cave 7 of Aurangabad) and are significantly placed on the thresholds. They belong to the third in the five configurational schemes identified by the author. The *dvarapalas* (also of the same scheme) though brahmanical, have also inherited the qualities of *bodhisattvas* from Ajanta and Elephanta *dvarapalas*. An undercurrent of force activate these otherwise quiescent images from within.

The *Saptamatrikas*, of whom there are four depictions in Ellora, set in a sequential order, represent the second scheme and in keeping with the classic style, they are integrated with the wall but there is mobility, grace and tranquillity, as angularities are avoided even in the Kala panel which is invariably associated with the *matrikas*.

The panels of Siva dancing and of Mahishasuramardini, which fall under

the fifth scheme, are differently conceived, the latter being highly innovative, a metaphor in stone for power, energies flowing in different directions. The panel merits different views, from the front and sides. The panels representing Parvati's penance and her marriage to Siva (in a triptych) provide an excellent example of flexible patterning—a syncopation as in musical notes.

The late Classic style, although born out of the Classic, is mainly transitional, towards (1) greater mobility and (2) towards a style pronouncedly hieratic. Before its demise, it also exhibits new stirrings which culminated in the pre-medieval extravaganzas of the Dasavatara Cave.

As for mobility, the late Classic style adds a new diagonal axis to the geometrical grid, introduces different pictures starting from the loosening of the classical firmness in the *tribhanga*, seeks concentration of forces, new tension producing relationships as seen in Siva dancing in Lalita (Cave 14), Andhakasura (Vadha) in Kailasa (Cave 16), Mahishasuramardini (Cave 14-Ravana-ka-kai). The influences are traced to Badami and Elephanta and even Kanchipuram(?). They also contain the germs of the future style in their tremendously mobile but highly disciplined tableaux. They are so significantly three dimensional that views from the sides are more relevant than the frontal approach of the classic style, with a hint of separation from the wall and with continual transformations of directions, foreshadowing the pre-medieval style. Even the arms (Siva in Andhakasura panel) and the ornaments (Siva dancing in Cave 14) act as energy channels for stasis/motion equation. The sculptor does not imitate but extracts the essences and conditions from the living body of the dancer, here Siva, and reproduces them in stone which is thus activated.

The development towards the hieratic is seen in the *dvarapalikas* in the *yajnasala* of Kailasa (Cave 16), the *Saptamatrikas* (Cave 14) as well as other figures in Caves 21 and 29, the Buddha in Cave 2, Bodhisattvas, Tara and Atita Buddhas in Cave 12. The trend here is towards stern frontality and verticality, and a certain standardisation, apart from a lack of centrifugal forces. However, in the female figures the fecundity aspect or emphasis on fertility is never absent, and the interaction of volume and void is not lost sight of even in the disciplined meditation of a Buddha or in the tremendous energies contained in the Atita Buddhas.

The demise of the late classic is located in the Dhumar Lena (Cave 29) panels which show a heaviness, stasis, lack of grace, particularly in the *dvarapalas* and Parvati in the Andhakasura panel, who is described as an aboriginal stone goddess expressing a "waning vocabulary of a provincial art" and life of the masses rather than the tastes of the elite of society.

The stirrings of a new style (pre-medieval) are found in the queen and atten-

For the modern visitor these panels provide alternating vistas, multifaceted experience, different perspectives, shifting scenes showing that the role of the perceiver is crucial. Each panel is to be viewed in relation to a particular alignment of geometrically shaped volumes created by architectural elements like columns, ceiling, beams and the intervening spaces. From the side views, there are abrupt visual transformations. A succession of multiple views indicates that the artist's intention was to depict the transitory nature of phenomenal events by showing changing, illusory views—eternal metamorphosis of forms. The unmoving ground is provided by the geometrical understructure of the square/rectangular mandapa, columns and the sanctum.

dants group in Kailasa (Cave 16) *Yajnasala*, as well as in the matrikas and Yama and his victims, which, according to Berkson, mark a revolutionary rupture with space which separates figures from the bare walls. "Wrenched out of the geometrical confinement of the past" they speak a new idiom in the vitality and ripeness of female attributes, bursting the boundaries of their sequential arrangement.

The third and most significant style is described as pre-medieval and Manneristic, created by a new generation of artists, revolutionary, daring and highly innovative. Their panels are in clear contrast to the strict puritanism of the stark geometry which characterises architecture. The unique contribution and distinguishing mark of this style is the agonised organic restlessness inherent in the compositional patterns of some of the Brahmanical panels.

Here past conventions are demolished, boundaries of classicism burst as under or frame defied. Exuberant force and spectacular abandon characterise all panels and yet to a large extent the basic stability is retained under the traditional convention of the *panjara* (grid). The best of these panels are found in the Dasavatara (Cave 15), which strike a balance between the frenzy of activity and the bounds of artistic discipline. The four panels of Andhakasura (Vadha), Markandeya, Narasimha-Hiranyakasipu and Gajendravarada rank among the world's leading works of sculpture.

The most remarkable of the new style and the new configurations are the Dyads representing the inter-relationship or bold interplay of two mobile figures, two large volumes dominating the field (no clusters except minimal figural additions), three dimensional, with a background of empty space, carved in the most powerful reductionist style, in oblique relationship to the plumbline full of dynamic tension. Details vary as the Dyads are in physical contact either at one or more points, or entwined or locked in combat physically or conceptually or have no physical contact at all or drawn towards each other or repelled.

The shift to the diagonal, the release from the limitations of their emphasis (vertical and horizontal stability) are

remarkably portrayed in Siva lurching forward in the Markandeya panel, Narasimha-Hiranya in combat, Siva dancing in Lalita, all in the Dasavatara Cave.

The frame is subordinated, no finite field exists and relativity dominates. Following Rudolf Arnheim's analysis, the author tries to establish that forms seek relationships with other forms that are outside the limited field in which they stand, reaching outside the frame. It is their relationship to environment which is crucial in Berkson's analysis of the organisation within the panels. Flexible patterns indicate that the panels are to be seen as aggregate of parts in changing relation to one another—a syncopated system of balances.

There are other panels like Vishnu Anantasayi and Linga from which Siva emerges which illustrate motion and fluidity. Volume and disintegration of volume are found in the Varaha and Govardhana panels (Cave 15.)

The artist chooses the climatic moment which is now petrified in stone and a certain level of abstraction achieved for elevating art above the concrete.

For the modern visitor these panels provide alternating vistas, multifaceted experience, different perspectives, shifting scenes showing that the role of the perceiver is crucial. Each panel is to be viewed in relation to a particular alignment of geometrically shaped volumes created by architectural elements like columns, ceiling, beams and the intervening spaces. From the side views, there are abrupt visual transformations. A succession of multiple views indicates that the artist's intention was to depict the transitory nature of phenomenal events by showing changing, illusory views—eternal metamorphosis of forms. The unmoving ground is provided by the geometrical understructure of the square/rectangular mandapa, columns and the sanctum.

The pre-medieval art of Ellora would hence seem to represent the relativity of all phenomena, microscopic analogy of the macrocosm and the underlying unity of all phenomena viz. religious experience.

Space plays an important role in architectural symbolism and as metaphor for

the Brahman. Hence there is unrestrained obsession with vast expanses and a concrete affiliation of the concepts of *Sunyata* and *akasa*. In caves such as Tin Thal (12), Dasavatara (15) i.e. multi storeyed excavations, it reaches its peak—it is all significant, it dominates, unifies, permeates all elements in the caves—in short a coordinated orchestration of space and volume results.

In the later phase, two panels in the Dasavatara are significant, first, the Trivikrama panel, in which the transformation of Vamana to Virata is expressed in a narrative in which stillness is followed by emergence, expansion, metamorphosis and vast extension (the foot of Virata). Centrifugal forces dominate providing a powerful visual and kinesthetic experience. The second is the Siva-Parvati triptych, interdependent in concept, style and alignment, where the total disregard of frames and measure is conspicuous.

Mannerism is particularly pronounced in Siva dancing in Lalita in Dasavatara Cave (15), wherein the cave chamber is a stage set for sculpture in the round, a wide range of dance postures call for a rapid series of anatomical transformations. It reaches its peak in the Ravana panel in Kailasa (Cave 16) where Ravana, in the lower part of the panel is a monument to demon power, while the upper part shows the highly mannered figure of Parvati with Siva striking an equilibrium. Also in the surpassing expression of pure ecstasy (*ananda*) in the dancing Siva panel (Lankesvara in Kailasa), innovative for its extreme motion through the body turned unnaturally at the waist, the figure of Siva dancing in space, in expansive freedom. This panel according to Berkson, foreshadows the later "neo-classicism" of Khajuraho and other related sites. A second dancing Siva panel on the facade of Kailasa marks an even greater radicalism (mannerism) where the superhuman activity of the god dancing his way to higher realms, soaring upwards, is shown by the upper and lower portions of the figure being turned in opposite directions, with three major diagonals marking the panel.

An archaic provincial style is said to co-exist with these brahmanical panels in the Buddhist images, expressing an entirely divergent ethos and representing a repressive style which merges a folk aesthetic with the art of the aristocracy of priest, monk and ruler. The Buddha, Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani figures in caves 11 and 12 are monolithic, thickset, vertical, frontal, solid and immobile, although the Buddha in Do-Thal (Cave 11) is still a masterpiece, as it shows elegant equipoise, peace, rest and beatitude. The Tara in Do-Thal is a primitive austere goddess, hieratic and static. The Buddha in Tin Thal is, however, a three dimensional statue, the solidity of its mass meriting different views, especially from the sides.

The final assessment of the author is

that Ellora is the consummate achievement of sculptural art.

The artist's vision as presented by Berkson is undoubtedly interesting and unconventional, because it moves away quite clearly from the chronological and stylistic sequence approach of an art historian. However, what is difficult to comprehend and hence not easily acceptable is how in one and the same monument, as in the case of the Kailasa monolith all the styles are present, given the fact that the Kailasa was authored by Krishna I, the Rashtrakuta (Second half of 8th century). It seems to have been conceived as a whole including the sculptured panels, *dvarapalas*, male and female, and could hardly be said to have taken four centuries to be shaped and hence the co-existence of all four styles may be the explanation. Hieratic art could well have co-existed with a highly stylised art using advanced techniques in composing complex panels.

It would also be difficult to describe the Buddha and Bodhisattvas as representing an archaic, regressive phase or style, as they are governed by conventions which cannot be ignored even by a new generation of artists however bold and innovative, it may have been. So are the *dvarapalas* in the brahmanical caves. On the other hand, the artist's freedom to follow/adopt dynamic patterns is generally greater, even unrestrained, while depicting narratives, episodes and climactic events from the *Puranas*.

Other problems arise from the author's undue emphasis on the *bhakti* of the Tamil saints and its impact on the pre-medieval style and on Pallava influence over the sculptures in caves 11, 12 and 15. None of the Pallava panels has the complexity and depth or diagonal thrusts of the Ellora panels nor do they resort to themes like Andhakasuravadha, Markandeya (Siva in combat with Yama) and Narasimha-Hiranya combat as in the Dasavatara cave. More logically the winds of influence could have blown from Elephanta, Aurangabad and Badami, as bold and varied compositions are known in these sites. All of them are directly derived from Puranic elucidations rather than Tamil *bhakti* poetry and its verbal imagery.

The book has a very interesting appendix describing contemporary techniques of rock excavations with pictures, a "Homage to Vishvakarma" as an Afterword by Mulk Raj Anand and a useful glossary.

It is, however, the excellent photographs by the author used to illustrate the text which enhance the quality of this work as they are ideally chosen for explaining the artist's vision. They are a true mark of the author's skill as a photographer and an artist.

Dr. R. Champakalakshmi teaches Ancient Indian History at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Indian Drama At A Peak

Girish Karnad

BHASA: THE SHATTERED THIGH AND OTHER PLAYS

Translated from the original Sanskrit with an Introduction by A.N.D. Haksar
Penguin Books, India, 1993, pp. xx+118, Rs. 85.00

In 1909, Mahamahopadhyaya T. Ganapati Sastri of Trivandrum found a palm-leaf manuscript of a Sanskrit play written in Malayalam characters which he suspected to be the work of Bhasa. Within a few years, Sastri had discovered, edited and published thirteen plays whose authorship he attributed to Bhasa. Much debate followed. But Bhasa, a playwright mentioned by Kalidasa as his predecessor and invariably listed among the 'greats' by medieval anthologists, suddenly achieved a concrete existence. For at the time of Sastri's discovery, not a single one of his plays was extant and his *oeuvre* had been considered irretrievably lost.

The Shattered Thigh and Other Plays contains English versions of six of these thirteen plays. In the Introduction to the book, which is very informative, the translator, A.N.D. Haksar, familiarizes the general audience with the state of Bhasa scholarship today. He also offers a concise explanation of some of the key terms from Bharata's *Natyasastra*. The Introduction even contains a summary of the *Mahabharata* for those unfamiliar with it, since all the six plays included here are based on themes from that epic. All this is most helpful.

What the Introduction does not do is so much as mention 'Kutiyattam', the Kerala theatre form which kept alive the tradition of actual performances of these plays over the centuries and in whose repertoire the thirteen plays had been preserved. This is typical of academic response to drama the world over. Though Bharata may insist that *rasa* is a product of a live performance, the Sanskrit scholar prefers to study his texts divorced from the stage. But the Cakyars of Kutiyattam did not merely stage these plays. They recorded these performances in detail. Their *kramadipikas* (production manuals)

and *attaprakarams* (actor's manuals) have told each new generation of artists how each line in the text was to be interpreted and played, and what meaning was justified in a given context.

I mention this only to emphasize a possibility voiced by students of Bhasa in the past that these plays may actually be 'stage versions' of the original texts, pruned to the demands of stage presentation. There is no way to prove or disprove this conjecture at this moment of time and scholars have rejected the notion as sacrilegious. But theatre people know only too well that for centuries even Shakespeare was presented on stage only in truncated versions.

In Kutiyattam, no play is presented in its entirety in a single performance. At the most, an act is presented at a time, elaborated over several hours. The Cakyar—that is, the artist—improvises the past life of each important character as it enters the stage. These sections are not part of the original text but additions to it. Thus a complete performance may be spread over several weeks.

This practice may account for the preponderance of short plays in the Bhasa *oeuvre*. In fact, a theory was once propounded that these six plays were parts of a single, longer play about the *Mahabharata*. And though it has since been shelved, I am glad Haksar presents these plays in the same order in which their central events occur in the epic. It gives the volume a unity, while bringing out the relationship of the plays to each other.

Though Bhasa's *Svapnavasavadatta* became the admired model for later playwrights, the range of techniques employed even in these six plays is truly amazing. As Haksar points out, it has been conjectured that the *Natyasastra* was compiled at around the same time that Bhasa lived and that this may account for

Bhasa's cavalier treatment of many of the hallowed tenets of Bharata. He lets people fight and die on stage, for instance. Plays like *Urrubhangam* end tragically.

To judge from what scrappy evidence we have, in the plays of Bhasa's predecessor, Ashvaghosha, Indian drama was still finding its feet. In Bhasa it stands mature and confident. Bhasa is a supreme craftsman. His dialogue is precise, tautly constructed. But the 'meaning' of the best of his plays lies in the almost architectonic structuring of the play.

Dutaghatokacam (a compound wrongly broken into two words by the translator, probably for ease of pronunciation) is a case in point. The play falls into three almost equal parts. The middle section which shows the Kauravas arguing amongst themselves about the war is flanked on either side by a section dealing with a young Pandava prince. In the first section we are told about the death of Abhimanyu, while the third begins with the entrance of Ghatotkacha, sent ostensibly as an envoy but clearly marked for death. Thus the squabbling elders are bracketed between two moving images of the dying young. It is a coruscating comment on war.

Take *Karnabharam* (Karna's burden). It is barely six pages long. After a brief prologue, Karna enters the stage and declares that no warrior can escape his arrows and that he wishes to face Arjuna.

He then turns to his charioteer and says:

King Shalya, drive my chariot to wherever Arjuna is.

Then Karna proceeds to confide in Shalya how his life has been a series of betrayals, by his mother, by his brothers, by his guru. Even his horses and elephants seem unwilling to fight for him. Then again announcing his intention to capture Yudhishtira and fell Arjuna, he says:

King Shalya, drive my chariot to wherever Arjuna is.

It is the same line. But the revelation of Karna's past has changed the meaning. It is no more the proud command of a warrior confident of facing the world. It is a plea to be literally 'led', from a man confused by his deprivations and humiliations. (This section can in fact serve as an example of how the Cakyar throws an entirely new light on a piece of dialogue by delving into the character's past.)

At this point Indra enters in the guise of a comical Brahmin and asks for 'something big'. He does not ask for anything in particular. He merely responds to every gift offered by Karna with a 'give me something big', so that Karna is led to up his ante each time. Finally whipping himself up into a frenzy of generosity, Karna gives away his most valued possession as a warrior, his protective armour. Even Shalya protests at this outrage. But the deed is done and in the place of a brave, confident warrior, we see an insecure man, uncertain of himself, eager to impress the world with his 'big' acts.

Then he turns to Shalya and again says:

King Shalya, drive my chariot to wherever Arjuna is.

It is now a bleak acceptance of death by a man dead inside. The play ends.

It is complexities such as these, which can be read into his plays, that have attracted so many of the modern theatre directors to him. Bhasa is unique in Sanskrit drama in this tragic awareness of human frailty.

Haksar handles dialogue in English with easy confidence. The sudden shifts in the tone of a scene, so characteristic of Bhasa, are dexterously managed. In his Introduction, Haksar explains that since a scholarly edition of Bhasa's plays already exists, he has merely attempted a version 'in readable English which can also convey something of the pace and flavour of the original plays'. He almost succeeds.

Almost, but not fully, I wish Haksar had 'listened' to Bhasa a little more carefully. And this is where the fact that these texts were preserved in a theatre repertoire and not in an academic collection has relevance. For every line in these texts is actable. Every unnecessary word has already been cut out. The gesture behind each word is clearly visible even on the printed page. I winced when I read that 'a few abridgements have been made without which, in the translator's opinion, the English version would have tended to drag.' Haksar could have done with a little more reverence.

In *Karnabharam*, for example, the line which is the *leit motif* of the play, 'King Shalya, drive my chariot to wherever Arjuna is', has been rendered: 'King Shalya, please drive my chariot towards Arjuna.' Both the 'please' and the 'towards' weaken the line.

Again, in the play, Karna's final repetition of this command is preceded by the following words:

'O, what is that sound? It is the blowing of a conch-shell, deep as the ocean's roar at the time of *pralaya*.'

Haksar leaves out the italicised words. But to leave out the reference to *pralaya* (the universal deluge, final destruction) is to miss the rage and pathos in Karna's response to the challenge of the conchshells. It impoverishes the entire dialogue.

This brings us to the usual question of how faithful a translation should be or can manage to be to its original. Even granted that no translation can (or probably even should try to) mirror the original, I believe the translator should treat every departure from the literal sense as a problem to be tackled, every untranslatable situation as a challenge to be met and resolved rather than as an obstruction to be circumvented. With each form, there is a shift in the nature of responsibilities involved. In the case of plays, the translator has the additional burden of trying to capture the 'action' within the

language of the play.

Let me take a random example.

Dutavakyam properly begins with the chamberlain's entrance with the announcement: "Attention, attention, you guards. King Duryodhana commands: 'Today I wish to confer with all the rulers. So summon all the kings.'"

Even this rough and ready translation should indicate the possibilities of interpretation in this opening. While giving us the information necessary for developing the plot, the line enables the chamberlain to convey his attitude to his lord (excited? adoring? cynical? ironic? tired?) and thus comment on what is to follow.

Haksar puts Duryodhana's command in indirect speech ('King Duryodhan has commanded that all the princes be summoned as he wishes to consult with them today.') and makes it purely informative.

Even titles get casual treatment. *Urubhangam* literally means the shattering of the thigh. This is turned into *The Shattered Thigh*. The original underlines the dramatic event: the translation of the inert object. Curious too is the rendering of *Dutavakyam* (which refers to the message) as the 'Envoy' and of *Dutaghatotkacam* (which actually refers to the envoy) as the 'Message'!

In the transliteration of names, to prefer 'Duryodhan' and 'Bheem Sen' (ouch!) to 'Duryodhana' and 'Bhimasena' is both phonetically incorrect and inconsistent, since 'Kaurava', 'Karna' and 'Bhasa' continue to retain their end-vowel.

Conventional practice usually carries much wisdom in it, as every theatre practitioner (even the rebel) knows. And publishers too would do well to pay heed to this dictum. A time-honoured convention in the designing of anthologies is that the title of the anthology is given at the head of the left-hand page while the title of the particular piece on the page (whether a poem, a short story or a play) appears at the head of the right-hand page. This makes any information the reader is likely to require at any moment instantly available. In the present anthology, however, the title of the anthology, *The Shattered Thigh*, is thrown at one from every page, as in a novel. If you want to so much as double-check the title of the play you are reading, you have to go back laboriously to the first page of the play or the contents page. An aggravating demand.

The word 'transcreation' despite its touch of arrogance, acknowledges some of the difficulties involved in the enterprise of carrying a work from one language into another. 'Imitations' is both more modest and more permissive. Haksar's text reads well. It gives the reader a sense of what Bhasa is about. It is at the stage where real 'translating' could begin.

Girish Karnad is a playwright and filmmaker.

Imprint On A Generation

E.S. Reddy

RAISING UP A PROPHET: THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN ENCOUNTER WITH GANDHI

By Sudarshan Kapur

Oxford University Press., Delhi, 1993, pp. ix+222, Rs. 150.00

At the end of a discussion with an American Negro delegation in 1935, Gandhiji said that "it may be through the Negroes that the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world". The statement proved prophetic. As Sudarshan Kapur—who teaches at the Illiff School of Theology in Denver, USA—observes:

... since World War II no single group has developed Gandhian ideas more creatively than African-Americans. Beginning with the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, under the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., Southern-based African-Americans and their white allies eventually demonstrated the power of revolutionary nonviolence and its capacity to transform persons, institutions, and perceptions. As a result, nonviolent resistance emerged with a new vitality as Gandhiji had predicted a generation earlier." (The author uses the term "African-American" which is increasingly preferred to "Negro" or "Black".)

Dr. King, then a seminarian, was inspired by a sermon delivered in 1950 by Mordecai W. Johnson, President of the Howard University and an admirer of Gandhiji from the 1920s, after his return from the World Pacifist Meeting in India. He proceeded to study the philosophy of Gandhiji and "came to see for the first time its potency in the area of social reform". He transmuted that philosophy by "grafting" it on to the African-American religious tradition, and made it the driving force of a historic struggle for a just community. Coming soon after the "Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws" of 1952 in South Africa, this struggle of the black people in the United States shattered the myth that people of African origin were incapable of practising non-violent resistance.

RAISING UP A PROPHET

The African-American Encounter with Gandhi

SUDARSHAN KAPUR



Mr. Kapur's book is a study of the African-American explorations into the Gandhian philosophy and techniques of nonviolent resistance before Dr. King led the Montgomery bus boycott. It is based mainly on an analysis of African-American newspapers and journals from 1919 to 1955, supplemented by references to the writings and papers of African-American leaders, as well as several interviews.

African-American interest in the Indian freedom movement arose in the beginning of this century from a sense of pride in the struggles of other coloured peoples and a feeling of solidarity. Soon after Gandhiji emerged as the leader in India and launched the non-cooperation movement, African-American leaders expressed support and introduced Gandhiji and his ideas to the community.

Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, the intellectual giant of the African-Americans, leader of the Pan African movement and editor of *The Crisis*, organ of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, wrote about Gandhiji. Dr. Marcus Garvey, the most influential mass leader and head of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, sent messages of solidarity to Gandhiji and his newspapers gave wide publicity to the work of

Gandhiji. These leaders provided a platform to Indian nationalists in exile in America.

The debate about the relevance of Gandhian nonviolence for black Americans, Mr. Kapur points out, originated at that time and developed, especially after the Dandi March of 1930, into a discussion of the need for a "Gandhi-like" leader to take them to the "promised land". The "little brown man" appealed to them not only for his effectiveness in mobilising people in active resistance against racism and a powerful Empire, but also because of his fight against untouchability and other injustices within his own community.

The visits to America of C.F. Andrews in 1929, and Mirabehn in 1934, and their meetings with African-American students and faculty at black universities—Howard University and Tuskegee Institute—generated greater interest in Gandhiji and his message.

But the most crucial way in which the African-American communities learned about the Indian independence movement and Gandhiji's concept of nonviolent resistance was through the writings and lecture tours of several prominent African-Americans who visited India and

held discussions with Gandhiji.

Gandhiji's first long encounter with African-Americans was on February 21, 1936, with a delegation to the Indian Student Christian Movement comprising Dr. Howard Thurman, dean of Rankin Chapel at Howard University; Mrs. Sue Bailey Thurman, a staff member of national YWCA and later editor of *African American Woman's Journal*; the Rev. Edward Carroll, a church leader; and Mrs. Phenola Carroll, a teacher. Gandhiji spent three hours with them asking searching questions about the history and condition of African-Americans. Mahadev Desai observed that in all his years with Gandhiji, he had never seen him greet a visitor so warmly (p. 88).

In January 1937, Gandhiji received Professor Benjamin E. Mays, then dean of Howard University's School of Religion, and Channing H. Tobias, delegates to the World YMCA Conference in Mysore. Professor Mays was later to become President of Morehouse College and a mentor of Dr. King, and Mr. Tobias a leader of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored people.

William Stuart Nelson, dean and Vice-President of Howard University and editor of the *Journal of Religious Thought*, visited India as head of a Quaker mission and held discussions with Gandhiji in 1947. Twenty years later he took part in the Selma-Montgomery march led by

Dr. King.

Mr. Kapur deals in detail with available information on these discussions and the activities of the African-Americans in advocating Gandhian methods in their freedom struggle. (The significance of these discussions has so far escaped Indian scholars since the reports in *The Harijan* do not provide the full names or information on the visitors.)

Meanwhile, nonviolent resistance was attempted by African-Americans from the 1930s. It attracted wide attention during the Second World War when A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, planned to mobilise black people in demonstrations, marches and draft resistance to break down discrimination. Though civil disobedience was not actually launched, he brought together many activists and developed consciousness.

Also during the war, the Congress of Racial Equality was formed by an interracial group of young people influenced by Gandhiji. Its founder and leader, James Farmer, was introduced to Gandhian thought by Dr. Thurman. CORE launched a series of nonviolent actions in subsequent years.

The independence of India and its activities in the United Nations against colonialism and racism had a notable impact on the African-American community. And in 1951, Ram Manohar Lohia,

in his six-week lecture tour of the United States, concentrated on visits to black universities and discussion of the relevance of non-violence and civil disobedience to the African-American.

With painstaking research and a perceptive understanding of the African-American struggle, Mr. Kapur analyses the impact of these encounters in the process of discussion, debate and activism which helped create the conditions that made possible the emergence of Dr. King.

The book is a significant contribution not only to Gandhian studies, but also for an understanding of the African-American freedom struggle and indeed for an appreciation of African-American solidarity with the Indian freedom struggle, a subject which has been almost ignored in India. It must be pointed out, however, that since Mr. Kapur is concerned mainly with the impact of the "religiously grounded methodology" of Gandhiji on the African-American freedom movement "grounded in its own understanding of Christianity", he does not cover all strands of African-American thinking and struggle.

Because of his primary reliance on African-American newspapers and the deplorable state of indexing of Gandhiji's papers in India, the author has missed a couple of significant letters from Marcus Garvey to Gandhiji; and the meeting of

Dr. John with Gandhiji, carrying messages and pamphlets from the great scientist, Dr. George Washington Carver. He has paid little attention to the visit of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu to the United States in 1929 as a messenger of Gandhiji. He errs in his assertion that "direct encounters between black Americans and the Indian leader did not take place until the mid-1930s" (p. 81). Not only was Gandhiji helped by a black American when he arrived in Pretoria in 1893, but he gave an interview to Mrs. Eslanda Goode Robeson, an anthropologist and wife of Paul Robeson, in London in 1931.

I believe the study would have benefited by greater attention to the role of white Americans and their press which also acted as channels between Gandhian thought and African-Americans. And by reference to the evolution of Gandhiji's own interest in the United States and its race problem from his South African days when he began to admire Booker T. Washington and his educational work.

E.S. Reddy, former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Director of its Centre against Apartheid, is co-editor, with Gopalkrishna Gandhi, of Gandhiji and South Africa, 1914-1948 (Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad, 1993). During his stay in the United States since 1946, he has followed the African-American struggle, and met many of its leaders.

TRACTS FOR THE TIMES

Kashmir : Towards Insurgency

BALARAJ PURI, journalist, columnist and social activist, primarily in Jammu and Kashmir.

Kashmir : Towards Insurgency attempts to understand the nature and historical roots of the insurgency in Kashmir. It traces the complicated history of the early years after independence when the stability of Kashmir was the subject of intense debate, and examines the process through which the emotional ties between Kashmir and the rest of the country were eroded and the basis of secular and democratic politics in the region were weakened. As the Indian state lost its legitimacy, militant groups gained popular support. This tract attempts to understand the logic of terrorism and secession and reflects on the ways in which such forces can be politically contained and democratic process in Kashmir may be re-introduced.

Rs 35.00

Ayodhya : Archaeology after Demolition

D MANDAL, Department of Ancient History, Culture and Archaeology, University of Allahabad.

This tract is a defence of archaeology against its political misuse. A cautious examination reveals a great deal about the working of communal politics. The archaeological discoveries which are supposed to prove the demolition of a Rama temple by Babur actually show no more than the logic of a politics which destroyed the Babri Masjid on 6 December 1992.

Rs 40.00

Other Tracts

Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right
Tapan Basu, Pradip Datta, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar & Sambuddha Sen

Rs. 35.00

The Question of Faith

Rustom Bharucha

Rs 30.00

Environmental Consciousness and Urban Planning

M N Buch

Rs 25.00



Orient Longman

Orient Longman Limited

3-6-272, Himayatnagar, Hyderabad 500 029

Recreating A Haunting Image

Suguna Ramanathan

JESUS

By A.N. Wilson

Sinclair-Stevenson, London, 1992, pp. 269, £ 20.00

The name of A.N. Wilson was not, for this reviewer, a very appealing one. His personality, as it came over in his television interview of Iris Murdoch, struck one as unpleasantly insistent and quiet, a curious combination. Then the media build-up for his biography of Jesus Christ, the autographing of copies ceremony in prestigious London bookshops, and the usual glitter and fanfare put one off. Nevertheless, it must be said clearly that I found this biography compelling and unforgettable. I simply could not put it down. The aliveness and humanity of the subject spring to life in its pages in a startling way. Jesus' disturbing, charismatic personality, his ironic and witty conversational energy, his brooding silences, his restlessness, his capacity for love, his experience of God, his closeness to men and women, his quarrels with his family, his rich humanity, and his terrible suffering—Wilson has caught it all.

And yet, my Jesuit colleagues did not like the book; it angered them.

There is, unquestionably a tension generated at the centre by an ambivalence in the biographer. A former student of theology, he cannot accept Jesus as the Second Person of the Trinity; equally, he cannot let the figure go. He remarks: 'We shall never recapture his features, his looks or the sound of his voice; but there are moments in the New Testament where one has the sensation of having only just missed the Presence' (p. 91). Jesus haunts Wilson's imagination; in turn, he produces a haunting figure who, set free of the encapsulations of the Christian church, addresses the imagination, heart, mind and spirit in an unforgettable way. Concurrently, Wilson's occasional mocking and sceptical tone undercuts the mystery in a manner which may well offend the believer. The fact is that solemnity has so characterised the Christian tradition that an account of Jesus' childhood escapades (from the Gospel of St. Thomas, fourth-century Coptic Gospel based on a second-century Greek Gospel) comes as a slight shock even to those for whom Krishna's pranks are a charming and inalienable part of his divinity. What is more, Wilson somewhat unnecessarily refuses to use the usual B.C. and A.D. One does not want to be too comfortably home at the finish from the very start.

A more serious stumbling-block for the orthodox is the restoration of Jesus to Judaism, and Wilson's thesis that he never intended to found a new religion. Jesus'

main concern, according to Wilson, was the implication for the Jews of believing in their Scriptures and their God, *in spirit and in truth*, and not according to the letter of the law. 'What interested him was how to be a good Jew' (p. 135). He places Jesus with the *hasidim*—charismatic leaders and wonder workers, holy men leading lives of great simplicity, fairly common in first century Palestine. He was, says Wilson, 'the last great Jewish prophet, misunderstood like all his predecessors, but speaking quite centrally within the main body of Judaism'.

The Palestine of Jesus' day is beautifully evoked. Judaea was a Roman province, an unruly, turbulent one; and Galilee up north a border area, a haven of revolutionaries and, from the Roman point of view, trouble-makers. Political terrorists, armed *sicarii* (note Judas *Iscaariot*), and revolutionary party members like the Zealots were everywhere. The Jews, restless under Roman rule, revolted several times, till finally, in about 70 A.D. the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, and the Temple and set in motion the Diaspora or scattering of the Jews from their homeland. It was a time of political ferment, aspirations for freedom, several quarrelling sects, priests unwilling to relinquish power, and ascetic sects like the Essenes at Qumran. The result was an upsurge of apocalyptic mysticism and political dreams of liberated Jewry, a heady atmosphere for the flowering of charismatic leadership. There is a very vivid description of Herod's grand Temple with its many enormous courtyards and pillars, scaffolding with stonemasons still at work, swarming with pilgrims, priests, a crowd of 100,000 during Passover Feast when the Paschal Lamb had to be eaten within the confines of the holy city. And Galilee, green, fertile and prosperous, with its fish-trade and comfortable houses. Jesus appears to have lived in one such house in Capernaum. The shifting backgrounds are beautifully sketched in, enabling us to place Jesus in his own setting, his Jewish milieu under the Roman occupation.

Against this, the question of Jesus' relation to his Jewish heritage emerges naturally, becoming the absorbing central theme of this biography. Wilson is clear that there is no breakaway, that Jesus regarded himself as a Jew engaged in sharing his Abba experience (of God the Father) and shifting the emphasis from the rituals of the Mosaic law to the chaos within the human heart. His most start-

ling departure—but not really a departure, let us say, rather, a return to a forgotten central motif—is his projection of the overpowering presence of God's love, available to everyone, saint and sinner, Pharisee and publican. Morality, virtuous doing of the right thing, is suddenly now not so important as something else; the yearning turn of the heart to a God of love who has *forgiven you already*.

This is, without doubt, Christianity's gift to world, the reassurance that we are loved, forgiven, healed. It touches the deepest point of the fragmented psyche and draws all together as the most effective psychotherapy might. Nowhere else in the world is God's love for us poured out over all in quite this manner. The parable of the Prodigal Son in only one illustration of this central tenet of Jesus' teaching.

We might recall that the distinctively Christian commandment to love our neighbour as oneself is, in fact, drawn from the Judaic Torah. The difference is that Jesus lived this out, setting everything else to naught. Of the prostitute who weeps silently at his feet, bathing them with her tears, wiping them with the hair of her head he says: 'Her sins which are many are forgiven for she loves much'. The contrasting emotional poverty of this rich Pharisee in whose house this occurs is highlighted, and the value—verging on the anarchic—is crystal clear.

Love disrupts discourse; it makes for a startling reversal of hierarchies. Wilson notes that not even Simon Peter has fully appreciated the reversals caused by love in a new kingdom where the first shall be last. It is precisely this dimension of love that liberation theology has made central to its programme, 'the preferential option for the poor'. No one is to be excluded from receiving my love or giving love to me. This is, it must be acknowledged in our torn, caste-ridden, currently godforsaken country, a deeply radical attitude of the utmost moral seriousness.

While Wilson recognises the 'healing' aspect of Jesus' teaching (and I am not referring to the miraculous cures), he does not push far enough the radical consequences implicit in Jesus' reversal of hierarchies for socially stratified society. On the contrary, he suggests that Jesus had mysterious, perhaps politically powerful, connections (Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, whoever it was who provided the ass for his entry into Jerusalem, and a large upper chamber for his celebration of the Passover Feast at a time when the holy city was teeming with pilgrims) and so on, connections of which his twelve disciples seem to know nothing. Were they political revolutionaries?

Did Jesus, in that final week, caught up in an exalted, excited state, expect the inauguration of his other worldly kingdom of love in some revelatory and extraordinary way? Framed by such questions, the agony, arrest and crucifixion assume a new poignancy.

As a writer, Wilson is at his best de-

scribing those final days in the life of Christ. Jesus, proclaimed king and followed by large crowds, had become a threat to the Romans (who feared uprisings) and to the Jewish priests (who wanted a scapegoat to hand over to the Roman rulers).

Wilson holds the Romans finally responsible. Crucifixions, we learn, were far more common than we imagine. 800 people were crucified in a single day by one Roman procurator.

Such an interpretation runs contrary to established Christian belief that the Jews killed Jesus because he was a threat to their legalistic, ritualistic faith. Christian spirituality defines itself against this background. Wilson upsets this particular apple-cart in no uncertain terms:

'Christian tradition sees it as a grand theological event in which the Incarnate God is walking among the blasphemous Jews who do not know about his identity and yet are also meant to be blamed throughout eternity for his death, even though this death brought salvation to the world. Quite a number of contradictions there! Since the Jews plainly did not know that Jesus was the Messiah, why should they be blamed for their ignorance; and since his death was supposed, in Christian terms, to have removed the sins of the world, it seems perverse to blame the alleged, if unwitting, instruments of this deliverance.' (p. 215).

This is well said. Christian theologians, while apparently taking account of historians like Geza Vermes (*Jesus the Jew*, 1973; *Jesus and the World of Judaism*, 1983), are still reluctant to acknowledge fully, it seems to me, Jesus' connection with Judaism. The separation of Jesus from his race is paradoxically written into the Christian enterprise. The Catholic church absolved the Jews of their guilt in the death of Jesus less than 50 years ago, and the deadly legacy of anti-semitism has stained the soul of so devout a Christian as T.S. Eliot.

Wilson's biography closes with this painful paradox:

'Were Jesus to contemplate the fate of this own people at the hands of the Christians, throughout the history of Catholic Europe, culminating in Hitler's Final Solution, it is unlikely that he would have viewed the missionary activities of St. Paul with such equanimity. We are told that before Jesus died, he wept over the city of Jerusalem and seemed to foresee its tragic fate. Matthew tells us that, his Messianic hopes in ruins, Jesus died with the words of the Psalmist on his lips: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Perhaps if he had foreseen the whole of Christian history, his despair would have been greater, and he would have exclaimed with Job: "Why died I not from the womb? ..." (p. 256)

The worldwide spread of a faith rooted in a non-proselytizing people, surprising

when one thinks of it, is the work of St. Paul. Wilson says, as others have before him, that Christianity was invented by St. Paul. A brilliant, troubled and passionate man, whose conversion to Christianity was as intense as his earlier persecution of it. Paul invested the symbol of the Cross with deep emotional power, making it a sign of reassuring love that redeem failure and renews life. This is the secret of its universal appeal, that the principle of life is love, and that all morality, eloquence, faith, without it is a sham.

Wilson privileges the Fourth Gospel over the Synoptics for reasons, one suspects, that are largely literary. He tells us that the evangelists read the events in Jesus' life through a lectionary grid, in the light of readings from the Hebrew scriptures, arranging them in a pattern and using names so that they conform to Old Testament prophecy. He notes acutely that the gospels are imaginative works, directly addressing the imagination, re-making the world through a life that challenges and undermines everything save love.

A.N. Wilson has written a splendidly critical biography, freeing Jesus from Christian tradition and letting us see the terrifying beauty of this extraordinary figure.

Recounting the scene of Jesus on trial before Pontius Pilate, he reminds us of the exchange. Pilate asks him: 'Art thou king of Jews?' Jesus replies: 'My kingdom is not this world'. Wilson comments on the way in which this scene undoes all neat tapestries woven by human minds:

"This icon of the ragamuffin before the Roman governor destroys them. The empires and churches and papacies which have been established in Christ's name are all revealed to be ridiculous by this text. Pilate probably crucified thousands of men, not just hundreds. The numbers of innocent who have stood before procurators, inquisitors, interrogation officers since must run into millions. Jesus establishes this strange icon: 'not that the powerful have no power; they have the power to torture and kill and destroy; but that there is another kingdom, of whose existence they are unaware and which is ultimately stronger' (p. 218).

That word 'ragamuffin' there is a brilliant and daring stroke, and only the careless reader will miss the tenderness inherent in it. It is clear that Wilson, non-believer that he is, loves the subject of his biography and acknowledges his power. His naturalistic explanations of the Resurrection (was it Jesus' brother in the garden? Why were they so slow to recognise him?), and his unfair handling of the Eucharist notwithstanding, I, for one, cannot doubt the extent to which the figure of Jesus has touched this writer. The biography like-wise moves us.

Suguna Ramanathan is Head, Department of English, St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad.

Life In Vignettes

Kavita A. Sharma

INDIA GATE AND OTHER STORIES

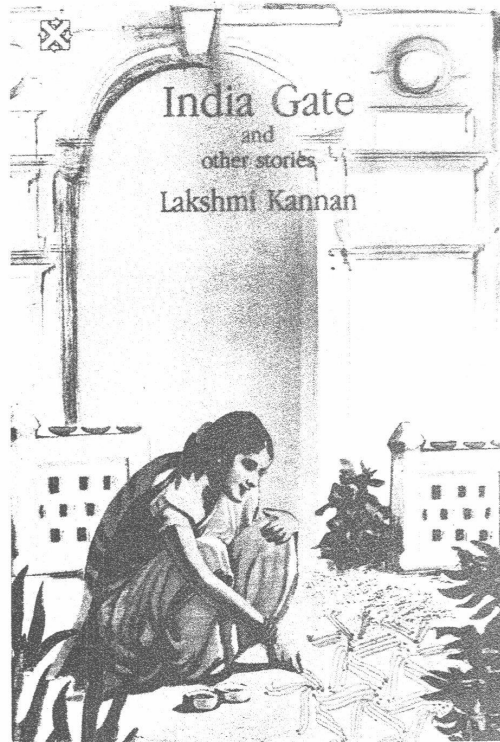
By Lakshmi Kannan

Disha Books, Delhi, 1993, pp. 159,
Rs. 70.00

Lakshmi Kannan's *India Gate* is her translation of her own Tamil stories. In her translator's note she makes us aware of the pitfalls of translation but also asserts: "Only translation can unlock a work and also give it an acid test, if it can stand on its own, in another language." Lakshmi's stories in English need no crutches and can be read as independent writings. She presents us with vignettes of life through them and immediately touches chords so powerful at least in the female readers that they relive bits and pieces of their own lives through the protagonists and their situations in the stories. The post-marriage experiences of Padmini in "India Gate" are familiar. Two people of equal education and rank marry but the automatic assumption is that the woman is always the inferior, not important enough, her work secondary. Her first duty is to her in-laws and to her husband who expects and takes her services for granted. Anything different, and he is shocked, aggrieved and genuinely affronted.

The framework is set in the very first story "Urvashi 2000" where the question posed is whether a woman can really be put into a comfortable slot. Must society see her only as a wife and mother and are these the only yardsticks by which her existence and worth are to be defined and measured. Sundaram's wife is 'lucky' in "Cryptic Chords" because she dies "a *sumangali*, adorned with flowers, *kumkum* and *haldi*." And the very tragedy in the death of Sundaram's son-in-law on the other hand is that he has taken away with him his young wife's *kumkum*.

Most of Lakshmi's protagonists are women—working women of different social strata or housewives—but always sensitive, intelligent, thinking women rebelling silently or openly against the familial and societal norms. The rebellion is usually suppressed by the protagonist within herself. Kausalya in "The Coming of Devi" and Pankajam in "Islanders" experience a momentary silent revolt but 'good sense' finally prevails on them. Far more outspoken is Moniyakka, the earthy old servant woman who talks constantly to herself. She has experienced life in the raw—"three useless sons in whom I once had a deep, implicit faith. . . Each worthless son, lusting after his own wife. . . all



fathered by an equally worthless man, Bairappa." Yet, she will do her duty towards her dead husband and perform his *shraddha* not trusting her sons with the task.

It is a world where unlike a man, a woman is usually faced with an either/or situation: a family or a career—a dilemma that a man never has to confront and, therefore, does not understand the gravity, the trauma and the heartbreak of it. Sushila Raman of the "Mooring" cannot marry Vikram because as she throws her mind into the future, she can see herself, her own wings clipped and her work tailored to the needs of her family as Vikram surges ahead to realise his potential.

If the world at home is claustrophobic, the world outside too does not spare a woman. Dr. Murthy in "Shell" cannot see Nandini only as a colleague and friend. He plays on her psychology as he tries to get her: "You're an individual personality, a self-contained *Shakti*. How can you confine this *Shakti*, and circumscribe yourself to one man, even if he is a husband?" expounds Dr. Murthy to Nandini. "Sable Shadows at the Witching Time of Night" is frankly autobiographical. It portrays the predicament of an intelligent woman in an essentially man's world

which cannot perceive a man-woman relationship without sexual undertones.

Lakshmi Kannan's stories have a lyrical intensity. She has used the form of short story with great skill catching a character at an important juncture in her life which may be physical, emotional or psychological. By the end of the story a shift in perspective takes place; in the protagonist, in the reader or in both. If this does not happen, there is at least the realisation that the life of the protagonist will go on as it is and why. That in itself increases the reader's depth of understanding. The short story is a more concentrated art and requires all the writer's skill to grasp and sustain the reader's attention while she holds up a slice of life to be examined, savoured and reflected upon. Lakshmi's success both as a writer and translator lies in mirroring the myriad facets of life and character, hitting at their infinite possibilities through a single event, a time of life or even a thought of the protagonist which reveals the past and the present and lets the mind travel to the future.

Kavita A. Sharma is Reader, Hindu College, University of Delhi. She has authored two books Byron and Selected Works of Shelley.

Birju

By Manju Kak

Cupping my hands to my mouth I giggled. I thought he looked funny. Startling glassy blue eyes, looking down his nose grandly. "To be or not to be..." he recited gravely. My giggles bubbled through again, my gangly legs dribbling in rhythm against the wall of the pigeon coop on which I was perched. ... limp brown hair, Hitlerish moustache. ... Hamlet? Why he couldn't cut a tragic figure, ever.

But Birju did so love to act larger than life roles, and I to watch. He was fanciful too and told tales. Yes, those are some of the things I remember about him, even now, when I think of him sometimes, and wonder where he is.

Birju's chacha was a cousin of Nani's. Though she was dead, he continued to spend three long months with Nana every winter. It was the best season. Nana sent Iqbal bhai to fetch me and we arrived at Colonelpura after five hours of rattling in a superfast, weather beaten, deluxe bus. In the monsoons it was different for the Ghagra was flooded and in full spate. The bus load got off at the ghat and woe if the steamer ferry had just left. It was then an easy two hours' wait for its return, carrying passengers who had dismounted on the other side of the bank. This made the eighty mile journey interminably long and the driver would therefore brook no conversation, no wayside stops for tea, pumping the accelerator desperately, till the distant grey muddy waters of the river had been spotted with drooping figures waiting at the worn, washed, creaking, wooden ramp serving as its quay.

But I preferred the train, though there was no direct one. It zipped through Bankipur station, where painfully thin malnourished urchins made superb acrobatic contortions with their bodies, sending prickles down my spine. Along with fellow passengers, I forced my hand out of the window bars to toss a few coins. They troubled me, those hungry faces, spoiling my magical homecoming reverie. I wished they would go away, so I could pretend they didn't exist. I wondered what kind of a life it must be for beggars, imprisoned by the hope that coin-tossing passengers brought. Mine was too distant. What need I, going home in starched crisp uniform, know of theirs? And by the time we changed for the Colonelpura passenger at Lalitpur, I forgot them. The train chugged along another four stops, in pace with the stillness

of life in our backwater town in the Gangetic plain. But while I could persuade Iqbal bhai to go by train during the monsoons, in winter it was invariably the bus.

Uncle was awaiting its arrival in his spanking new Fiat, dominating the bus terminus with his camaraderie, exchanging news with his cronies and friends, being offered cups of tea and paan, cursing diabolical politicians with gutsy fervour, then discovering that the bus had already arrived and was unloading, he hurriedly collected us with bag and baggage, hustled us into the car, and in a tearing hurry, zoomed down an overcrowded road, avoiding stray dogs, children and little tin sheeted stalls on shaky wooden stilts, as he incessantly blew the horn. Little urchins chased the car gleefully and he too childlike, enjoyed outracing them, suddenly remembering he needed to stop a minute. He always had to stop a minute, diverse plans and errands preying on his mind as he drove. Cigarettes from the paanwala, a message for the plumber via the cycle-repairwallah's, a reminder about a party at the club. Then, as if it had just slipped from his mind he said,

Birju's here.
Birju?

I was surprised, excited yet nervous. I looked forward to Birju's visits not only because he had so much to tell but more he shared and understood my fears of doing things that to others seemed simple. Maybe he had them too, the fears. Of course all through growing up I knew Birju was different. But it was only on his last visit that I realised why. Hesitatingly I asked Uncle,

Same?

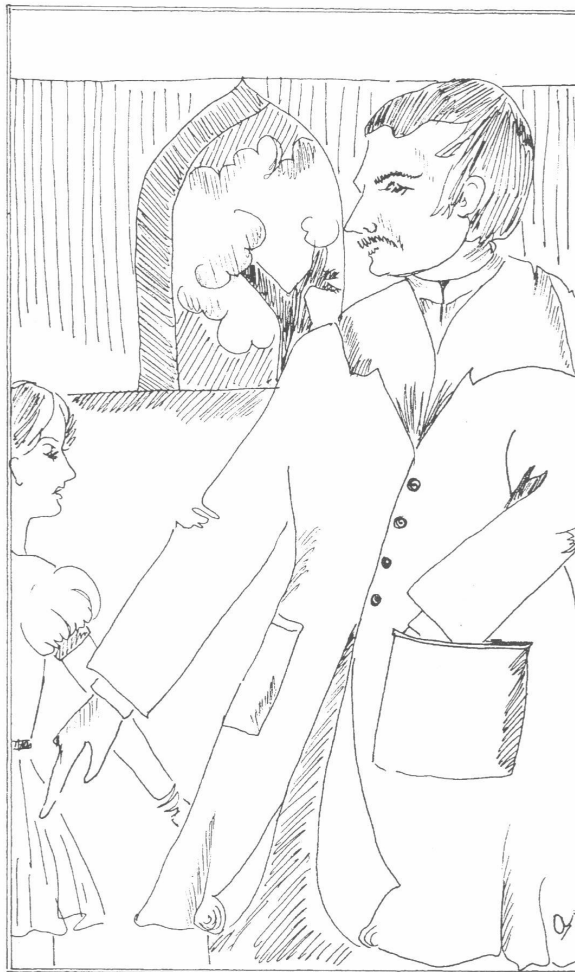
Same, he sighed, keeping his eyes fixed on the road.

I thought of that last day before I left. Hearing a radio broadcast Birju went rushing to the railway station to snatch an early morning paper. All the way returning in a rickshaw he held his head in his hands, alternately flinging them out in overblown stately tragedy, ranting to amazed passers by, who gaped at his distress that Princess Margaret had chosen to marry the future Lord Snowdon.

Come on... I told Birju giggling, thinking he had fallen into another of his "roles". But there was no mirth in his eyes. Only the pain of rejection and from within, a deep crying sorrow lacing his voice. My laughter dried up on me as I stared at him, confused.

She promised she would wait for me, he wailed. Women, fickle women, do they ever deserve good men? He mourned the rest of the day, a symbolic black ribbon tied on his arm, adding to his sartorial elegance.

Of Birju, I must say, he was the best dressed man I had seen then. Clothes, impeccably cut, and shoes that looked as if they never needed polishing. Moreover he had no body odour, because he never perspired like we did. In winter he wore



a stylish greatcoat that he had wheedled out of Nana, one that Nana had had stitched at Savile Row, many years ago, on his only trip to London.

It was a game they played every time Birju visited. He would rustle through Nana's great wardrobe—warm glowing Burma teak, fronted with an elegant oval Belgian glass mirror. There would be bow ties, silk kerchiefs, shirts, and atchkans stitched at the legendary Mohammad Ally's in Calcutta, and at the bottom in neat rows, two dozen pairs of shoes. Apparel Nana had given up wearing when he joined the Congress Party and donned khadi. Also they now sagged from his shoulders. But still he was loath to part with them, and never to his sons whom he secretly considered sloppy. When Birju rustled through, Nana made a great pretence of resistance, till Birju

would emerge in one of those excellent pieces and with his hair slicked back, half-shut eyes glancing down his nose arrogantly, looking like some Hollywood hero of the forties. And Nana would sigh. Yes, they were definitely meant for him, silently regretting none of his progeny had the carriage or acquiline features that lent Birju such distinction.

And that's how he got the great coat.

When he wasn't there I felt lost, missing the Birju who wove fantastic tales of places he had never visited—Madame Tussaud's, Hyde Park etc., but which he described with such detail that I grew up believing he had actually been there. Oh yes, Birju's visits always brought fun. For otherwise Nana's house was as always. Nothing changed ever. A chipped piece lay unobtrusively, lovingly neglected till it became an accepted part of everything

Birju was sitting in the verandah facing the wide porch, in one of those great big woven basket chairs, watching the road languidly through half-shut eyes when we drove up. I quickly jumped out of the car, telling him how happy I was to see him and where all he had been this time, what new books had he read and what all had he done. But as I excitedly prattled, I knew it was coming out all wrong, for he responded with a distant cordiality he had never shown me before. Was it because I was now more grown up and the same familiarities would not do between a bachelor and a young girl? Only to me Birju had never been a man. . . sexless really. I worried and mused over that shaded look in his eye that kept me at a small distance, but the more I tried to bridge it the more it yawned me away.

else. If removed we'd have felt its absence as acutely as if it were an active part of our lives. When bored, I usually went over the house carefully, finally ending up at the two large grey-painted steel Godrej almirahs, in which Ma's childhood things were stored with bits of silverware, Nani's sarees grotesquely and richly embroidered—too expensive to throw away and too old fashioned to wear—her false teeth in a silver soap-case, and a lock of Ma's baby hair. Mementos were undisturbed by spring cleaning or packing cases at Nana's.

But there was little time for pottering when Birju was around. He would have read some more books in the last year and would narrate them, his eyes and brows moving like a bharatnatyam dancer's, bringing drama to King Lear, Mary Queen of Scots, Julius Caesar; he would enact the chivalry of Walter Ralieggh and the dastardly death of Beckett, all of which I enjoyed much more than Bade Mamu's sonorous recital of the epic Ramayana with its predictable heroics and its inevitable triumph of good over evil. It didn't matter what we did together, water colours or making clay toys, Birju always helped me do it different. And unlike other adults he never said I tired him out with questions. Rather it was Uncle who tired him out. I thought Uncle resented Birju's privileged missionary school education. And Birju secretly despised Uncle for being a trifle boorish perhaps; umpteen curses delivered in loud baritone, endless singing, spitting paan, penchant for witless jokes and so on. Sometimes in his removed refinement, in his detachment from things real, that plagued adults, he appeared almost spiritual, like a Jesus or Moses in a Cecil d. Mille movie.

Now when I think of it what didn't Birju have; looks, intelligence, lineage, (maybe he had too much, which is why he seemed not to care for any of it); only this one thing marred. Nothing noticeable though. If you didn't know you couldn't tell and families hid their own frailties then. Oh he was alright really, talked and laughed and argued intelligently on almost any subject. But that last visit I had wondered if he was, whether he might be. . . no, no, no one said it openly ever. . . so when I asked Uncle the same—I

supposed he knew what I implied. In the car I worried over how I should greet him so he would not guess my, at last, knowing why he was different.

Birju was sitting in the verandah facing the wide porch, in one of those great big woven basket chairs, watching the road languidly through half-shut eyes when we drove up. I quickly jumped out of the car, telling him how happy I was to see him and where all he had been this time, what new books had he read and what all had he done. But as I excitedly prattled, I knew it was coming out all wrong, for he responded with a distant cordiality he had never shown me before. Was it because I was now more grown up and the same familiarities would not do between a bachelor and a young girl? Only to me Birju had never been a man. . . sexless really. I worried and mused over that shaded look in his eye that kept me at a small distance, but the more I tried to bridge it the more it yawned me away.

That winter Birju was more than frequently seen at Principal Sahib's with whom he had long discourses on esoteric subjects and weighty tomes which I now doubted he had ever read. He continued to avoid me. It was easy in that large house. I had wanted to tell him I was sorry for him. How could I know it was just that which hurt, that shadow of pity that had glazed my face which had taken away from a sense that he was equal.

But there was nothing I could do to unknow what I knew, to draw him back into the warmth of companionship that ignorance had allowed me to share. I hated it, this adulthood that forced one to face reality at every turn for Birju's was a world of the unreal and he had no room for those who lived outside it, or who chose to doubt his world's existence. With the adults it was different. They laughed at him as he wanted them to, taking him as a joke, getting him into heated arguments just to see him display his histrionics and crazy antics as they would watch a clown in a circus. He accepted it, as his role. . . as a clown would his nose on stage, a part he played. . . and would have been affronted if someone in the audience had shouted; take it off, I know that's not really yours. Those were the rules of audience but I never knew then.

Then that early morning at the end of

my holidays, Uncle's cousin, Markandey, came with the news that Birju was seen at the station trying to buy a ticket to Lucknow with a newspaper clipping. Naturally the ticketing clerk would not agree that it was money. Birju went into an aristocratic fury at which the Station Master was summoned. Birju told him there were things of national import happening and his advice was essential and it was imperative that irrelevant details like money be disregarded when a man of his calibre was needed to set the Cabinet right. Swirling out his trump card he talked of Mrs. Gandhi; she was his cousin he said (and engaged to marry him once except he had taken objection to a blood match); anyway she would hear of this impertinence, his not being allowed onto a dirty filthy train and he flapped himself into further fury. The last scenario Markandey explained breathlessly, was the Station Master on his knees beseeching mercy and Birju magnanimously unsheathing an imaginary sword and anointing him Knight of the British Empire. For a minute he had forgotten his Nehru-Gandhi leanings and had become George the VI.

Uncle's new Fiat was revved up and he drove post-haste with Markandey hopping in for good measure. A hot cup of station tea was needed to revive him, he explained. Really to see the fun.

But Uncle was raving angry. Being tolerated humorously by all who visited the house was alright in its place, but humiliating the Station Master on his very own platform, with the coolies and passengers looking on was going too far.

Uncle who was Birju's age, gave him a dressing down right there on the platform, allowing the Station Master to retrieve some of his lost dignity. That *ullu* ought to know better, he shouted, as he commanded him into the car. Birju went meekly. This was carrying pretence too far, Uncle fumed. Pretence, the Station Master asked? Yes, he was sure all this madness was humbug. A guise for not taking a job. But those trips to the. . .? Oh all for a free life. . . wanting everything free, scoffed Uncle? That Birju was always a bounder. Ran through his father's fortune, dropped out of College. . . now all he can be. . . is mad, conveniently so. . . or a clerk (much harder work and not quite upto his English education he sniggered. A clerk! and he guffawed aloud. A nobody, he would be then hunh. . . never wanted to be a nobody did he? But mad. . . that makes him somebody. . . and he began laughing loudly again.

When the car pulled up, Birju dismounted, beaten and sad, his greatcoat sagging at his shoulders. While Nana and Bade Mamu noticed his drawn looks that evening, there was nothing that could be done. For Uncle would not apologise. What for, he asked? Merely telling the truth? I was confused. This world of grown-ups was hateful I thought, for if Birju wished to be mad why didn't Uncle let him be.

Birju was unusually quiet at dinner. He had shed all his roles. The next morning he came holding his beaten brown leather bag. We were sitting around the table, in the verandah, having morning tea. Send for a rickshaw, I'm going to the station, he told everyone, not looking any of us in the eye. Nana gently tried to persuade him. It's over, Birju, we all lose our tempers. But, taciturn yet dignified, Birju repeated his request.

That morning Birju left. He never came back. Sometimes Bade Mamu would ask aloud, and we would all wonder. Uncle would snigger—sponging off some other relative I suppose. Tales sometimes filtered in. From Lucknow or Kanpur. He was seen lurching at the Carlton. Birju was seen walking down the Mall. In Naini Tal. Or in Simla. So the bugger's cooling off in summer, Uncle smirked. Which sucker has he caught this time? And slowly no news came any longer. And in time I forgot about him.

It must've been two decades later. Married, dragging along two whining children, I shopped in Lucknow's crowded Hazratganj. I came down the wide steps of Mayfair, onto the chaotic main road lined with balloon sellers, hairclip vendors and hawkers of sundry things. Clumsily tripping, I fell, scattering the bundles I carried.

Someone stooped to help. Turning around, I jerked away. One never knew what diseases they carried, these beggars. Then ashamed I stretched out guiltily, to put in a coin, and moved on to hail a rickshaw as I went. That greatcoat? glancing back I saw him looking at me. Birju? There, squatting on the pavement, in Nana's coat! Hot flushes came to me in a volley. . . and then I wanted to run and retrieve the coin. . . to ask him where he had been all these years. . . to ask him why he had never come back. . . to take him home. . . yet I hesitated. . . because he. . . oh why did I? He saw it in my eyes as he had done before and in his own blue ones came the same knowing look that he had that winter. He looked away, as I did too, pretending it was all a mistake. Rattling his beggar's bowl, he began to sing discordantly. Quicker than I, he had put on his clown's nose. . . for me. . . now adult. . . and I couldn't shout to him to take it off. The rules of audience prevailed. What's happened Mum, who's it. . . the kids asked. My voice strangled in my throat. They prodded on as children do. Then I heard myself, as if from afar, saying, no one, no one really. . . just someone I thought I once knew, someone who was. . . quite mad. The kids giggled, screaming excited questions at me and shame shadowing me, I crossed the road.

Manju Kak has been a teacher, a broadcaster and a journalist before taking to writing. This story is part of a collection of short stories by her to be published by Penguin Books, India.

In Translation

G.J.V. Prasad

ANOTHER LIFE AND OTHER STORIES

By Mohan Rakesh

Rupa & Co., New Delhi, 1993, pp. 184, Rs. 50.00

It is one of the curious shortcomings of our cultural life as a nation that even those considered giants in our various literatures remain inaccessible to readers from other parts of the country. So, though we have had a rich tradition of our literatures influencing each other in the past, we look to perhaps East European literatures as one of our common influences now and any similarity between our own writings is purely accidental or coincidental. The situation is rectifiable. All it needs is a concerted effort to translate and publish without waiting for official patronage from and into various Indian languages (why do people still call them regional languages?), perhaps through the filter language of English. This will still be necessary because it is almost impossible to find people absolutely fluent in two or more Indian languages. The other pragmatic reason is the boom in English language publishing and the opportunity this provides. Since the market for these Indian publishers is India itself, one need not worry about any new colonialisation.

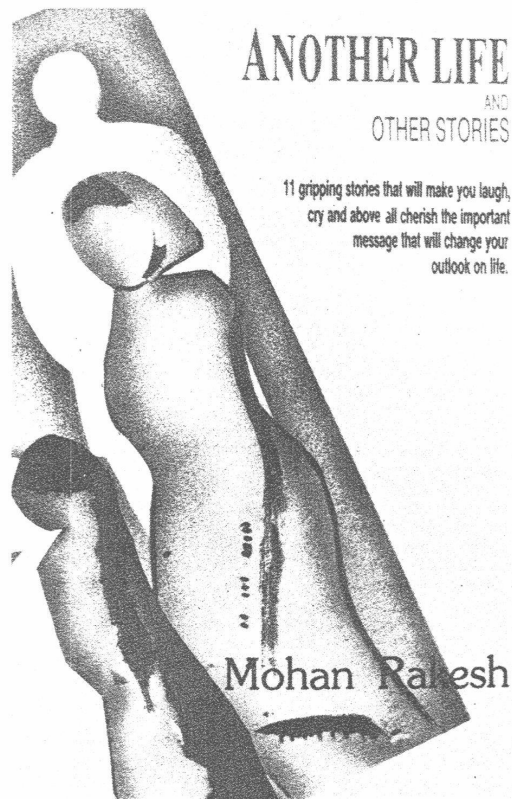
It is in this context that one welcomes Rupa and Co's project of translating Mohan Rakesh's works. Mohan Rakesh (1925-1972) was a towering literary personality considered by many as the greatest modern playwright in Hindi. His most famous plays—*Ashadh Ka Ek Din* (1958), *Lahron Ke Rajhans* (1963), and *Adhe Adhure* (1968)—are perhaps the most frequently performed plays in Hindi and are seen to define an era. But Rakesh was also a novelist, with three well known novels to his credit, and critic. When he died he was working on the synopsis of his proposed thesis on *The Dramatic Word*. He was given the Sangeet Natak Academy award twice within his not too long a career. Rakesh was also an excellent short story writer as this volume affirms. The stories translated here have been selected from five different collections as well as a selection of his best stories. All these collections came out in the sixties. The stories in this collection confirm as perhaps all his other writings do that Rakesh belonged squarely to his times, an era which took itself so seriously in all its confusion, angst, and sense of loss.

Take "Another Life", for instance. The first story in this collection, it was published in another collection named after it in Hindi (*EK Aur Zindagi*) in 1961. Trans-

lated here by Patricia S. Kochanek (more about this later), it is a brilliantly written story about a man's essential loneliness. The central character, Prakash, has had two failed marriages—with Bina and Nirmala. He has a son from his first marriage but his efforts to have a meaningful relationship with Palash, his son, seem doomed to failure from the beginning and what after all is a meaningful relationship? One in which you try to appropriate the other, try desperately to have some noticeable impact, to leave your mark in this existentialist world? Palash tells his father that a man has two legs and not four because men walk half on the ground and half in the sky. But the skies have fallen away leaving man so infirm on the ground. Every attempt at relationship is a war you cannot win. So the ultimate realisation, moksha, is of your essential loneliness. This is eloquently captured and expressed in the image of Prakash walking away in the rain over a bridge accompanied by a dog, "...drenched, ears twitching, silent, self-contained."

That sets the tone for the rest of the short stories in this book. There are only transient connections possible, otherwise all relationships are complex and fraught with danger and are totally unreliable. The next story in the volume, "A Living" ("Rozgar" in Hindi, from the collection *Aaj Ke Saaye*), translated by Barbara Settel, is about a prostitute, called 'the girl' throughout the story, her brother, and his landlady. The girl supports her brother, Jamshed, whose only occupation is to fight with his landlady. His sister suddenly disappears, he feels she may have run away, and he is unable to pay for his boarding and lodging. What is worse for him is that he is no longer able to be righteous in his fights with the landlady and leaves in a fit of anger. His sister returns, after an abortion, and finds him missing. The only thing left of her relationship with her brother is to settle his bills but isn't that what it had always amounted to? Isn't that what all relationships amount to? Ask the prostitute, ask the landlady, they know the truth.

The third story, "Safety Pin" (called the same in Hindi, from the collection *Faulad Ka Akash*), also translated by Barbara Settel, is about relationships, marital and extra-marital, in upper class Delhi. Even the narrator's safety-pin plays tran-



in this world. "City Asleep" ("Soys Hua Shahr" from *Mile-Jule Chehre*) depicts the subterranean relationship between sex and violence and the mafia nature of all extended relationships. This is an opaque story compared to the rest and is translated well by Peter Hook. "The Glass Tank" (from *Roye Reshe*), translated by Karine Schomer, puts under the microscope and examines the demands, desires, and jealousies all relationships cause. It shows how difficult it is to define a relationship and how pain is inherent to it. "Married Women" ("Suhaginen" from *Roye Reshe*), translated by Kusum Rashid again depicts the mockery of marriages that some women live for and the exploitative nature of relationships. The two women here belong to different social levels and one works for the other. The servant at least has some children, the mistress none.

"Savourless Sins" ("Gunahe Belazzat" from *EK Aur Zindagi*) translated by Richard Williams, is a comic story about a failed marriage and a failed attempt at transgression. The protagonist, Sundar Singh, is not even credited with having made his attempt! The other stories in the collection "The Man and the Wall" ("Admi aur diwar" from *EK Aur Zindagi*,

"The Wound" ("Zakhm" from *AJ Ke Saaye*), "The Stranger" ("Animals" from *Roye Reshe*), and the "Animal and Animals" ("Janwar aur Janwar" from *Mohan Rakesh; Shresth Kahaniyam*) all talk of loneliness, what a human being can do to another, the possibility of transient sympathy, and the compelling desire to leave one's mark and overwhelming impossibility of it all. It must be mentioned that these stories have been translated by Indira Y. Junghe and Garland D. Bills, Deborah Torch, Iqbal Singh, Steven M. Poulos and Asghar Wajahat respectively.

What is intriguing is that nowhere is it mentioned how these eleven stories came to be translated by these various translators. There is no editor mentioned, there is no preface or introduction. No information is provided about the translators. It is even assumed that the blurb is more than enough of an introduction to Mohan Rakesh! But perhaps it is uncivil to cavil when you have finally the best introduction an author can want—a translation which though uneven is of a good quality.

G.J.V. Prasad is Assistant Professor of English at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

A Victorious Woman

Anuradha Marwah Roy

SHREYA OF SONAGARH

By Uma Vasudev

UBSPD, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 310, Rs. 125.00

Uma Vasudev is a well known name in political journalism. Her second novel *Shreya of Sonagarh* deals with sex and politics, love and ambition. What a temptation to read it as a *roman à clef* and scandal sheet uncovering the shady goings on in the corridors of power! A temptation to some extent fostered by the blurb. I will come back to the construction of these expectations later. Here, it is sufficient to point out that the effort to sell the author rather misses the point. There is nothing of the scandalous and the titillating in the novel. The tone is staid, bordering on the phlegmatic. Though Shreya the protagonist is fully realized and does not require any points of reference for the reader, it is her acceptability and likeability that become the issue in the novel.

Vasudev is taking a calculated risk in portraying her protagonist as a passive, rather neurotic young woman who from childhood uses subversions typically associated with the feminine—the plea of a mysterious physical disorder, for instance—that save her from exams and then enable her to withhold sex from an unloved husband. To some extent, the risk pays off. Earlier in the novel, the sympathies of the reader remain caught between two contraries—the genesis of feminine neuroses in a patriarchal system and its disastrous implications. For instance, the transformation of Shreya's 'understanding husband' into a raving drunkard is also accomplished very skillfully by treating the situation as the decay of a relationship rather than as a site for pathos.

What is most remarkable about the book and rather unusual in the realm of Indian English writing is Vasudev's portrayal of the political scene. The reality of the feudal moorings of our society are neither glossed over nor are they condemned by satire and sarcasm. The archetypal wheeler-dealer Shri Krishen Chaubey is neither a caricature nor a villain. He is scrupulously portrayed as an undesirable but indispensable player in the power-game.

The subtle nuances of class-caste hierarchy are very ably brought out, again without irony, in the novel. The dress code of the bureaucratic circle as contrasted with that of the provincial royalty, the operation of caste politics in the exploitation of the *chikan* workers, the

pecking order of the 'wives' in a provincial town, Vasudev's eye for detail is unerring.

However this tone of neutrality does become irksome as the book progresses. The story is self-consciously about the formation of a woman's identity. There are long passages where Shreya ruminates about her progress from non-person to person. Anand her lover appears in a Pygmalion-like role in this drama. The sisterhood of *chikan* workers that she finds supportive and empowering remains peripheral to the central relationship of love and sex. However, the delineation of the sexual relationship, does not move away from the patriarchal conception of sex as being essential in 'becoming' a woman.

The second stage in Shreya's career of 'becoming a woman called Shreya' is her election as M.P. Her agency remains minimal in this stage as well. The recognition of her potential, its cultivation and its culmination remain in the hands of others who are very blatantly a part of patriarchal institutions. So, though her earlier neuroses and her unawareness of her sexuality are convincing, the solutions that her 'awakened' self offer seem rather questionable. Her abandoning of her lover and seduction of her husband because it is expeditious for her new image as an M.P. becomes more of selfishness and betrayal than a feminist statement in this context. So the fact that Shreya the politician is a creation of the circumstances of a powerful marriage, bureaucratic help rendered by her lover and the fortuitous murder of her mother-in-law remains unproblematic and the paradoxical nature of a woman's power arising out of patriarchal institutions unresolved, in the novel.

Another problematic aspect of the novel for me is its glorification of power, specially political power. If the figure of the woman in power in our society is arrived at through the machinations of patriarchal institutions, should not there be a questioning of that power? Shouldn't the hierarchies be investigated? The summons of the Prime Minister are perceived as a potent aphrodisiac for Shreya now a Minister in the Central Cabinet.

"The sun's rays cast their lingering warmth on her. As the glow of achievement swept over her, caressing her like the lingering black of his eyes, the incense

began to rise from her body. It arose from being her own woman, her own goddess, *Shakti*. The source of timeless energy. It rose and rose and began to swirl around her. It arose from her awareness, her pride and pain. It arose from becoming at last a woman called Shreya. Me Shreya. A woman called Shreya. She stood there caught in a swirling cloud of incense, Alone."

Shreya stands victorious and solitary at the end of the novel as perhaps she has to because Vasudev is writing about, as she proclaims in various interviews, a 'victorious woman'. This brings me to another paradox in the book which is inadvertently brought out by the blurb. It is a paradox of the personality of the writer, her self-perception and her writing. Talking about her first novel *The Song of Anasuya* the blurb disingenuously heralds Vasudev as the progenitor of a particular trend in Indian English fiction. As that novel is about high society of Delhi, perhaps Namita Gokhle's *Paro* is meant but then one more book does not make a trend.

In the realm of Indian English fiction, it is too early to start talking in terms of trends and traditions. My suspicion is that an effort is being made here to make a literary trend out of personalities. When famous women write about politics and sex readership can be charged with prurient expectations. Both Uma Vasudev and Shobha De have come to fiction after a career in journalism. A large part of Shobha De's popularity is due to her being who she is. She is perceived as an insider of the circle she is writing about. Some of this insider-syndrome operates in Uma Vasudev's self-perception as well, as, for instance, in her totally unnecessary preface where she admits to having been inspired by a woman politician from Madhya Pradesh.

Nayantara Sehgal is a name that cannot be overlooked when this kind of women's writing is being discussed. She too had access to the corridors of power. Perhaps her novels can be read as *roman à clef* but her concern is primarily with the conflict of views. She does not portray state-politics as a power game but rather as a tussle between ethic and selfishness. She definitely prioritizes the westernised elite of the country and idealizes the tussle for power but her novels do problematize the complex relationship between state power and women's concerns in what remains a feudal society. *Shreya of Sonagarh* fails to become a meaningful text of a woman's victory because it does not deal with this complexity or bring out its inherent conflicts. Rather to invert the author's metaphor of the incense that rises from Shreya, it reeks of all the corruption that plagues our political system.

Anuradha Marwah Roy teaches at Zakir Hussain College, Delhi University and has just published her first novel *The Higher Education of Geetika Mehendiratta*.

Gubernatorial Role: Poltroon, Agent, Philosopher, Sage?

T.C.A. Ramanuja Chari

GOVERNOR'S ROLE IN INDIAN CONSTITUTION

By Anirban Kashyap

Lancers Books, New Delhi, 1993, pp. xiii+756, Rs. 650.00

This book divided into eighteen chapters and running into 756 pages out of which 742 are descriptive material is a useful addition to any library on constitutional history. Its merit is that it contains between its covers every bit of available material on the office of Governor from the proposals of the constitutional adviser (B.N. Rao) through the proceedings of the constituent assembly and its committees/sub-committees to all important books/treatises/articles in newspapers, journals et al, any one wanting to know anything about how the office of governor in its present form came into existence, the role assigned to it in the constitutional landscape and how governors have been in fact functioning need now only refer to this meticulous chronicle.

Constitutional offices and institutions can be described either in chronological order or in logical order. The former would describe when, why and how those offices and institutions came into existence and the subsequent growth in importance or eclipse thereof. The latter would ordinarily delineate a functional evaluation or a dialogue with the entire heritage of what had been thought and said before about the offices and institutions but also what still lies in reserve in the context of what these were in the beginning, of what there have been in actual practice and of what these can be. Anirban Kashyap has proffered the first mode of description which is the easier and less creative of the two modes and thereby disappoints those who would look for an interpretative evaluation.

The Governor was, before January 26, 1950, a repository of enormous powers and prestige. The Governor was the direct representative of the crown, the actual and working head of the Executive of the Province, the head of the province in all matters of dignity and precedence and the chief patron of innumerable institutions and endeavours. The Governor had ordinary and extraordinary powers and duties and was invested with the author-

Anirban Kashyap has put together material to show how this august office was stripped, step by step, of its competence to be an effective check on the tyranny of a majority for its duration of the term of a legislature. The Constituent Assembly debates clearly show that the Governor is to be a "figurehead" (to borrow the late Punjabrao S. Deshmukh's crude but telling description) euphemistically called "the constitutional head". Pandit H.N. Kunzru and some others were brutally frank when he pointed out that nomination of the Governor by the President is to ensure that "the government of the province might be carried out in conformity with the policies of the Central Executive", that the Governor will be, in fact, the nominee of the Prime Minister and that the governor will be an "agent" or instrument of the centre. The book brings out how prophetic these apprehensions have turned out to be.

ity in reserve, to override normal processes on being satisfied that special intervention was needed (e.g., certifying demand for grants refused or rejected by the Legislature; issue of permanent enactments, but with the concurrence of the Governor-General, forthwith or after consideration of the view of the Legislature).

Anirban Kashyap has put together material to show how this august office was stripped, step by step, of its competence to be an effective check on the tyranny of a majority for its duration of the term of a legislature. The Constituent Assembly debates clearly show that the Governor is to be a "figurehead" (to borrow the late Punjabrao S. Deshmukh's crude but telling description) euphemistically called "the constitutional head". Pandit H.N. Kunzru and some others were brutally frank when he pointed out that nomination of the Governor by the President is to ensure that "the government of the province might be carried out in conformity with the policies of the Central Executive", that the Governor will be, in fact, the nominee of the Prime Minister and that the governor will be an "agent" or instrument of the centre. The book brings out how prophetic these apprehensions have turned out to be. Despite the Supreme Court ruling in Raghukul Tilak's case (ATR 1979 B.C. 1109) the Governor stood reduced, by and large, to the contemptible role that of being the hit men of the party in power at the centre. The Supreme Court declared that the Governor's "office is not subordinate or subservient to the Government of India. He is not amenable to the direction of the Government of India, nor is he accountable to them for the manner in which he carried out his functions and duties. His is an independent constitutional office which is not subject to the control of the Government of India.

Kashyap demonstrates that practice does not always conform to the Law of the Book and of Judges. He points out with justification, that "some of the Governors like K.C. Reddy, B. Gopala Reddy, Y.N. Sukhthankar, A.P. Jain etc. misused

their powers to serve the party in power in the centre. Sri Prakasa went to the extent of calling himself an "agent of the centre" (p. 683). "Governors like Ram Lal, Jagmohan, were used by the Centre as instruments for achieving partisan ends. Even recently Mrs Kumudben Joshi in Andhra Pradesh and Mrs Ram Dulari Sinha in Kerala acted as custodians of the ruling party at Delhi..." (p. 681). Even so, it is legitimate to ask, and Kashyap does not, whether the Governor has become, irredeemably "an agent of the party in power", as Nath Pai described in 1967, or a "cobra hiding in the grass" as N.G. Ranga described him in 1969, or as many chief ministers made him look like—or a poltroon and as the incidents cited by Kashyap at pp. 680-81 would show, or whether that august office has still the capacity to be a sage, friend and philosopher as L.P. Singh demonstrated that it could be.

The answer to this muddle can be found only by an objective evaluation, shorn of entailments of the philosophy of parliamentary democracy of the White Hall variety, of the meaning and scope of the formula "aid and advice" used in Article 163 of the Constitution in the context of the categorical, clear and simple terms of Article 154 which says that "the executive power of the State shall be vested in the Governor and shall be exercised by him either directly or through officers subordinate to him in accordance with the constitution. This evaluation is necessary, but has not been made, since amendments similar to those made in respect of Article 74 by the 42nd and 44th Amendments have not been made in respect of Article 163. (The 42nd Amendment provided that the President "shall", in the exercise of his functions, act in accordance with the advice given by the Council of Ministers. The 44th Amendment provided that the President may require the council of ministers to reconsider its advice, either generally or otherwise, and the President shall act in accordance with the advice tendered after such reconsideration.) Thus, Anirban Kashyap missed a good opportunity to build up a

case for structuring an efficient system of checks and balances so necessary to prevent parliamentary democracy based on adult franchise from running berserk as it is wont to do because of electoral compulsions. Was it not Aristotle who cautioned

that democracy is the worst form of government?

T.C.A. Ramanuja Chari is a retired civil servant and a practising lawyer.

Age 2-5

PICTURE BOOKS

Available in Hindi and English

- HIRA - Manorama Jafa
- CIRCLE - Manorama Jafa
- THE TABLE - Manorama Jafa
- THE PARROT - Mukta Munjal
- TREE GROWERS - Manorama Jafa

Available in Hindi only

- LALU AUR PEELU - Vineeta Krishna

Age 6-11

Available in Hindi and English

DINOSAURS IN MY GARDEN

PANCHTANTRA 1, 2

Meet the Four Elements are a set of 4 books written by Dilip M. Salwi

1. MR. SUN TAKES A HOLIDAY

2. IN SEARCH OF WATER

3. MADAME AIR WANTS A CHANGE

4. MEET THE SOIL FAIRY

Available in Hindi only

NANHI KAHANIYAN 1, 2

BACHCHON KE JAWAHAR 1, 2

Available in Tamil, Bengali, Urdu, Malayalam,

Hindi, and Gujarati

DINOSAUR OF THE DESERT - Shinji Tajima

Age 12 +

- THE GHOST RIDER OF DARBHANGA - Sigrun Srivastav
- TEN MODERN SHORT STORIES - Vijaya Ghose ed.
- AN ISLAND OF TREES - Ruskin Bond
- THE ROBOTS ARE COMING - Dilip M. Salwi
- THE SWORD OF DARU SHIKOH - Subhadra Sen Gupta
- THREE DAYS TO DISASTER - Deepa Agarwal
- ALIEN ENCOUNTERS - Dilip M. Salwi
- 'M' FOR MYSTERY 1, 2 - Compiled
- THE ALIENS HAVE LANDED - Dilip M. Salwi
- A MOMENT OF TRUTH - Sigrun Srivastav
- MEET THE PLANETS - Dilip M. Salwi
- THE POISONED POOL - Arup Kumar Dutta

FORTHCOMING

DINOSAUR OF THE DESERT in 6 more Indian Languages

THE SECRET OF SICKLE

MOON MOUNTAIN - Margaret Bhatti

THE MOON BEAMED - Viswajita Das

THE MYSTERY OF THE

ZAMORIN'S TREASURE - Margaret Bhatti

OH! DEER - Arup Kumar Dutta



Ratna Sagar P. Ltd.

VIRAT BHAVAN, MUKHERJEE NAGAR, COMMERCIAL COMPLEX

DELHI 110009 • PHONES: 712-2505, 721-6094

BRANCH: NO. 24, RAMANATHAN STREET, T'NAGAR, MADRAS 600017

Write to us for a free catalogue.

B
O
O
K
S

F
O
R
G
R
O
W
I
N
G
C
H
I
L
D
R
E
N

Responding To An Innovative Technique

Kuldeep Mathur

MANAGERIAL TRANSFORMATION BY VALUES: A CORPORATE PILGRIMAGE

By S.K. Chakraborty

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 215, Rs. 195.00

Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Co. Ltd (GBL) went through a series of unfortunate events during the late 1970s. N.P. Godrej, the architect of the company, was physically assaulted and ultimately he died in 1990. The tragedy shook the top management into concerns for creating a value based management system. It began to be realized, as S.P. Godrej in his Foreword points out that the Total Quality Movement "needed to be supported by a systematic, long term educational process for our employees in the basics of human values. And this effort ought to be fairly responsive to the deep and authentic roots of the Indian ethics." For this effort of inculcating a value system based on an authentic corpus of ideas, principles and practices ingrained in classical Indian thought the company turned to the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta where its faculty member S.K. Chakraborty was already involved deeply in such efforts.

This book is a descriptive account of the way Chakraborty intervened and the kind of response he got from the managers and workers with whom he worked. It is to the credit of the author that the account of the experience of the participants is frank and candid and to that extent as he says it is their book, a book by them, of them and for them.

The managerial value system that Chakraborty was aiming to create in GBL was based on the traditional Hindu philosophy and the expositions made by Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. *Living Within*, a book published by the Aurobindo Ashram was an important assignment for reading and discussion. Creating a Hindu ambience was a feature of all the interactive sessions which began with Vande Mataram when all participants stood in silence, keeping an oil lamp burning throughout and lighting incense for the duration of the session which ended with Jana Gana Mana. It was also part of the creation of a traditional ambience of learning that the au-

thor dressed himself in white dhoti and kurta. The participants later, but appropriately addressed him as Guru.

The first effort was to lay emphasis on *chittashudhi*—a Sanskrit term for the purification of mind/heart which was the prime pursuit stressing that necessary sharpening of the intellect can wait but the purification of heart cannot. The most critical and philosophically the deepest element in this exploration was the appreciation of the distinction between our imperfect, conventional day-to-day fluctuating self and our essential stable, perennial and perfect SELF. The next component in this module was the disidentification and reidentification process. The next three elements in the model *guna-karma-sanskara* constitute the more operational package for *chittashudhi*. The last component was the concept of 'giving' in which the life of man was devoted to the process of discharging debts to society.

The second module was on Leadership and Teamwork which had statements on self-restraint, *moksha* (liberation from lower instincts) or *karuna bharna, mudit bharna* etc which explained its components. The third module was on 'Management of Stress, Counselling and Communication' in which statements were around the precepts of Hindu spirituality and also a set of guidelines culled from the writings from Aurobindo Ashram.

The case of the methodology was yogic breathing exercise called mind-stilling exercise which every participant was expected to do either individually or in a group. As part of a continuing educational process, initial sessions were held by the author and later the participants met in groups, read the prescribed texts and discussed the issues raised. The leader of each group reported the discussion by letter to the author who clarified points or reaffirmed certain values.

A sample of letters on the Programme on Leadership and Teamwork as given in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6 carries the other correspondence. As intended, the entire

focus of discussion is on the spiritual values and little on their relationship to managerial practice. A participant, for example, thinks that the question of imbibing such values is purely a private and personal affair and thus finds no need to report whether he practises them or not (47-48). Another talks about his scepticism because those who teach such values do not necessarily follow them (45-54). The theory of karma is constantly questioned and it appears the managers are unable to reconcile the relationship of past deeds or present action or satisfy themselves with the concept of just deserts. What is more intriguing is that the author emphasizes values that may not reflect the profitability demands of an enterprise. Wealth is seen as causing unhappiness and the employees are enjoined to minimize their standard of living and share their earnings with the poor (113). The joint family system is extolled for inspiring the right *sanskaras* on impressionable minds (118). Discipline and sincere unselfishness are emphasized as the primary needs and the author suggests their revival in India through spiritual processes. There is no mention in the entire correspondence of these managerial decisions which have been taken in a better way after going through these modules.

It needs to be mentioned that as the programme has gone on, the problems of dwindling attendance and not practising breathing or mind-stilling exercises have been frequently referred to by the group leaders. The staff association responses are not that favourable and a narrator's comment is significant, "Changing yourself without a relevant change in the environment is of no use" (208).

While the effort at creation of a value-based managerial system is commendable, there is no evidence in the book of the relationship of values to improvement in managerial decisions. Managerial action takes place in an institutional framework and in response to an environment. Institutions with its incentives system sometimes deter managers from successfully responding to the environment. What is then also needed is a change in this framework apart from change in the individual per se. Values propounded do not necessarily command universal acceptance. Most of them emerge from the Brahmin-oriented tradition where dispute is settled by exhorting to faith and not reason. Much more research needs to be done to argue that because such blending of spiritual values with managerial values has been successful in Japan, it should be so in India too. Fresh discussion of mythological characters and their actions is bringing into dispute traditionally held belief systems. Is a 'good' Hindu also a good manager? An adequate answer is not forthcoming in the book.

Professor Kuldeep Mathur is Rector, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Laboured Defence

K.S. Dhillon

OPERATION BLUE STAR: THE TRUE STORY

By Lt. Gen. K.S. Brar (Retd.)

UBS Publishers' Distributors Ltd., 1993, pp. 173, price not stated.

"Operation Blue Star was, in my opinion, one of the most extraordinary and sensitive operations ever undertaken by any army in the world. . . I am convinced that it was the Indian soldier, who through an act of supererogation, finally gave his life, defended his honour, and in so doing, averted a major cataclysm in contemporary Indian history". This is how the author sums up the operation, "the true story" of which forms the subject matter of the book under review. The general pays rich tributes to his men and officers in the book all through, as a good general must. No doubt most of them deserved them. However in a multi-dimensional operation of the kind mounted in Amritsar on 3 June 1984 under the code name "Blue Star", everything could not possibly have gone off as planned. It never does. The author admits as much in the course of his narrative. Troops must have come across unexpected hazards, some must have exceeded their brief, others may have acted without sufficient care and caution. The very nature of the enterprise which was most uncommon and which a soldier was not trained to cope with, would undoubtedly add to the stress and strain of the battle. For the officers and men deployed on such a mission without much preparation, mental re-orientation and under severe constraints of many kinds, not to commit any mistakes would have been super-human. The book would, therefore, have gained immensely in appeal and effect, if the author had given a more balanced account of all the strengths and weaknesses of the operation.

As the operation, like most military activity remained shrouded in secrecy, some of its controversial features and its later fall-out was bound to raise several questions in the public (specially Sikh) mind and cast doubts on the army's claims and credits as to its success in achieving their objectives. It also, perhaps inevitably, violently hurt the Sikh psyche which generated a chain of catastrophic events

not only in the Punjab but also in many other parts of the country—Mrs. Gandhi's assassination being perhaps the most prominent of them. It also seriously affected the relationship between the State and the Sikhs and at a later stage considerably impaired their implicit faith in the machinery of the government to provide protection to their life and property (as happened, in the wake of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, in Delhi and several other Indian cities and towns). Admittedly the events of the post-assassination period are beyond the scope of the book, but considering that the general has devoted many pages and much ingenuity in answering several other doubts and critical comments, perhaps he could have tried to find the reasons for the withering away of the state in the face of unspeakable atrocities against the Sikh men and women in early November '84 in the streets and suburbs of Delhi, the seat of the national government. However that was to be in the future; in June 1984 in the wake of 'Blue Star' the questions which continued to agitate the intelligentsia, and not only the Sikh community, were:

1. Why was the operation launched on a day which, being the martyrdom day of the fifth Sikh guru Arjun Dev, was to be observed as a deeply religious occasion by the Sikhs throughout the country when many of them were to visit the Golden Temple for prayers and would inevitably be trapped within the complex in the event of curfew and assault? Yet this was precisely what was done. The argument about "grain roko" movement call by Sant Longowal on 3 June does not wash, because Akalis had been giving similar calls off and on during the recent past without causing any earth-shaking disturbances in the state. The fear that Sikhs in tens of thousands would march to Amritsar to 'defend' the golden Temple had already been disproved by events in Moga a little earlier. In any case it was a manageable risk which was not likely to become graver if the operation had commenced a couple of days later. Proper orientation, adequate preparedness and a better evaluation of available intelligence would have greatly improved the chances of a successful accomplishment of tasks with possibly much lower loss of life on both sides. One cannot avoid an uneasy feeling that the 3rd of June was selected as the D-day either due to incomplete and inadequate appreciation of the situation or out of sheer bravado.
2. Heavy civilian (pilgrim) casualties in the operation and the escape of a disproportionately large number of terrorist elements on

the night of 3rd June added to the anguish and indignation not only in the Sikh community but also among the informed and thinking sections of society. The army top brass did not offer any convincing explanation then, nor does the writer do so in the present book.

3. Hundreds of people—men, women and children—in fact all those who survived the onslaught within the complex were rounded up and transported via the Kotwali to the cantonment, where they were kept under armed guard for several weeks; the Akali leaders and high priests were detained separately of course. The custodial status of those detained in the cantonment remained unclear for long as the legal provisions governing such detention had not been observed. Subsequent juggling with the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code as a device to settle serious questions of legality and legitimacy became unavoidable and the civil administration did rise to the occasion. It left a bad taste in the mouth all the same. It also constituted a serious violation of the legal and human rights of the unfortunate victims.
4. Screening of the persons so detained including women and children (some babes in arms) and their categorisation into 'Whites', 'Greys' and 'Blacks' at the hands of joint teams of Police, intelligence and military agencies took several months, causing avoidable and unjustifiable suffering, misery, anguish to (and discontent among) at least hundreds of those detainees who were subsequently placed in the 'Whites' category; though even that did not ensure for them automatic and prompt release from custody.

These and many other questions continued to agitate the intelligentsia for several months after the operation. Several articles in the print media and a couple of well written books by eminent writers and media men appeared in the wake of the operation, most containing a far from favourable account of the armed action. There were also many unfounded rumours and stories doing the rounds at the time, most of them dying a natural death in course of time. But doubts about the nature and conduct of the operation, the quantum and kind of armour employed, its timing and the tasks accomplished persisted. Neither the army nor the governments in Delhi and Chandigarh were able to furnish credible answers. Even the 'White Paper' issued by the Government of India a couple of months later did not improve matters very much.

It is some of these questions, doubts

and critical comments which the General makes his business now to clear up, besides describing in detail the nitty-gritty of the operation itself. However the explanations and justifications offered by him cannot be termed effectual, only partly because of the considerable time-lag between the event and its explanation. The latter also becomes tainted with suspicion of after-thought based on hindsight. Since Authority was unable or unwilling to clear the air, a sense of indignation, disbelief, alienation and betrayal continued to sway the Sikh community—with tragic and cataclysmic results which are now part of history. Understandably, the General could not be expected to produce a work of this nature while still in service. Now that he has retired from the army, his account could have been more frank and forthright adopting a more open and unbiased approach.

A work of this nature put together by the most important character in "one of the most extraordinary and sensitive operations undertaken by any army in the world" (author's own words, p. 170) need not have concerned itself so much with trite comment and unverified observations by some imaginative individuals, which in any case, have not stood the test of time. One expected a more accurate and in-depth narration of events leading to the situation where army intervention became necessary. And, of course, an unprejudiced and a more understanding view of the causes of helplessness of the civil administration in enforcing the law of the land in the peculiar political environment during the Bhindranwale phase in the Punjab. One also expected a heightened sense of history in tracing the origin and growth of Sikh separatism and the resultant identity-crisis. Similarly the factors behind the inability (failure?) of the Akali leadership to blunt the rising tide of Bhindranwale's popularity and unconventional methods could have been probed more perceptively. As a matter of fact, the application of a much higher degree of conceptualisation skills in the treatment of the subject would have enhanced the value of the book considerably in support of the above remarks, this reviewer would like to reproduce just two passages from the book, selected at random:

"Though Sikh history spans only 400 years or so, the dichotomy in the Sikh mind with regard to honour and pride on the one hand and a penchant for survival on the other, dates back much further" (p. 2). What is the purport? If Sikh history is only 400 years (or so) old, how can the "dichotomy etc" date back much further? Perhaps the time-slot refers to the Punjabi mind—not just the Sikh mind. One does not know.

"Soon followed the large-scale Akali agitation against the Centre and the Emergency declared by it. The Akalis received much needed support from Bhindranwale for this. It became a prac-

tice for large batches of Sikhs to come daily to the Golden Temple to offer prayers and march out of the Temple shouting the slogan, *Raj Karega Khalsa*, only to court arrest by the policemen waiting outside the Temple" (p. 24). Here the time-frame is of 1982-83 while Emergency was declared by Mrs. Gandhi in 1975 and called off in 1977. It is true that the Akali Party continued to offer daily arrests throughout that period as a protest against the declaration of Emergency but to transpose the arrests of 1982-83 which were in a totally different context against those during the Emergency of 1975-77 is nothing short of a promiscuous mixing of historical facts.

The inexact use of the expression 'race' in respect of the Sikh Community at many places in the book is confusing and inept. Inelegant syntax, inaccurate phraseology and occasional pomposity of style and improper usage spoil the overall impact of an otherwise painstaking narrative.

What were the objectives to be achieved in the operation? The book fails to specify them with the requisite degree of precision, as is the practice when formulating military operational plans. Of course the reader can turn to the Briefing given to Brar by General Sunderji on 1st June to the effect that "Mrs. Gandhi, after much reluctance had finally decided to use the army to flush out the militants from inside the Golden Temple at Amritsar and other shrines in the state" (p. 36). One can also presume that this decision of the Prime Minister was at a later stage suitably re-formulated in precise military terminology as the operational objective because precision in such matters is paramount to avoid miscalculations and other complications. Moreover the degree of success (or failure) of an operational activity cannot be assessed against loosely framed plans and objectives. Perhaps some of the indignation and hostility which 'Blue Star' evoked in the Sikh community was due to the lack of clarity in objectives and what it did eventually accomplish besides the too visible results, namely the destruction of the Akal Takht and the Sikh memorial library as also extensive damage caused to the 'Parikarma', the holy 'Sarovar' and other parts of the sacred shrine, including bullet holes in the sanctum sanctorum building. The points made by the author in the section entitled "Subsequent Events of Significance in both complexes" (pp. 117, 118) are valid and do not lack a ring of sincerity. However someone in authority should have found some way to dispel confusion and misconception at the material time to prevent passions from solidifying into isolation and alienation. That would have averted much suffering and anguish and of course bloodshed) at a later date.

It has been stated by the author on p. 34 that in "the intervening period, after the decision had been made (to seek army help to flush out militants from the Temple

Complex) but before its final execution, a number of secret parleys are believed to have been held, stretching late into the night, between the Centre and the Akali Dal emissaries in a bid to arrive at an acceptable and honourable settlement. However, even the slender hopes that existed of striking a last minute compromise with the Akali leaders, ran into heavy weather as a result of their disinclination to budge an inch from their declared stand". The reference is perhaps to talks which the so-called "Panjab group" was conducting with a group of Union ministers in Delhi right into the last week of May 1984. This reviewer understands on good authority that the talks had succeeded in thrashing out the differences and a final draft agreement had been prepared, which was to be flown to Amritsar by a top official of the Union Home Ministry for signatures of the Akali leadership. What made the Akalis refuse to sign it even at that late stage was the unilateral introduction of a clause by the government side without prior consultation with the other party that "in case of differences as to interpretation, the views of Mrs. Gandhi will be final and binding on both sides" or words to that effect. It is therefore not proper to place the entire blame on the Akalis. Everyone knew that Longowal and party were as eager to get Bhindranwale out of the Temple Complex as the Government of India, perhaps even more.

Perhaps it is not good form to split hairs while reviewing the first authoritative account of so crucial an adventure as Operation "Blue Star". For its sheer novelty, uniqueness, hazardous nature, sensitivity and complexity, it had no parallel in Indian military history. That the Indian army accepted the task and did not botch it up totally, in spite of constant political back-seat driving and leadership, frailties and miscalculations, speaks highly of the Indian soldiers' traditional tenacity. General K.S. Brar has done not too bad a job as far as the military aspects of the operation are concerned. However his political analysis, treatment of the civil and administrative handicaps and the felicity and flow of expression could have been better handled. Perhaps he has also been unnecessarily harsh on the Akali leadership. In a lighter vein, it may be added that Bhindranwale and Brar were not the only sons of Moga connected with "Blue Star" and its aftermath. There were two others—the D.C. of Police, Punjab who relieved P.S. Bhinder soon after the operation (incidentally the writer of this review) and at a later date Baba Santa Singh who was entrusted with the politically motivated task of re-building the Akal Takht by the Government of India. The re-built Takht was naturally found unacceptable by the Sikhs and was later demolished voluntarily by them.

K.S. Dhillon is a Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.

A Tibetan Odyssey

Parshottam Mehra

JAPANESE AGENT IN TIBET: MY TEN YEARS OF TRAVEL IN TIBET IN DISGUISE

By Hsiao Kimura

Serindia Publications, London, 1990, pp. 232, £ 14.95

A tale of high adventure of a young, 19-year-old Hsiao Kimura on his travels through the vast and empty heartland of Asia in the later part of World War II. The principal journey starts (October 1943) from a small, Inner Mongolian settlement and wends its way across the Alanshan range to the largest Tibetan gompa outside of the forbidden land—at Kumbum, in Chinghai. Follows a 15-month interlude of detention in the Tsaidam basin. Their progress towards Sinkiang firmly arrested, HK and his two companions, now head towards Lhasa instead from the north, via Nagchuka and end up, in the autumn of 1945, in the busy, picturesque, just-across-the-border town of Kalimpong.

A second leg just about two years later proves no less exciting. Here our Japanese agent accompanied by a compatriot is launched on another spy mission. To Eastern Tibet, via Giamda, taking in both Chamdo in Kham and Jyekundo in Chinghai. As if this were not enough, HK, now turned an avid Himalayan trader undertakes three round trips across the Jelap La with all kinds of merchandise to sell and buy, on his way to and from Lhasa. Nor does this fascinating tale close

with K's departure for home (May 1950). All through the nearly four decades still left to him, he proves a tireless traveller, an assiduous writer, a dedicated teacher forging links with lands that had fascinated him in younger days: Mongolia and Sinkiang. Above all, maintaining an abiding interest in the affairs of the one country he had almost come to love as his own—Tibet.

Young Kimura, barely 17, started life (1941) as a trainee in an Inner Mongolian khural, not far from the borders of Outer Mongolia, officially, the high sounding Mongolian People's Republic. His objective, to master the language and ways of living of the Mongols so that he could pass for an authentic 'native'. His employers, the Good Neighbour Association, 'Zen Min Kyoki', funded by the Asian Development Board of the Japanese Army. In all important towns of Inner Mongolia, the Board operated a string of farms, schools, hospitals ostensibly to lend countenance to, and buttress, Inner Mongolian resistance to KMT China oppression. In reality though, this 'selfless' assistance was designed to prepare congenial soil for the economic exploitation of the region and drain away its rich

Initially scheduled to enroll at Drepung, DS decided to leave the Tibetan capital after a bare three-week sojourn, hurrying south to India. His objective, to ascertain for himself the 'unacceptable' truth that Japan had licked the dust and been worsted in war. And this despite what 'a pompous, effeminate, bespectacled' Chinese official in Lhasa has told him: 'Oh yes, Japan has been completely defeated. Unconditional surrender, you understand. Now we have occupied the whole country. . . Of course, there are some American troops there as well. . .'

At Kalimpong the news stood starkly confirmed: a newsreel in a local cinema showed an aerial view of Tokyo, nearly completely levelled. And the once proud and haughty Tojo looking rather small and shabby besides an American MP guard!

harvest of wool, hides and meat for the Japanese mainland whose supply lines, now increasingly tenuous, were threatened by reverses in the Pacific War.

Kimura proved an apt pupil and could soon pass for a 'convincing' Mongol; his first assignment, an 'experimental' farm where a new breed of sheep was being raised to help improve the pedigree of its Mongolian counterpart. Adventure soon came his way—to spy out for his masters an alleged supply link to Chiang Kai-shek's badly beleaguered regime. This, an incredibly long, and circuitous, route began at a port north of Moscow and trailed off across Kazakhstan and western Mongolia to war-worn Chungking. It sounded crazy and well-nigh fantastic but with the Japanese controlling the entire China coast and snapping the Burma road link, the Generalissimo was in sore straits.

Disguised as a Mongolian monk with an authentic Mongol name, Dewa Sangpo, and accompanied by a Mongol couple, the threesome set out in the winter of 1943; their first objective, Kumbum. The sheer magnitude of what lay ahead in terms of negotiating an uncharted journey across trackless deserts soon overtook DS's brief, and 'hardly glorious' career as a spy for Japan. It ended a couple of months after it had started with a 14-line 'report' which did 'little if any harm' to anybody. Travelling west of Ninghsia and across 'the sea of burning sands' (Tengri desert), DS and his two companions reached Kumbum at last. After a brief halt and with Sinkiang still their professed goal, they set out across the Tsaidam basin. But even as they did, Chinese Tartary seemed a distant dream. The Kazakhs were determined not to let them in, its place was soon taken by Tibet. In the process though, they found themselves prisoners at the new military settlement of Shan, close to Chogan Os. At the end of a not altogether unpleasant interlude, DS and his companions started afresh on their four-month trek across a high, barren and almost uninhabited country to holy Lhasa.

Initially scheduled to enroll at Drepung, DS decided to leave the Tibetan capital after a bare three-week sojourn, hurrying south to India. His objective, to ascertain for himself the 'unacceptable' truth that Japan had licked the dust and been worsted in war. And this despite what 'a pompous, effeminate, bespectacled' Chinese official in Lhasa has told him: 'Oh yes, Japan has been completely defeated. Unconditional surrender, you understand. Now we have occupied the whole country. . . Of course, there are some American troops there as well. . .'

At Kalimpong the news stood starkly confirmed: a newsreel in a local cinema showed an aerial view of Tokyo, nearly completely levelled. And the once proud and haughty Tojo looking rather small and shabby besides an American MP guard!

DS soon rallied, soon picked up a good

While crossing into India through the Chumbi valley, DS ran into the celebrated US journalist Lowell Thomas. The junior who had accompanied his father was to acquire some instant notoriety with a journalist quickie which mentions inter alia their encounter with 'a Chinese being tossed out of Tibet. ... (and) on his way into China.' Later the author corrects himself by adding that the person concerned 'was actually an Inner Mongolian who had spent five or six years studying in Japan.'

knowledge of the Tibetan language and was entrusted with an intelligence mission to Kham and Eastern Tibet: to ascertain Chinese preparations for their much-talked-of assault on Lhasa.

At Lhasa, DS was able to persuade his Japanese acquaintance, Nishikawa, to join him; the duo reached Chamdo (April 1947) after nearly two months on the road. The Khampa capital, an important centre for trade and politics of ET and the meeting place for five main routes is a small town of 3400 houses. Yet its importance on the 'tea road' starting at Tatsienlu could not be gainsaid.

DS soon discovered that there was 'no unusual military activity' in the area and set out for Jyekundo. There were 'few more suspicious or unfriendly areas in the world' than Chinghai. A little short of Jyekundo, the Americans, Iliya Tolstoy and Brooke Dolan, had put up an airfield (1942) to make do for Chiang's loss of the Burma road. Not that it was ever used! Close by stood the dilapidated Panchen Gumpa marking the spot where the 9th Panchen Lama died in 1937 his dream of being installed at Tashilhunpo by his Chinese hosts in tatters.

DS and his companion's return journey to Lhasa on a much-touted but non-existent, motorable road to Nagchuika ended in near-disaster. Even as the two ragged, starving, filthy pilgrims marched into Lhasa and later crossed over into Kalimpong, the Raj had wound up. His last two years in India occupied DS at once as a trader (kerosene), smuggler (gold) and activist (working out a constitution for Tibet)! Trader and smuggler, largely to make his little pile for the eventual return home; an activist, or Tibet's lost causes.

At the end, revealing his identity, DS, now HK, was detained in Calcutta for a little over six months and then (May 1950) put aboard a ship bound for Japan. Thanks to his remarkable gift as a linguist—a part from a mastery of Mongolian, he was fluent in Tibetan and had taught English—Kimura soon found himself useful. He was engaged by the Foreign Broadcast Service of the CIA and was involved in a multiplicity of interesting jobs preparing a Mongolian phrase book; monitoring daily programmes in Mongol; translating into Japanese relevant documents for establishing diplomatic ties with MPR. A British agency offered him employment

for snooping around in Mongolia! In his new incarnation, Kimura met a host of interesting people, became a university professor and travelled widely.

Fascinating years! And yet it is in his earlier birth as DS that our Japanese 'agent' comes alive: a keen perceptive observer and a brilliant raconteur. In his little over two years of travels as a Mongolian lama, there were any number of intriguing, even bizarre situations, not least with his two redoubtable Mongol companions: the weather-beaten Danzan, widely travelled, dependable, down-to-earth, and his wife, the vivacious Tserentso, endowed with a singular penchant for saying the wrong thing, at the wrong time and the wrong place! Once while detained at Shan, DS's encounter with a genuine Mongol lama, much older than him in years, was far from pleasant. Even as young DS was retiring after a hard day's chores, the old man reminded him of chanting the holy texts. And a minute later, 'with a wicked gleam in his eyes', enquired: 'which way you like it, young man, from the front or back?' Though a Mongol, he had spent long years in Tibet and 'could go either way.' With difficulty, DS wrested himself by throwing the Khalkha lama against the wall and running into the wild.

DS was witness to the last gasps of a dying Tibetan regime whose hurried and ill-considered actions in the months preceding Chinese 'liberation' were to prove a disaster. He too was forced out of a land 'I felt daily more part of'.

While crossing into India through the Chumbi valley, DS ran into the celebrated US journalist Lowell Thomas. The junior who had accompanied his father was to acquire some instant notoriety with a journalist quickie which mentions inter alia their encounter with 'a Chinese being tossed out of Tibet. ... (and) on his way into China.' Later the author corrects himself by adding that the person concerned 'was actually an Inner Mongolian who had spent five or six years studying in Japan.'

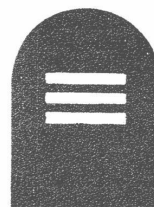
Kalimpong too comes live. With its legendary half-British, half-Sikkimese David Macdonald and its clusters of Kazakhs and Uzbeks, of Russians, Red and White; of pro-reform and anti-Chinese Tibetans; of Mongols of all hues. Of Chinese, both pro-/and anti-Mao and a motley procession of Europeans, in transit.

Kimura's book was first published in Japanese way back in 1957 and reprinted many times over. An English translation was rescued by an American writer (Scott Berry) who with the author's help completed it in 1989. Embellished by a graphic map of his travels, and some photographs,

Kimura's book makes for compulsive reading.

Parshottam Mehra has been Professor and Chairman, Department of History and Central Asian Studies at the Panjab University, Chandigarh.

Essays on
HINDUISM
KARAN SINGH



BY



PUBLISHED BY



Ratna Sagar P. Ltd.

VIRAT BHAVAN, MUKHERJEE
NAGAR COMMERCIAL COMPLEX
DELHI 110009
PHONES: 7122505, 7216094
BRANCH: NO. 24, RAMANATHAN
STREET, T'NAGAR, MADRAS 600017

Hardbound Rs. 225
Softbound Rs. 95

■ BIOGRAPHY

The Life of Isaac Newton

Richard S. Westfall
The author follows Newton from his boyhood in Lincolnshire to his career at Cambridge University where he realised virtually all of his scientific achievements. In this richly detailed biography Westfall captures both the personal life and scientific career of Newton.
Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 328, Rs. 195.00

Fifty Years With the British

S.K. Kirpalani
This document is derived from meticulously kept diaries by S.K. Kirpalani, ICS. It is a compelling portrait of his life and administrative career that spans the first half of the twentieth century.
Orient Longman, 1993, pp. 382, Rs. 225.00

Never Say No to Life. Biography of O.P. Ghai

M. Sivaramkrishna and Sumita Roy
The title taken from O.P. Ghai's autobiography which remained incomplete, tells the story of a life lived to the full. This reputed publisher, wrote, compiled and translated several works and contributed greatly to the world of books.
Sterling Publishers, 1993, pp. 266, Rs. 150.00

■ BUSINESS

Using Dow Theory, The Classic Stock Market Theory updated for the 1990s

Michael D. Sheimo
The Dow Theory, the very foundation of stock market investing know-how has been used by millions of successful investors. This book offers an introduction to the Dow Theory technical and fundamental analysis and key market indicators.
Vision Books, Orient Longman, 1993, pp. 168, Rs. 95.00.

Basics of Stock Market Investing

David Sutton
David Sutton's book offers the stock market newcomer a grasp of the basics—its structure, mechanics and behaviour. Real world examples and illustration are used throughout the book.
Vision Books, Orient Longman, 1993, pp. 120, Rs. 75.00

■ ECONOMICS

Macroeconomic Adjustments. Theoretical Issues and Practical Policies

Yashwant S. Bhawe
The author deals with the dynamics of group behaviour, information asymmetry, organizational theory, the effect of import substitution versus export promotion on economic development in

this book.
S.Chand and Co., 1993, pp. 150, Rs. 190.00

■ EDUCATION

Technical and Vocational Programmes Through Distance Education

Edited by R.V.R. Chandrasekhara Rao
There is a need for courses in technical and vocational subjects for creating and updating of necessary human resources for development and distance education. Institutions in developing countries have a specific responsibility of offering technical and vocational programmes.
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, 1993, pp. 244, Rs. 250.00

■ FICTION

Vertigo

Ashok Banker
A gripping novel about the struggle of a young marketing executive to succeed against formidable odds.
Rupa Paperbacks, 1993, pp. 371, Rs. 80.00

Hem and Football

Nalinaksha Bhattacharya
Hem is a Calcutta school girl with an obsession—playing football. This runs directly counter to an equally strong obsession on her mother's part: marrying her off to a nice boy with a good job.
Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd., London, 1992, pp. 199, £ 7.99

■ GENERAL

Fun Cooking for Children

Rohini Singh
Written specially for children of all ages. This is a fun-filled introduction to a creative and satisfying hobby. Every recipe is detailed, simply written and illustrated to guide a child through each step of cooking.
UBS Publications and Distributors, 1993, pp. 200, Rs. 75.00

■ LAW

Broom's Legal Maxims, 10th Edition

R.H. Kersley
This is the first Indian reprint of this book of selected legal maxims by Herbert Broom.
Universal Book Traders, 1993, pp. 706, Rs. 340.00

The Supreme Court, 4th Edition

Lawrence Baum
The fourth edition contributes to a better understanding of the institution and its impact, it examines the court as a political entity, describing its basic operation.

Universal Book Traders, 1992, pp. 289, Rs. 78.00

Learning the Law, 11th Edition

Glanville Williams
This book gives a brief history and outline of the English legal system. It introduces legal problems and how to tackle them, how to look up points of law and is essential reading for anyone embarking on the study of law.
Universal Book Traders, 1993, pp. 241, Rs. 98.00

Transfer of Employees Under Labour Laws

H.L. Kumar
This book contains the ratio of decisions of the Supreme Court and High Courts with rights and restrictions about the employers power to transfer its employees.
Universal Book Traders, 1993, pp. 150, Rs. 95.00

Access to Justice: A Case for Basic Change

V.R. Krishna Iyer
The book is a critical study of the Indian judicial system and the author offers curative strategies to remedy the present situation.
B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1993, pp. 163, Rs. 150.00

The Indian Constitution and International Law

P. Chandrasekhara Rao
This book explains with great thoroughness the basic concepts of international law and examines their relevance to the numerous provisions of the Constitution of India which have a bearing on issues of international law.
Taxmann Publications, 1993, pp. 248, Rs. 400.00

■ LITERATURE

Sir William Jones. A Reader

Edited by Satya S. Pachori
This Reader contains selected representative works of Sir William Jones (1746-94), the prominent British philologist, poet, translator, orientalist, jurist and father of comparative studies.
Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 230, Rs. 350.00

Five Plays

Vijay Tendulkar
This anthology contains five of Tendulkar's most significant plays highlighting the complexity of human relationships. All contain a latent critique of modern Indian society and in all of them women play significant roles in the plot. The plays included here are *Kamala*, *Silence!* *The Court is in Session*, *Sakharam Binder*, *The Vultures and Encounter in Umbugland*.
Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 357, Rs. 250.00

Mr. Tompkins in Paperback

George Gamow

Mr. Tompkins has become known and loved by many thousands of readers as the bank clerk whose fantastic dreams and adventures led him to a world inside the atom.
Cambridge Paperbacks, 1993, pp. 186, Rs. 195.00

The Poetry of Kamala Das

K.R. Ramchandran Nair
This critical study of Kamala Das' poetry covers most of the individual poems. She is judged as one of the great pioneers of modern Indian poetry in English despite her drawbacks.
Reliance Publishing House, 1993, pp. 147, Rs. 175.00

Manohar Malgaonkar and Portrait of the Hero in his Novels.

C.M. Mohan Rao
A detailed study of the novels of Malgaonkar is made from the point of view of the growth and development of his protagonists.
Reliance Publishing House, 1993, pp. 150, Rs. 200.00

■ NEHRUANA

With Three Prime Ministers Nehru, Indira and Rajiv

N.K. Seshan
The author served Pandit Nehru for nineteen years, Mrs Gandhi for eleven and Rajiv Gandhi appointed him Secretary of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust. So his links with the Nehrus go back to 1945.
Wiley Eastern, 1993, pp. 136, Rs. 175.00

Challenges of the Twenty-first Century

Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust
Contains the proceedings of conferences held biennially by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust to discuss causes and ideas of import to her.
Wiley Eastern, 1993, pp. 377, Rs. 300.00

Nehru and North East India

Edited by T.S. Gangle
Contains the papers presented at the seminar on the same topic held at Imphal with contributions from scholars from Eastern region.
Published for the Department of University and Higher Education, Government of Manipur, Imphal.
S. Chand and Co., 1993, pp. 161, Rs. 250.00

■ POLITICS

A Century of Government and Politics in North East India (Vol V.—Freedom Movement)

V. Venkata Rao
This is the fifth volume in this series and deals with the Swadeshi Movement, Non-Cooperation, Salt Satyagraha etc. with special reference to the North Eastern region.
S. Chand and Co., 1993, pp. 209, Rs. 250.00

NEW FROM OXFORD

The Tribals of India

SUNIL JANAH

This book is a collection of photographs of the tribals of India accompanied with a text narrating the author's experiences among them.

Beginning in the early forties, Sunil Janah, the well-known photographer, travelled extensively for thirty years in inaccessible tribal villages. For days he lived with these people and fell in love with them. It was with that love that he captured with his camera several moments in their lives.

This collection contains over a hundred black and white photographs representing almost all the major tribal belts of India.

The photographs will be of documentary value as the life of the tribals has changed considerably during the last decade.

SUNIL JANAH is one of the most talented photographers of the country. Janah has photographed India's diverse tribes, its fascinating landscape and people, and events of political and historical importance. In 1973 he was awarded the Padmashree, a national award of honour, by the Government of India for his pioneering work in the field of photography.

144 pages

Rs 695

Development And Change

PRANAB BARDHAN, MRINAL DATTA-CHAUDHURI, T.N. KRISHNAN

This volume—in honour of K.N. Raj, internationally known for his contribution to development economics—is an outstanding collection of essays in development economics. The authors have contributed significantly to development theory and policy and have influenced the course of development economics over a long period of time.

The essays fall into three sections: development theory, comparative development experience and Indian development experience.

PRANAB BARDHAN is Professor of Economics at the University of California, Berkeley.

MRINAL DATTA-CHAUDHURI is Professor of Economics at the Delhi School of Economics.

T.N. KRISHNAN, former Director of the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, is currently the National Coordinator of a research project on Social Sector Strategies and Financing for Human Development in India.

368 pages

Rs 350

Shifting Agriculture and Sustainable Development

P.S. RAMAKRISHNAN

An integrated approach to conservation and sustainable development presupposes the satisfaction of basic human needs, equity with social justice, and the maintenance of social, cultural, and biological diversity together with the ecological integrity of the system.

Field research in north-eastern India has sought to combine detailed ecological studies on the dynamics of rural ecosystems with practical suggestions for improving the systems of land use and land management in the region.

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

DR P.S. RAMAKRISHNAN is Professor, School of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

436 pages

Rs 475

Artisans and Industrialization: Indian Weaving in the 20th Century

TIRTHANKAR ROY

It is well known that after the mid-nineteenth century, trade between Europe and Asia caused a 'deindustrialization' in the latter. This book argues, more specifically, that the effects of English goods on Indian industry were more complex than just loss of employment.

Centrally, this volume attempts two tasks: first, it ties together various kinds of changes that craftsmen experienced, the significance of which would otherwise escape notice. Second, it draws the past closer to the present. Sections of handloom weaving in the late-twentieth century have been competitive and responsive to the market. Weaving has also been a source of capital and enterprise in many of India's textile towns.

TIRTHANKAR ROY is Assistant Professor at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Bombay.

252 pages

Rs 290

Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant: Volume I

EDITED BY B.R. NANDA

Govind Ballabh Pant was in the front rank of Indian nationalist leaders who played a key role first in India's struggle for freedom and subsequently in the politics and administration of Independent India. His services to his home state, Uttar Pradesh, spanned nearly half a century, including stints as Chief Minister both before and after Independence; and beyond its confines lie his contributions to the Indian parliamentary system, his role as a trusted colleague and confidant of Jawaharlal Nehru, as a member for several years of the highest policy-making echelons of the Indian National Congress, as Deputy Leader of the Central Legislative Assembly, and Home Minister in the Union Cabinet headed by Nehru.

Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant will not only document and illuminate the career and personality of an eminent and charismatic Indian political figure but provide valuable insights into Indian politics both before and after 1947.

MR B. R. NANDA is a leading historian of modern India and has distinguished himself as the definitive biographer of Gandhi, the Nehrus, and other nationalist leaders.

350 pages

Rs 350

Vessels of Time: An Essay on Temporal Change and Social Transformation

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

It opens with an exploration of time in different societies. Most studies assume time to be axiomatically given, in terms of which other notions of time become different or non-existent, and are dissolved in other domains (social structure, economy, kinship, ritual).

Half the essay is thus concerned with questions of what is involved when we talk about time in different societies. The other half is thematically even broader with the addition of changes that have occurred over the past two centuries, leaving no society untouched.

AKOS OSTER is Professor of Anthropology and Film at the Wesleyan University, Middle-town, Connecticut.

120 pages

Rs 175

Essays on Indian Philosophy

J.N. MOHANTY—EDITED BY PURUSHOTTAMA BILIMORIA

This collection of essays by Professor J.N. Mohanty on Indian philosophy and related topics, brought together in a volume for the first time, provides us a vignette into his writings in this area over a forty year span. The collection ends with some ruminations on the future of Indian philosophy.

The volume is designed also to supplement Professor Mohanty's book-length works in the teaching of Indian and comparative philosophy.

PURUSHOTTAMA BILIMORIA presently teaches at Deakin University in Australia.

388 pages

Rs 400

Two Faces of Protest: Contrasting Modes of Women's Activism in India

EDITED BY AMRITA BASU

Drawing on case studies of the Communist Party of India in West Bengal and the Shramik Sangathana in Maharashtra, this wide-ranging work assesses Indian women's political activism through an investigation of institutional change at the state level and protest at the village level. The Shramik Sangathana, a grass-roots organization born in the early 1970s out of a critique of parliamentary communism, appeared to constitute a model for radical, democratic change.

Rich in its fieldwork, incisive in its political analysis, *Two Faces of Protest* offers a subtle but compelling portrait of women's political activism in the Third World.

AMRITA BASU is Associate Professor of Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies at Amherst College.

Rs 350

Periplus—Poetry In Translation

EDITED BY DANIEL WEISSBORT AND ARVIND KRISHNA MEHROTRA

Periplus means the action of sailing round, a circumnavigation, a voyage round a coastline, etc. *Periplus: Poetry in Translation* attempts to do both. It sails round or along certain coastlines, some of which might be unfamiliar, and whenever possible it narrates what occurred or did not occur on the journey.

Periplus features European poets but at the same time explores an area hitherto neglected.

DANIEL WEISSBORT is the Director of the Translation Workshop at the University of Iowa.

ARVIND KRISHNA MEHROTRA is the author of *Middle Earth* (1984), translator of *The Absent Traveller: Prakrit Love Poetry from the Gathasaptasati* (1991), and editor of *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets* (1992).

Rs 250



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

2/11 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002

Oxford House, Apollo Bunder, Bombay 400 039

5, Lala Lajpat Rai Sarani, Calcutta 700 020

Oxford House, Anna Salai, Madras 600 006

Subharam Complex, 144/1 M.G. Road, Bangalore 560 001

Gayatri Sadan, 2060 Sadashiv Peth, V.N. Colony, Pune 411 030

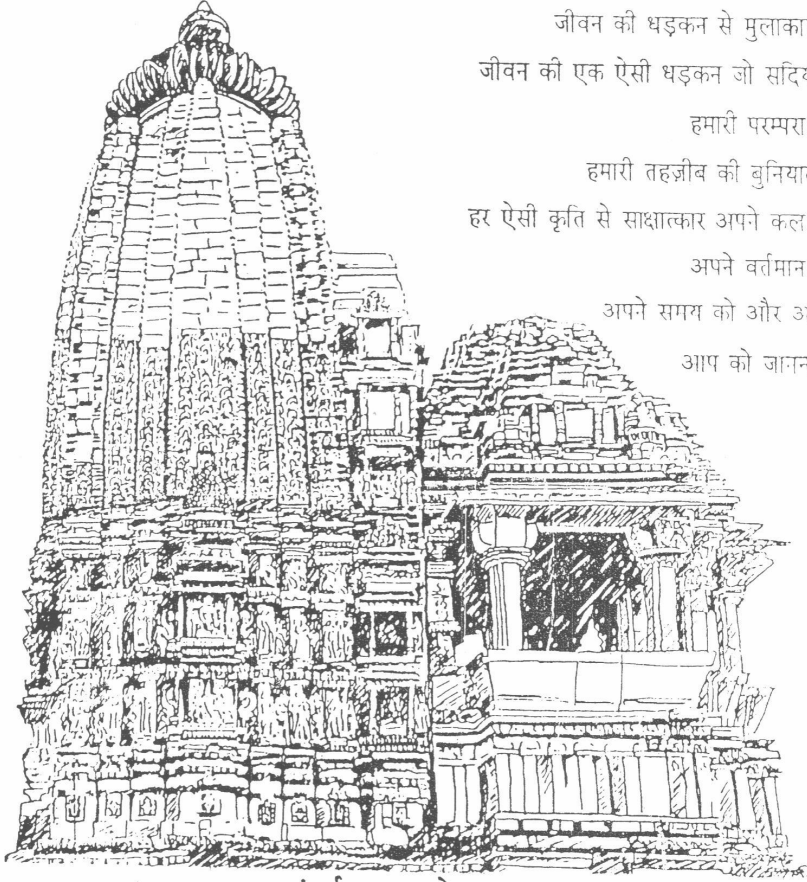
Bharati Bhavan, Rishi Bazar, Thakurbari Road, Patna 800 003

B 49, Mandir Marg, Mahanagar Extension, Lucknow 226006

3-5-1107 Narayana Guda, Hyderabad 500029

पत्थरों पर धड़कता सच

सच जो पत्थरों पर उकेरा गया है।
ज़िन्दगी का सदा
हमारी परम्पराओं, हमारे विचारों के
इन रूपाकारों से सामना,
जीवन की धड़कन से मुलाकात है।
जीवन की एक ऐसी धड़कन जो सदियों से
हमारी परम्परा की,
हमारी तहज़ीब की बुनियाद है।
हर ऐसी कृति से साक्षात्कार अपने कल की,
अपने वर्तमान को,
अपने समय को और अपने
आप को जानना है।



अं. ०००१५३३ ज.सं. ३१/२००५/१२ जनसंपर्क, मध्यप्रदेश शासन