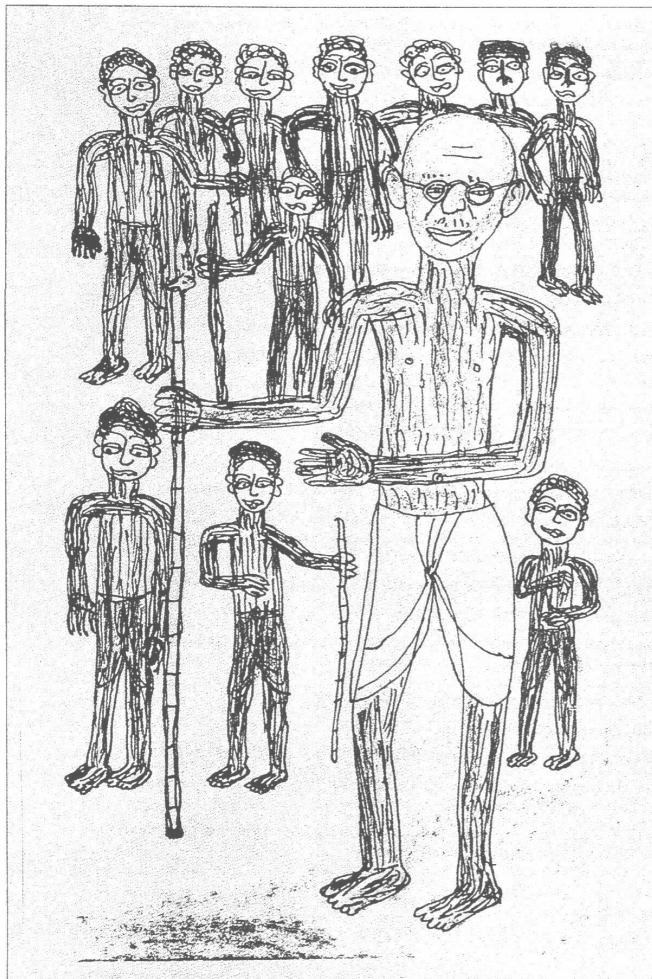


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“Money Is a Kind of Poetry”

N.S. Jagannathan

THE OXFORD BOOK OF MONEY

Edited by Kevin Jackson

Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. xvi+479, Rs. 575.00

As any bookworm will tell you, the three Baconian procedures of tasting, swallowing, and chewing and digesting do not exhaust the possibilities of dealing with books. For example, “browsing,” (which is not the same thing as tasting and so cannot be subsumed under it) has escaped Bacon’s taxonomy. But it is often the only way with certain kinds of books. It is the only way, for example, with anthologies, and the most pleasurable. I commend both the book under review and this reading methodology to the reader.

Many are the uses of anthologies: those in “the stinking trade of writing tosh at 1s. 6d a quire” would concede in moments of candour that an empty mind with a deadline to beat can be quickened by a dip into a dictionary of quotations. One might pass for a scholar or even a wit with an apt quote in a dull discourse, oral or written. But sheer pleasure is the most important reason for letting your mind wander over these pages, thrilling to forgotten or half-remembered nuggets, delighting in new finds and fresh angles to “what oft is thought”—incoherently—“but never so well expressed.” And when the anthology is about a subject like “Money”, one can well settle down to long hours of “cultivated reverie.”

To get the best out of the book, I would suggest your dredging from your own memory witticisms and throwaway lines, reflections, portentous or facetious, highfalutin or down-to-earth, and find out whether they have made it to the book. If they have, you may preen yourself on a well-stocked mind; if they haven’t, you may feel superior to the anthologist. Either way, you win.

Applying these principles, I found quite a few of my favourites in and a few out. Belloc’s

“I am tired of Love: I am still more tired of Rhyme.”

“But Money gives me pleasure all the time” is there as is the longer lament of the Grub Street professional about all the felicities of life that chronic penury has denied him. (Belloc was no Vikram Seth.)

*“Would that I have thirty thousand pounds,
Invested in some strong security;
A midland Country House with formal
grounds,
A Town House and a House beside the sea,
.....
And Friends innumerable at my call,
And youth serene—and underneath it all
One steadfast, passionate flame to nurture
me.
.....
Then would I chuck for good this stinking
trade
Of writing tosh at 1s. 6d a quire!
.....
But that is all over. Here is the world again.
Bring me the Blotter. Fill the fountain-pen.”*

Misses? A few. Dr. Johnson’s “No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money”, which so scandalised Boswell, is there. Indeed, it provides the occasion for some interesting celebration in Jackson’s introduction. Literature may be a product of red hot imagination, but it is also a commodity to be sold for money. Johnson’s equally famous ex cathedra pronouncement, remarkable for its freedom from cant, “There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money” is not there. This is curious, since the comment is very much apropos an important aspect of money—the moral hypocrisy of those who denounce it as the root of all evil” (Timothy). Jackson has two well balanced sections on “Money as Vice” and “Money as Virtue”, in which he has assembled a whole range of views on the subject. Against Timothy’s sour-grapism should be set Shaw’s robust “money is the most important thing in the world”. (Even within the Bible, inclined on the whole to the view that “it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God”, there are dissenting voices that say that “Money answereth all things”—Ecclesiastes.

There is God’s plenty from Dickens, as is only to be expected given nineteenth century England’s obsession with money.

As Jackson says in his perceptive introduction, the novel as an art form would have been impossible without money as a theme. (Death and Love are the stuff of poetry.) He quotes Lionel Trilling, “the novel is born with the appearance of solid fabric of the old society, the great generator of illusion.”

Among the haul from Dickens is Paul Dombey’s fundamental question “Papa! what is money?” that has the elder Dombey floundering in a sea of philosophical doubt. The extract is, very appropriately, the frontispiece of the book and sets its tone. In its philosophic ambition, the question is comparable to “Who Am I?” that has teased thinkers of all times and claims.

Micawber is there, of course, with his very unmodern budget philosophy, personal and national: “Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds and annual expenditure twenty pound ought and six, result misery.” Tell it to our own Micawber, Manmohan: as stern as his Victorian forbear about surplus budgets when lecturing captive audiences, he bases his conduct on Micawber’s other, not unreasonable, premise that “Something will always turn up”—to wit, the proceeds of family heirlooms in the form of public sector assets.

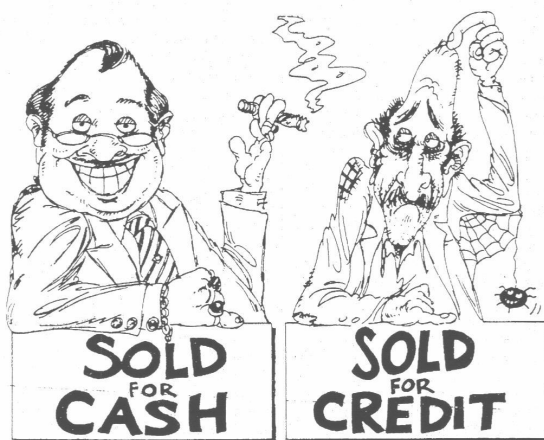
Talking of improvident Finance Ministers puts one in mind of Edmund Wilson’s protest—quoted in the book—about the weird ways of the Internal

Revenue Department. The department had put him through the wringer for failure to report imagined incomes, reprimanded him for spending too much money on liquor and distraised without notice royalties from his publishers. A variation of the same theme by A.P. Herbert—not quoted by Jackson—is hilarious:

*“Well, fancy giving money to the Government!
Might as well put it down the drain,
Fancy giving money to the Government!
Nobody will see the stuff again.
Well, they’ve no idea what money’s for—
Ten to one they’ll start another war.
I’ve heard a lot of silly things, but Lor’
Fancy giving money to the Government!”*

Grateful as one is for what Jackson has given of Dickens, one feels let down that he has missed the immortal Sam Weller, the equal of a thousand Friedmans when it comes to monetarist theories of sterilising purchasing power and a wit to boot, the equal of a hundred worthies that have found a place in this volume. Remember “very glad to see you, indeed, and hope our acquaintance may be a long one, as the gentleman said to the 5 pound note”?

An alternative to pitting your memory against Jackson’s research in reading this book, is to zoom in on your favourite author(s) from the index and work your way through the book. One thing will lead to another: a quote in the page opposite will seduce you and send you in hot



pursuit of another author, and before you can say John Maynard Keynes, you will be happily meandering all over the place, forgetting your original quest. Now chasing Umberto Eco on the semiotics of Bank of Italy's One Hundred Thousand Lire (pp. 142-144) and then on to Mark Twain's unnegotiable—despite the solemn promise on its body by the American equivalent of our Rangarajan—500 million note! (pp. 140-41). There is then this serendipitous gem from C.H. Sisson:

*I was led into captivity by the bitch business
Not in love but in what seemed a physical
necessity
And now I cannot even watch the spring
The itch for subsistence having become
responsibility.*

*Money the she-devil comes to us under many
veils
Tactful at first, calling herself beauty
Tear away this disguise, she proposes paternal
solicitude
Assuming the dishonest face of duty.*

*Suddenly you are in bed with a screeching
tear-sheet
This is money at last without her night-dress
Clutching you against her fallen udders and
sharp bones
In an unscrupulous and deserved embrace.*

It is time to get to the introduction which talks of its subject with becoming detachment. For my money, I would any day prefer Money laughed at rather than portentously denounced or defended. There is plenty of both in this anthology on "Money and the Imagination" that seeks to sample "how poets, novelists, dramatists and wits" have transmuted into literary immortals crooks and gamblers, misers and spendthrifts, embezzlers and blackmailers, feckless, born losers and overachievers rolling in the stuff, practical men who count their penny and philosophers who haven't a penny to count but plenty to say on what they do not have. Example of the last? Karl Marx: "Money is the jealous god of Israel beside which no other god may exist. Money abases all the gods of mankind and changes them into commodities. . . . Money is the alienated essence of man's work and existence; and this essence dominates him and he worships it."

Attitudes to money are an index of the culture of the times at all times, a truer measure than attitudes to love, liberty and other consecrated verities. Money as power, as corrupter, as neurosis, or as an absurdity is the theme of the book. Well chosen and tactfully introduced, it is a treasure-trove whose contents are to be taken out and savoured time and again, as a miser does his hoard, but with much greater profit.

N.S. Jagannathan, journalist and a former editor of The Statesman, The Financial Express and The Indian Review of Books, is on the advisory board of The Book Review.

Interlinkages of Economic Theory, Agriculture and Development

Badal Mukherji

ACCUMULATION, EXCHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT
ESSAYS ON THE INDIAN ECONOMY

By Krishna Bharadwaj

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 401, Rs. 300.00

This volume collects eleven articles by Krishna Bharadwaj written between the early seventies and her untimely death in 1992. They are grouped in three parts. Part I, The Accumulation View, consists of three papers on historical and methodological issues in economic theory. Part II collects five articles on Indian agriculture and Part III, although titled "the course of development" is really a continuation of Part II. There is a serious production defect in part III, surprising for Sage, that pages 322 to 336 are repeated twice. Otherwise the production is good.

The para above is the best that I could do for an objective, professional beginning, for, rereading Krishna's papers opened up a mental wound that I thought had healed. For those who loved her the danger of that affection being translated into uncritical acceptance of her economics is very real. It is after accepting that possibility and struggling for a long time with the job that I write—the five papers of Part II of this book are by far the best of anything written anywhere in that area. When I first read those, twenty years ago as those came, I thought that they were very good; about ten years ago when there was a flurry of formal models in the same area, rereading those papers, they seemed to have contained more substance; today there is no doubt in my mind that those are the only ones that will survive. But what must have been painful to Krishna, and seems shocking now, is that she did not get any more credit than a passing footnote for an entire area of research that she had opened up as well as researched the best interlinkages of credit and labour contracts in backward agriculture. All that the subsequent literature added (including little things that I did myself) are cosmetics and polish, and in those two activities as everyone knows we are now the world champions.

Let me begin with the specifics of Part I with which I have the most disagreements before taking up Part II. The three essays in the first part were written between 1986 and 1991; they contain the well known criticism of neoclassical economics coming from Marxist political economists and are expository in nature.

Since the weakness of equilibrium economics in handling the analysis of distribution as well as dynamic non-steady state situations are well known, I shall not comment on them here. But there are two axioms of the Marxist critique and one assumption of Ricardo that is carried over by them that need alteration and substantial modification and Krishna should have been the one to have taken up the task since this would have involved substantive research at the foundations which she had the power to do. First, the Marxist description of the economy as consisting of two classes needs modification. There is a spectrum of income earning groups and social categories that span the rich and poor in advanced capitalist countries and seem to be emerging in the Third world as well. It is useful to remember that this idea of a spectrum of 'classes' was taken as a Menshevik aberration by all the thinkers of post revolution USSR but one, Lenin. The consequence of such a scheme for Marxist economics remains to be worked out. If the poorest worker consumes all his income and the richest worker saves, say, 30 per cent of his income, and the savings are put in UTI and the latter parks them in private company shares, then depending on the size composition of the components of the working class their economic well being on the whole might be positively associated with that of the capitalists.

Secondly, Krishna accepts uncritically as an axiom of neoclassical economics the principle of 'symmetry' as she calls it meaning thereby, perhaps, that when a production function is written as $Q=F(x,y,z)$ the argument factors are treated symmetrically. The mathematical form imposes its own methodology on the algebra but only the crudest neoclassicist would draw from it the conclusion that

. . . rereading Krishna's papers opened up a mental wound that I thought had healed. For those who loved her the danger of that affection being translated into uncritical acceptance of her economics is very real. . .

the social status and power of capitalists and workers are 'symmetrical'.

Finally, the Ricardian assumption that no rent is invested; does it hold today? It certainly would have been an apt description of the absentee zamindar in 19th century Bengal or in Ricardo's England, but is it today? As the capital markets become more and more integrated and cover more and more of population, the Ricardian distinction becomes obsolete. The truth may in this case be in a counterfactual: would Marx the builder on the data of history have accepted the assumption today?

I turn now to the great papers on Indian agriculture. "Notes on farm and productivity" addresses the famous debate about the inverse relationship between farm size and productivity and neither special production function assumptions nor the assumption of imperfect markets will be adequate to get a true explanation of the observed behaviour of the variables because "what does complicate the analysis, however, is the fact that markets become interlocked through price and non-price links, given that market and social power is vested in the dominant rural classes and that the dominant party often combines multiple functions, enjoying a superior position simultaneously in a number of markets... the decision to enter one market restricts the weaker party's field of feasible choices open to him in other markets..." This is the earliest and perhaps as yet the clearest statement of interlinked markets; what subsequent mathematical formulations in terms of principal-agent contracts have achieved are explicit characterisations of special cases. If a general "theorem" ever comes it will be, in my judgement, a mathematical "proof" of the quote given above.

The rest of this beautiful paper is a detailed analysis of the farm manage-

What must have been painful to Krishna, and seems shocking now, is that she did not get any more credit than a passing footnote for an entire area of research that she had opened up as well as researched the best interlinkages of credit and labour contracts in backward agriculture. All that the subsequent literature added (including little things that I did myself) are cosmetics and polish.

ment survey data in the context of inter-linkage and other institutional features of the agrarian economy of India. The next paper, "On the so-called technical relations in agriculture" continues the same theme by demonstrating the fact that "what is noticed is not so much a technological phenomenon as an outcome of certain property relations". To give an example, the technology used to produce steel ingots may be the same, for example, in China and the U.S.A. but when we look at the data in the market about input use, production, prices, profits and investment we must be aware of the fact that between the technology and the data stand the organization, the markets and the institutions of the economy.

Chapter 6 is the famous joint paper by Bharadwaj and Das based on a field survey of eleven villages in Orissa by Das. It is a detailed analysis of tenurial contracts and tenancy in its manifold mutations and it ends with the remarkable conclusion that gross productivity per acre is systematically higher under the fixed rental system than under sharecropping. The authors of a hard analysis of data are least likely to speculate or else, perhaps, they could have anticipated the sharp decline of tenancy contracts in India in the decade after their paper was written.

In the next chapter Krishna returns to her earlier theme of interlinkage to examine yet another startling aspect that could not be unearthed through conventional analysis. This is the consequence for policy intervention of market interlocking. She shows that "modernizing one segment in the complex web of production and exchange relations, if not followed by commensurate supportive changes in others, can frustrate the policy objectives of such interventions". I do not have to emphasise the importance of the result.

The last article in this section is unique; it does not quite belong to any subgroup of ideas but stands by itself. It seeks to reconstruct the inter-industry input-output matrix for the Indian economy in terms of the interrelationships amongst economically homogeneous subsectors rather than of physical commodity groups as is usually the case. This is really an agenda for research rather than simply a finished article. The author's claim that such reconstruction is economically much more useful is entirely valid. Travelling a very different route in trying to model a mixed economy, V. Pandit, K. Sundaram and myself faced exactly the same lack of economic information of the quantity based input-output models used in our plan models (Mukherji, Pandit and Sundaram in an article in the Special Number of the *Indian Economic Review* in Memory of Professor Sukhomoy Chakravarty, 1994).

Krishna Bharadwaj's work on Indian agriculture is amongst the very best and this book is mandatory reading for any student of that subject.

Badal Mukherji teaches at the Delhi School of Economics, Delhi.

Highlighting Broad Contours

Biswanath Goldar

INDUSTRIAL GROWTH AND STAGNATION: THE DEBATE IN INDIA

Edited by Deepak Nayyar

The Sameeksha Trust, Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 365, Rs. 275.00

During the first 15 years of planned industrialisation in India, 1951 to 1965, industrial production grew rapidly at the rate of 7.7 per cent per annum. In this period, there was an acceleration in industrial growth—the annual growth rate of industrial production increased from 5.7 per cent in 1951-55 to 7.2 per cent in 1955-60 and further 9.0 per cent during 1960-65. But, after the mid-1960s, there was marked deceleration in industrial growth between 1965 and 1970, the growth rate of industrial production was only 3.3 per cent per annum. The growth performance was poor in the next five years, and the growth rate of industrial production in the ten-year period 1965-75 was only 3.6 per cent per annum. The deceleration was most marked in the case of capital goods industries which attained a growth rate of about 17 per cent per annum during 1956-65, but grew at the rate of about 2 per cent per annum during 1965-75. In the literature on India's industrial development, this phase of relatively slow growth of Indian industry is often referred to as industrial stagnation in India.

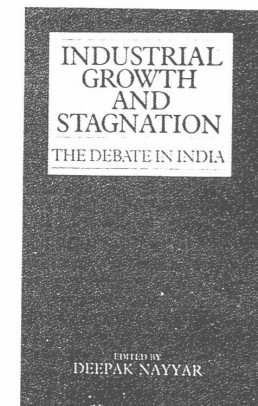
Rapid industrialisation being at the heart of India's development efforts in the post-independence era, the deceleration of industrial growth naturally attracted a good deal of the attention of the Indian economists. In this context, a lively debate began in the early 1970s and continued until the early 1980s on a range of issues relating to industrialisation in India. Most of the contributions to this debate were published in the *Economic and Political Weekly* (EPW). The book under review is an edited volume which brings together a selection of articles published in the EPW which made a significant contribution to the debate. Needless to say such a book of readings would be useful for the interested students and for a reader unfamiliar with the extensive literature (except that some important contributions to the debate were not published in the EPW and hence do not find a place in the book). The object of the book, as the editor states, is to present the main strands of the discussion and the broad contours of the debate on industrialisation in India, mainly for the benefit of the new reader.

The book contains twelve essays. The list of authors, which includes some well-known Indian economists, is as follows: Prabhat Patnaik, Ranjit Sau, K.N. Raj, Amiya Kumar Bagchi, T.N. Srinivasan

and N.S.S. Narayana, A. Vidyathanan, S.L. Shetty, Deepak Nayyar, Sukhamoy Chakravarty, Ashok V. Desai, C. Rangarajan, and C.P. Chandrasekhar. The essays are arranged in the book in chronological order of their appearance in the EPW. There is an introductory essay to the volume by Deepak Nayyar, the editor of the volume.

A wide range of issues relating to industrialisation in India are discussed in the various essays of the volume. These include (i) linkages of industry with agriculture, (ii) the scope for and implications of an export-led industrialisation strategy as compared to an import-substitution based industrialisation strategy, (iii) the relationship between income distribution inequalities and the rate expansion of home market for industrial goods, and (iv) the links between public investment and private investment. One of the essays (S.L. Shetty) points to a weakening of the development process in the period after the mid-1960s as result of a neglect and drift in the economic management and planning. Another essay (Ranjit Sau) draws attention to a shrinkage of the market for industrial goods in India in the 1950s and early 1960s manifested in a decline in the proportion of per capita consumer expenditure on industrial goods which was found to be more marked for rural areas and among the poorer sections of the society.

Sukhamoy Chakravarty's essay discusses the question whether there are reasons to believe that the narrowing of home market poses a serious problem for India's growth prospects. Chakravarty notes that generally mature economies are the ones which are regarded as prone to demand deficiency while developing countries are considered to be subject to the operations of Say's law which implies that the constraints to development in such economies are from the supply-side and the relevant questions are how to increase the rate of saving and bring about its conversion into an appropriate mix of capital goods. He points out that market problems can arise also for developing countries because (i) savers are not necessarily the investors, (ii) the industrial structure in such countries is significantly oligopolistic, and (iii) the government's intervention in the markets for agricultural products may give rise to problems relating to absorption of surplus. A highly skewed distribution of wealth may lead to an increase in the propensity to save



without there being a corresponding increase in the inducement to invest, causing demand deficiency to arise. As regards the Indian situation, Chakravarty argues that the demand problem got built into the economic system as an important tendency due to growing rigidity in the structure of prices with an upward trend, insufficient generation of employment opportunities, absence of bargaining power on the part of the rural poor, and the myopic character of private investment.

A number of hypotheses have been advanced in the essays of the volume to explain industrial deceleration in India. Thus, the slowdown in industrial growth after the mid-1960s has been attributed to (i) slow growth in agriculture constraining industrial growth from both demand-side and supply-side (for example, in the essays of K.N. Raj and A. Vidyathanan), (ii) slowdown in public investment after the mid-1960s which adversely affected the industrial sector by creating shortages of crucial inputs and infrastructural facilities and by reducing demand for products of heavy industries (T.N. Srinivasan and N.S.S. Narayana), (iii) the exhaustion of import substitution possibilities especially in the capital goods sector putting limits to growth of such industries consumer goods arising from unequal and worsening income distribution (Ranjit Sau and Deepak Nayyar). The last two hypotheses have been seriously questioned by Ashok V. Desai and C. Rangarajan in their essays. Desai has presented empirical evidence to indicate the import substitution in capital goods continued beyond the mid-1960s and that there was no worsening of income distribution. Rangarajan has carefully examined the empirical evidence on the relationship between income distribution and industrial growth and has come to the conclusion that there is little empirical support for the proposition that income distribution inequalities set a limit on industrial growth. Both Desai and Rangarajan have drawn attention to high and

rising capital-output ratios (reflecting inefficiencies in the use of capital) as a factor underlying the slowdown in the growth of industrial production.

It may be mentioned here that [Isher] Ahluwalia in her book *Industrial Growth in India: Stagnation since Mid-Sixties* has made a detailed examination of the various hypotheses concerning the industrial deceleration in India. She has concluded from her empirical analysis that the following four factors contributed to industrial stagnation: (i) slow growth of agricultural incomes, (ii) slowdown in public investment, (iii) poor management of the infrastructural sector, and (iv) the industrial and trade policy framework and their effect in creating a high-cost industrial structure in the economy.

In the introductory essay to the volume, Deepak Nayyar has discussed some strategic issues in industrialisation. He identifies four issues: (i) the relationship between agriculture and industry in the process of development, (ii) the relative importance of internal market and external markets in the process of industrialisation, (iii) the degree and nature of state intervention in the industrialisation process, and (iv) the role of technological development in the process of industrialisation. He also looks at the interaction between demand and supply factors in the process of economic growth and in this context makes comparison among different ways of demand expansion: private-consumption-led, private-investment-led, government-expenditure-led and export-surplus-led expansion. One interesting point Nayyar makes is that "it does not serve much purpose to consider a high marginal capital-output ratio or a slow total factor productivity increase as performance criteria if capital or capacities are underutilised" (p. 11).

Though well-produced, the book has some printing errors and on page 298, the figures on output and input of agriculture and allied activities are inconsistent.

Another point that should be made here is that industrial stagnation came to an end by the end of the 1970s. During the 1980s, Indian industry achieved a high rate of growth comparable to the growth performance during 1956-65. Though following the 1991 crisis, Indian industry has of late been facing a recessionary condition, the future growth prospects may be considered to be as good as that during the 1980s (if not better) in view of the substantial liberalisation of economic policies undertaken in the last few years. One may therefore ask how relevant today are the essays of the volume which discuss a situation very different from the present one. The editor of the volume assures us that though the essays were written in a different context the issues discussed in them remain important even at the present conjuncture.

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Women Workers, Survival Strategies

Jayati Ghosh

LABOUR AND GENDER: SURVIVAL IN URBAN INDIA

By U. Kalpagam

Sage Publications, 1994, pp. 309, Rs. 285.00

The recent proliferation of research into the economics of gender has meant that our understanding of women's role in productive and reproductive processes and in sustaining economic activity is now much richer. Yet even this burgeoning literature typically suffers from either too much abstraction which is often divorced from empirical reality, or an obsession with factual detail which does not bring out the broader analytical implications. It is therefore refreshing to come across a book that manages to avoid both pitfalls, and blends some theoretical discussion with very interesting descriptions of women workers' survival strategies in urban South India.

The strength of Kalpagam's book is that it is fundamentally based on the perception that gender issues cannot be studied in isolation, but must be located within the overall structural context and the dynamics of the macro-economy. It is therefore careful to situate the condition of women workers within particular material and class contexts, and also in relation to different and shifting industrial structures.

Some of the early chapters go through material that is by now well-known but which nonetheless bears repetition: the invisibility of women's work in official statistics and in social perceptions; the ideological construction of the "dependent woman"; the marginalisation of women in the planning process; how the process of globalisation and structural adjustment programmes affect women workers; household dynamics, kinship patterns and their relation to gender politics; forms of population control and control over women versus women's control over their own lives. Kalpagam provides a brief review of literature supplemented by her own understanding of these issues, which is usually balanced.

Her own emphasis is on how women are affected by labour market segmentation in multi-structured industry, with different production structures having different uses for women either directly or indirectly. The logic of change in such a multi-structured context is that there need not be a linear progression to wage labour as in the classic Marxist paradigm.

Rather, the expansion and contraction of forms of production, their transformation and articulation all mean that change in labour relations is a complex process. Similarly, while it is true that women contribute to forming the "reserve army of labour" which is an important disciplining device under capitalism, the form of their involvement depends upon the organisation of industry. Thus, development can often be displacing of female labour rather than leading to a feminisation of work—indeed, either form is possible. In addition, the slow growth of employment and incomes relative to population gives rise to a distinct sphere of activity which Kalpagam calls "the mode of subsistence", in which transactions are not geared to surplus value production but to the generation of subsistence. Kalpagam therefore identifies two distinct but not independent circuits—the circuit of accumulation and the circuit of subsistence—with distinct logic. A linear progression to wage labour in the process of economic evolution would occur only when the circuit of accumulation expands to absorb the circuit of subsistence, but a multi-structured system reproduces both circuits and thus non-linear movement.

That wage earners have a different logic of reproduction from that of capital is obvious and well-known; clearly Kalpagam's argument extends beyond that to make a more specific point. If so, then this argument clearly requires further theoretical elaboration and clarification, which Kalpagam unfortunately does not provide. Its implication for empirical research are however more clear-cut. Ultimately, what all this means is essentially that to understand the dynamics of urban labour markets, it is necessary to study the relation between self-employment and wage employment, movements in the labour force and in participation rates, links (including migration) with the rural sector, and differential earnings in different sectors of the urban labour force.

Some of the most interesting sections of the book deal with empirical studies of different sections of women workers around Madras city. The chapter on female workers in the garment export

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industry in Madras brings out the argument about the complexity of labour processes in the multi-structured context. To her credit, Kalpagam always considers these also in relation to male workers and the general nature of the industry rather than focussing on women in isolation. Another chapter provides some fascinating case studies of very poor workers in Madras city—garbage pickers and domestic servants. The various coping strategies of the very poor are highlighted, as well as the degree of flexibility they are forced to develop in various spheres: in food consumption, in shelter, and so on. Despite all this, Kalpagam points out that the extent of individual manoeuvrability is really quite limited, with the poor per force involved in a complex web of dependency relationships. Such dependency is typically with employers or those immediately above them in the work hierarchy, creditors, kin groups and friends, and the state. Dependence on the state is evident in all spheres, and tellingly, it is almost independent of the degree to which the state actually defends their interests. Thus, public distribution schemes for foodgrains are usually of no use to those with a small daily income, since they simply cannot set aside the amount required for a fortnightly purchase from the PDS shop. "That the state has so many schemes to help the urban poor is taken as proof of its progressive nature; that it does not ensure the survival of all its members is not the state's concern" (p. 227).

Responses from women workers, the possibilities and constraints of mobilising informal sector workers, and the actual experience of the Working Women's Forum in providing credit and other activities, are dealt with in the closing sections of the book. Here too Kalpagam's sanity and balance are admirable, retaining a clear sense of the difficulties of the process even while suggesting grounds for optimism for the future.

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Importance of Durable Interaction

N.S. Siddharthan

TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY IN INDIAN INDUSTRY:
CASE STUDIES ON UTILISATION OF INDIGENOUS R&D

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

Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, in Association with the International Development Research Centre, Canada, 1994, pp. 224 including index, Rs. 150.00

This interesting volume incorporating eleven case studies will prove useful to policy makers, R&D managers and research institutions. The case studies cover a wide range of products developed by diverse R&D institutions ranging from in-house R&D units to National Laboratories. The studies mainly deal with the transfer of technology from R&D institutions to manufacturing units. Additionally, the cases include a fair mixture of successful ones and failures. An attempt has been made to identify and analyse the causes of success and failures, and draw appropriate policy conclusions. The case studies were done in 1987. The major policy changes that took place in 1991 could have made some of the conclusions arrived at based on 1987 data irrelevant. The editors have considered this possibility and have commented, in the introductory chapter on the recent policy changes and discussed their possible implications for the conclusions.

The case studies cover the following products and industries: (1) Fly ash utilisation (building material industry); (2) Chlorosilanes and (3) Monocrotophos (chemicals); (4) Rifampicin and (5) Pyridoxine Hydrochloride (pharmaceuticals); (6) Cocoa Butter Concentrate and (7) Soft Drink concentrate (processed food industry); (8) Diesel Engine ARAI 129 and (9) Diesel Engine TELCO (automobiles); (10) Sponge Iron Process (metals); and (11) Electronic PABX (electronics).

The predominant causes of commercial failures are the lack of close cooperation between the R&D establishments and the manufacturing units after the technology transfer, low emphasis given to commercial factors by the R&D establishments, low volume of production due to the small size of the market, and high price of inputs, in particular, raw materials compared to world prices. Despite identifying the factors responsible for failures, the volume in many cases advocates protection in terms of quantitative ban on imports (of final products) and high import duties.

The following commonalities were found among the successful cases:

All the success cases have some compulsions for using R&D. Firms that transferred technology from National Labs but did not have business or policy compulsions to use them did not succeed in commercialising the technology. One example is fly ash utilisation for building materials. Given the market prices, the use of fly ash had no commercial advantages over the alternatives. Hence, firms that went in for the transfer of this technology did not utilise it. Another example is the development of diesel engine for Standard Motors.

The success cases asked the right business questions in addition to technological questions. They also formulated their research proposals in that light. Firms that mainly concentrated on technological or scientific questions failed commercially. The leading examples are: (i) The development and transfer of technology for the manufacture of Chlorosilanes by NCL to HICO. From the point of view of technology creation and transfer the programme was a success. However, it failed commercially mainly because of the small plant size and the high cost of raw materials. The product was not internationally competitive. (ii) The transfer of technology to produce Rifampicin to Themis Chemicals. The firm was not able to produce the drug at international prices mainly because of the state of the fermenta-

tion industry in India (mostly equipment of 1960s vintage), high cost of inputs and the firm being at the starting point of the learning curve. On the other hand many ventures succeeded mainly because they also took into account commercial parameters. Such examples include production of monocrotophos pesticides, commercialisation of Vitamin B₃ technology, Cocoa Butter Concentrate, and Tata 407 Engine.

All successful ventures have developed very close and durable links with technology/R&D institutions. They have also evolved formal conflict resolution mechanisms between the manufacturing units and the R&D institutions. NCL supplied Vitamin B₃ technology first to the Public Sector Undertaking IDPL and later on to Lupin laboratories. The former was a failure while the latter was a success. Various factors have contributed to the failure of the IDPL venture. The most important being the lack of interaction between NCL and IDPL. "For all practical purposes the scientists at NCL had no involvement in the development and commercialisation of the technology, once the process details had been passed on to IDPL" (p. 102). This was in contrast to the latter case where the two organisations continued their interaction at every stage.

The predominant causes of commercial failures are the lack of close cooperation between the R&D establishments and the manufacturing units after the technology transfer, low emphasis given to commercial factors by the R&D establishments, low volume of production due to the small size of the market, and high price of inputs, in particular, raw materials compared to world prices. Despite identifying the factors responsible for failures, the volume in many cases advocates protection in terms of quantitative ban on imports (of final products) and high import duties. Even in cases where raw material prices pose a serious problem, the report instead of supporting import of materials or promoting development in the input industries so as to make them price and quality competitive, upholds ban on the import of final goods. This would only encourage inefficiency and result in the exploitation of Indian consumers. At least some of their recommendations run counter to their case study results. Furthermore, some of the case studies contain section headings like Discussions, Lessons, and Suggestions while some others have omitted these sections. It would have been useful if all case studies had incorporated those sections. These minor criticisms do not diminish the usefulness of this volume which I hope will encourage researchers to undertake such worthwhile case studies.

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North South Cooperation: Unrealistic Expectations

Partha Sen

REGIME TRANSFORMATIONS AND GLOBAL REALIGNMENTS: INDO-EUROPEAN DIALOGUES ON THE POST-COLD WAR WORLD

Edited by Kanta Ahuja, Huub Coppens and Herman Vander Wusten

Sage Publications, 1993, pp. 413, Rs. 375.00

Major political changes have taken place in the world in the last decade. Socialism, as practised in Eastern Europe, is dead. Socialism, as practised in China, has undergone such major changes that one wonders whether it is in place at all. Western Europe continues to be mired in high unemployment which aggregate demand policies do not seem to be able to cure. Together with this there is an attempt to break down internal barriers to trade and factor movements combined with erecting (non-tariff) barriers against the rest of the world. The American economy is in similar decline. At the same time militarily the American position is unchallenged in the world. One can add other ingredients like the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa.

No one could have predicted ten years ago that such far-reaching changes would take place. In the face of these changes, the big events of the sixties and seventies like the Vietnam war, the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, the oil price shocks, etc. pale into insignificance.

The book under review seeks to address the implications of these events for the various blocs of nations. It is the eleventh volume in the Indo-Dutch Studies on Development Alternatives, and is the outcome of a conference held in the Netherlands in December 1992.

The common theme in this book, in so far as there is one, is about flows to the developing countries in the light of the far-reaching changes, political and economic that have occurred in the world in the last decade. I believe that those who expect large flows of funds from the OECD countries to the Third World are living in a dream world. For example, there is no prospect of carbon emission permits on a per capita basis seeing the light of day. Similarly those who believe that suddenly South-South co-operation will materialize out of thin air will have their hopes dashed (daily!) (the pious pronouncements on relevance of a nonaligned group

Over the last ten years there has been a positive (net) official flow from the South to the North and there is nothing that one can see on the horizon which is going to reverse this movement significantly. Whether one likes it or not the model for the foreseeable future is one where Southern countries get integrated with one or the other economic blocs in the North. This process, unfortunately, is occurring with increased protectionist and xenophobic sentiments in the North.

by our Prime Minister, quoted at length on p. 216, notwithstanding). Over the last ten years there has been a positive (net) official flow from the South to the North and there is nothing that one can see on the horizon which is going to reverse this movement significantly. Whether one likes it or not the model for the foreseeable future is one where Southern countries get integrated with one or the other economic bloc in the North. This process, unfortunately, is occurring with increased protectionist and xenophobic sentiments in the North.

I approached the task of reviewing this book with great trepidation. One would need to be a renaissance man (and more) to claim expertise in all the areas that the chapters in the book seek to

discuss. They cover Eastern Europe, North-South issues, non-alignment, India and the SAARC, the green house effect, the role of the United Nations and (the title of the final chapter which deserves to be quoted in full) globalization, civilizational traditions and multiple modernities.

I need not have worried. Most of the topics are handled very superficially. Only two of the papers are over twenty pages in length. Some chapters are ten pages or less. Not that the length of a paper constitutes merit in itself but it allows for the possibility of examining a topic in depth. Let me first turn briefly to the credit side of the ledger. There are some chapters which are thought-provoking surveys of the field. The chapter by Linneman, on

the kind of economic cooperation developing countries should strive for, deals with the issues in a concise manner. Jepma's chapter on the implications of alternative policies in Eastern Europe on welfare in the rest of the world is also a good piece of political economy. The only problem with this chapter—something that it shares with other studies which use simulations—is that the results are not independent of the model used. It would be useful for the reader to see the model (although the Appendix outlines its salient features). Interestingly the model lists East Timor as part of South Asia.

Most of the chapters on India are focussed and hence useful. This is especially true of the chapter by Sarma and Mehta on India's exports to the EC. They provide a good summary of the problems that Indian exports have to overcome when both the nature of the European market is changing and the Indian economy is becoming increasingly outward-looking. The chapters by Ahuja and Tendulkar discuss various aspects of planning and industrial growth (or lack thereof) in India since independence. While there is not much new here they do bring out the issues involved very clearly.

I finally ask a question: Should a book of this type be published at all? Or alternately: who benefits from the publi-

cation of such a book in the case of a book such as this? I cannot see the average reader gaining anything. The average length of a paper is about fifteen pages. Given that this is an Indo-Dutch project, the Dutch participants spend a lot of time explaining European issues to the Indian audience and Indians do likewise (e.g., the backdrop to the Second Five Year Plan and even listing the constituent members of SAARC!). Geographically the average reader of an Indo-Dutch project lives in Turkish Kurdistan! The point I am trying to make is that with an average length of fifteen pages per paper and after the other party has been familiarized with the name of Mahalonobis one has about eight to ten pages left to do justice to a complicated topic, which is nowhere near enough. This is not a criticism one could level against the previous volumes in this series. Reading these volumes, one cannot but be critical of the tendency to publish conference proceedings indiscriminately. The conference participants would not be averse to having their papers published, the publisher is happy if some grant accompanies the manuscript. The catch lies in that the expense involved is probably counted as Dutch foreign aid to India!

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Development Transformation and State Policy

EDITORS P. TERHAL, J.G. DE VRIES

The Centre for Development Planning, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, has substantially contributed towards development research and creation of planning techniques during its existence of 25 years.

The papers in this volume address various issues currently relevant to development planning and exhibit a broad, thematic, and methodological variety.

PET TERHAL, formerly Director of the Centre for Development Planning of the Erasmus University, Rotterdam, has studied Indian economic development extensively. J.G. DE VRIES studied development economics at the Centre for Development Planning and has been a research assistant at the same Institute.

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Studies of Indian Jewish Identity

EDITED BY NATHAN KATZ

This book about Indian Jewish identity is an attempt at 'self definition'. It raises basic questions like—who the Jews of India are, are they Jewish or Indian? It then proceeds to answer them by delving deep into cultural mechanisms by which India's Jews came to define themselves and how they were defined by others. In doing this it explores the conditions by which a group's identity is established and maintained, how it responds to changing conditions and how it anticipates and structures a future.

NATHAN KATZ, the editor of this volume, is Professor of Religious Studies at Florida International University in Miami, U.S.A.

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PROFESSOR T.N. MADAN, formerly editor of *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, is a senior member of the faculty at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi.

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RAMA S. MELKOTE is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Centre for Area Studies, Osmania University, Hyderabad. Her areas of interest are African Politics, Political Theory and International Relations.

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DESIDERIO PINTO

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DESIDERIO PINTO, S.J., teaches at Vidyajyoti, Institute of Religious Studies, Delhi, and Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune.

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GEOFFREY A. ODDIE

According to Durkheim, even those rites which may appear "barbarous and bizarre" express "some human need, some aspect of life be it individual or social."

A graduate of the universities of Melbourne and London, Geoffrey A. Oddie is a Senior Lecturer in the University of Sydney. He has written extensively on religious and social developments in nineteenth and early twentieth century India.

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Overarching Patterns of State Structure

Harish Khare

DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITARIANISM IN SOUTH ASIA

By Ayesha Jalal

Cambridge University Press, Foundation Books, 1995, pp. 295, Rs. 385.00

This brilliant work becomes, in the last, a victim of what can only be called the analytical equivalent of "ungovernability", a concept that defines so evocatively the collective arrangements in South Asia. It requires supreme confidence, bordering on intellectual brazenness, to want to impose a sense of analytical order on the trials and tribulations of over 116,00,00,000 in forging political economies of the most varied varieties, spread over five decades. The result inevitably is a mixed bag of scintillating insights, sweeping generalisations, and analytical compromises. More of the inadequacies later.

This work merits special attention because it is perhaps the most serious offering of the second generation of South Asian scholars, or rather of the Non-Resident South Asian variety, who seem to have come of age. The era of Myron Weiners, Stanley Kochanek and Rudolphs is regrettably over. In particular, the second generation believes it has to prove that it is capable of the same, and presumably desirable, "objectivity" and detachment that would characterise the work of a western South Asian hand and yet bringing to its inquiry a sensitivity and insight that would elude a firang observer. On both counts Ms. Ayesha Jalal performs superlatively. She is joyfully unburdened with obligations of either the "modernization" or "system-building" or "guardians of the State" paradigm. She travels light.

Rather originally Ms. Jalal does a fairly convincingly job of imposing a *leitmotif* to the entire subcontinent—the three political systems that were once governed from one centre but now find themselves in autonomous modes. She discovers that "political and economic developments, [in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh] and ideological responses to them, are showing ostensible signs of convergence". She departs from the traditional concern of South Asian scholars with political parties and formal democratic structures to focus on "a covert authoritarianism inherent in the state structure".

Ms. Jalal's basic thesis is that both in India and Pakistan the civil society has been short-changed by the state struc-

ture. She discovers that the unquestionably exalted status accorded to the nation-state and the need to uphold the authority structure of the state combine to breed institutionalized authoritarianism. She traces most of the problems in the subcontinent to this blind acceptance of the claims—moral and ideological—made in the name of inviolability of the state structure: the bind has necessarily deflected from the task of accomplishing an agenda of "redistributive reforms"; it has been abetting the erosion and eventual strangulation of local and regional autonomy. What is more, neither India nor Pakistan dismantled the coercive apparatus of a centralised colonial state; both went about systematically bolstering up the very coercive apparatus against which the nationalist movements had revolted— notwithstanding the formal democratic structure in India.

In establishing the correctness of her central thesis, Ms. Jalal deploys three major arguments. And all three are problematic. First, she argues for a de-legitimisation of the nation-state. She finds the very construct of nation-state in the subcontinent "artificial" and calls for "a sustained critique of the state in post-colonial South Asia." She breaks ranks to lament that "mindful of being labelled 'anti-state', 'traitor', and 'terrorist', many in the domain of knowledge for different reasons guarded their limited autonomy by succumbing to the dictums of the nation-state, especially its project of retroactively constructing the narrative of an inclusionary nationalism to counter colonialism's insidious legacy of dividing and ruling".

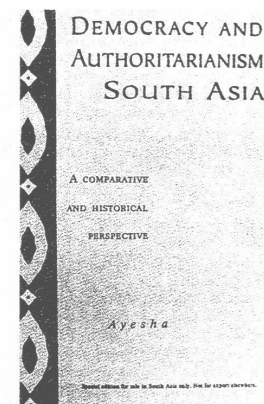
Ms. Jalal's second argument follows from the first: she questions the tenability of the ideology of sovereignty. Proclaiming her unwillingness to give in to "the determinisms of political geography and the imaginings of sacred mythology", Ms. Jalal finds it ironic that "the ideology of sovereignty" survived the "agonizing political division of the subcontinent and was sought to be replicated at the central apexes of two independent sovereign states" (p. 28). She further finds it "a supreme irony of the times that a region with a long history of working out crea-

tive political arrangements based on layers of sovereignty appears today to have declared sovereignty a non-negotiable issue".

Belabouring the obvious point that in the subcontinent there were "nations" but no modern "state", she proceeds to insist that the nation-state does not deserve to be deified because the arrangement has failed to deliver the goods. In India, according to her, the nation-state stands de-legitimised because it has been deified by recalcitrant peripheries. "In any case, the writ of the centre in such troubled peripheries as Kashmir, Punjab, and Assam has for some time been maintained by the coercive arms of the state, including the 'apolitical' Indian military". Insistence on a "monolithic national ideology" by centralised states in South Asia has not produced any national unity. The evocation of an "inclusionary nationalism" has neither produced "evolution of collective ethos" nor has helped in "accommodation of distinctive but significant strands of local and regionally defined belief systems and practices".

In her diagnosis this "alien concept of indivisible sovereignty" has been the virus gnawing away at the collective vitality and creativity in the subcontinent. This is the single most crucial source of coercion and other disasters in the South Asian political economies. "Having appropriated the concept of monolithic sovereignty from the colonial era, the post-colonial state in both India and Pakistan attempted to give currency to a welter of idioms capable of transcending the bounds of locality and region. Partly tweezed out of the ideational features present in local and regional social formations these were cast in a rigid mould once they were sought to be transformed into ideological pillars of state monoliths. This explains why despite their inclusionary claims state-sponsored national ideologies have tended to be almost exclusionary in social impact". Those who chose not to fall in line with this ideology of sovereignty are made to see reason by the coercive arms of the state.

Related to the first two arguments is Ms. Jalal's third major assertion: democratic content, if not entirely bogus, has



Ms. Jalal's basic thesis is that both in India and Pakistan the civil society has been short-changed by the state structure. She discovers that the unquestionably exalted status accorded to the nation-state and the need to uphold the authority structure of the state combine to breed institutionalized authoritarianism.

remained confined to a formal ritual in Indian State structural arrangement. This is the most provocative contention in Ms. Jalal's work. She finds not much to choose between a formalistic democratic India and an overtly authoritarian Pakistan. Towards the end she concludes that "the lack of electoral exercises in Pakistan is oft-cited as the main factor ensuring the infirmity of political processes. Yet the lessons from India serve as a warning against sanguinely interpreting periodic references to the people as sufficient evidence of a thriving democratic pulse".

Rather refreshingly not only does she refuse to join "the scholarly chorus to celebrate Nehru's achievements in putting India on the road to democracy" but is also not enamoured of too much accent and attention on the Congress. She wants to be different because already "a focus on the Congress, rising or falling, has seen a succession of political scientists of India writing in a manner reminiscent of the old historians of empire". She holds the Congress leadership responsible for espousing "a composite nationalism

based on an indivisible sovereign central authority" even after finding it politically expedient to abandon the commitment to India's geographical unity.

Ms. Jalal finds India's secularism rather skin-deep; its Centre-state relations a far cry from the "promised culturally sensitive democratic federalism"; its reliance on non-elected institutions like the civil service, police and army as evidence of authoritarian coercion. She declares that "having lost much of its democratic gloss ever since the waning of Mrs. Gandhi's populist politics, the Indian state in the 1990s has become even more tractable in comparison with the over-authoritarianism of military dominated Pakistan and Bangladesh".

These three major arguments are based on three sub-themes evident throughout in Ms. Jalal narrative: (1) that the post-colonial state was doomed to an authoritarian streak because it chose to retain much of the administrative structure—including its coercive laws—of the colonial state; (2) that rather than focussing on the periodic recourse to elections, the correct criterion for "democratic" content in any state structure would be the nature of relationship between the elective and non-elective institutions; and, (3) that centralisation of powers amounts to authoritarianism.

To take up the last sub-theme first, Ms. Jalal fails to substantiate what she calls "the centralizing imperatives of the existing Indian State structure". Her assertion, for example, about Indira Gandhi's fear of "a populist regional challenge against the centre" is not empirically established; on the one hand she attests to the clout of regional elites, (without propitiating whom "no political configuration could expect to govern from New Delhi"); on the other, she finds something amiss in Indira Gandhi's effort to meet the challenge of the rising regional forces.

No less unsubstantiated is Ms. Jalal's insistence on elevating the Indian bureaucracy to the same level of autonomy that the civil service and army enjoyed in Pakistan. In fact, this key argument in her overall "authoritarian India" theme is the weakest and entirely wrong. Ms. Jalal posits a relationship of "partnership" between the civil services and the political leadership. In her view Nehru's state socialism was an exercise in "suckering the appetite of state officials as well as the bigbags of Indian capitalism"; Shastri "clutches at the arms of the higher civil service in India" in order to meet the challenge of the "syndicate"; and, again, Indira Gandhi "turned to elements within the bureaucracy" in order to reverse the Congress fortunes after the 1967 elections" (p. 47). There is just no evidence to suggest that the V.P. Menons, L.K. Jhas, V.P. Singhs or P.N. Haksars ever entertained the notion of equality, leave alone defiance, of the political leadership, even when its waywardness was all too palpable.

The only explanation that can be offered for this strange argument is that she has thoroughly misunderstood the nature and track record of the two all-India services, the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service. While it is true that the two administrative cadres are selected on an all-India basis, and that there is stipulation of "deputation" to the Centre, it strains credulity and scholarship to assert, for example, that Mrs Indira Gandhi could manipulate Congress factions in the states because of "a greater confidence in centrally appointed state governors, and, of course, members of the IAS and the IPS".

Ironically it is only in the 1990s that Ms. Jalal's assertion of an autonomous role for the Indian bureaucracy comes to pass, how a handful of bureaucrats, in collaboration with international players—World Bank, IMF and American and western "capital"—could pry loose the Indian policy-making from the emotional rigidities of the nation-state and joyfully give in to the demands of globalisation.

Ms. Jalal makes much of India and Pakistan retaining the administrative structure of the colonial era. It indeed sounds somewhat incongruous that laws like the criminal procedure code should

Ms. Jalal finds India's secularism rather skin-deep; its Centre-state relations a far cry from the "promised culturally sensitive democratic federalism"; its reliance on non-elected institutions like the civil service, police and army as evidence of authoritarian coercion.

continue to be based on the original foundation laid in the 19th century by a colonial regime. But Ms. Jalal is not sufficiently mindful of the fact that only an intensely revolutionary regime can afford the uncertainty and chaos of discarding the trappings of the older regime. And neither the Indian National Congress nor the Muslim League leadership pretended to revolutionary credentials of a Mao or an Ayatollah Khomeini.

If Ms. Jalal is able to discover an overarching pattern of latent authoritarianism in entire South Asia it is because she chooses not to pay sufficient attention to the different consequences in India and Pakistan of an anti-colonial legacy. It can

be reasonably argued that because of a "mass" nationalist movement, spread over three decades, a prestige accrued to the Indian political leadership which was used to establish a position of hegemony over the bureaucracy, the feudal elements, the princely class, and the industrialists. By the same reckoning, it can be argued that in the absence of a reasonably ennobling struggle for a Muslim homeland the new managers of Pakistani State were at a disadvantage against the civil service and army.

Similarly, a major flaw in her narrative is her failure to explain why various elements in Pakistan were able to gain the upper hand because of their international linkages and why a similar phenomenon did not take place in India. This again can be attributed to her failure to grasp the ideological, intellectual and political edge that accrued to the Congress leadership from the nationalist struggle. It is only in the 1990s when the national struggle syndrome has totally petered out that international linkages have become crucial in the Indian political economy.

The burden of Ms. Jalal's narrative is that the arrangements in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh have "failed". But she does not indicate in any coherent fashion what would be the standards of an ideal state structure, though strewn through her narrative are various yardsticks: "democratization entails the capacity to resist and renegotiate relations of power and privilege", "socio-economic reform aimed at eliminating poverty, discrimination and exploitation", "redistributive reforms", "rights of equal citizenship", and "effective institutionalisation of citizenship rights". These are simple elements of good governance in a liberal framework. Not the most imaginative of notions.

She does not subscribe to any coherent ideological school and takes the easy way out of debunking the South Asian arrangement. It is no surprise that she romanticises "people" and "spontaneity". She finds inherent merit in any social group a "asserting the ideology of difference with a vengeance". This celebration of "ideology of difference" leads her to suggest that any time any group entertains "feeling of neglect, injustice and exclusion" it acquires an inherent right to legitimacy. In fact, if Ms. Jalal had cared to examine the "movements" pursuing the "ideology of difference", she would find that not many of them can pass the test of her own good governance. In the absence of such analysis, Ms. Jalal's brilliant labours seem to add up to a recipe for an endless balkanisation of the nation-states in South Asia—an agenda very much in conformity with the demands of a new world order being choreographed from Washington.

Harish Khare is Deputy Chief of Bureau, The Hindu, New Delhi.

Are All Peasants Reactionaries?

Prem Shankar Jha

DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND THE COUNTRYSIDE: URBAN-RURAL STRUGGLES IN INDIA

By Ashutosh Varshey

Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 225, Rs. 595.00

Are peasants intrinsically opposed to industrialisation, or can situations exist in which they become passive if not enthusiastic allies of the new industrialising elites? Traditional political economy led to the conclusion that peasants are against industrialisation because they were among the first to be marginalised by the process of industrialisation. In fact, based on the experience of England, most political economists of the nineteenth century and economic historians of this one have concluded that a prior marginalisation of the peasantry is a precondition of the industrial revolution because it both increases agrarian surpluses which can be sold in the burgeoning towns and provides the cheap labour that industry needs. Early development theory faithfully converted this historical experience into a normative prescription.

A number of more specifically political corollaries flow from this perception: firstly, that in a democratic regime the peasantry will resist policies that promote industrialisation. Consequently either democracy or industrialisation may have to be given up or at least slowed down. Add to this the seldom questioned maxim that democracy is itself a product of the emergent bourgeoisie in an industrialising country, and one gets the conclusion that the promotion of democracy requires the suppression of the peasantry.

If these maxims were invariably true, industrial growth in India should have ground to a halt sometime in the eighties at the very latest. For here democracy was introduced in 1947, and universal franchise first exercised in 1951. Peasant power as a distinct force in the polity first manifested itself at the end of the sixties, and grew rapidly until it became a dominant force in the eighties, and is now one of the constants of Indian politics. But instead of being choked, economic growth which was a lackluster 3.6 per cent in the fifties and sixties, accelerated to 4.5 per cent in the mid seventies, and further to 5.5 per cent in the eighties. The growth in the output of manufactures recorded a much steeper increase till it touched 12.6 per cent in May 1990, before the Gulf war and the subsequent economic crisis.

Why is India an exception to the conventional view of the role of the peasantry in development? This is the question that Ashutosh Varshney of Harvard University sets out to answer in this many-layered book. At the risk of oversimplification, Varshney's answer can be summed up as follows: The mobilisation of the peasantry was highly successful, but it did not take the form of an all out confrontation with the industrial strata, in a classic town-versus-country confrontation for three reasons: First, the poverty of the country. This forced the State to take a macro-economic view of its policies, in which the need to generate savings for investment and to minimise inflation acted as powerful brakes on the temptation of politicians to woo the powerful farm lobby at any cost. Second: the self-limiting nature of class allegiance within the peasantry. Varshney points out that while they were capable of and did press for specific policies, especially in the eighties which saw the emergence of leaders who openly espoused the farmers' interests and sought to convert these into macro-economic policy, they were also pulled in different directions by a host of other pulls—especially caste, ethnicity and religion. These multiple, conflicting pulls prevented the consolidation of leaders who represented the farmers/peasantry (the two terms are used sometimes interchangeably and to others to distinguish commercial from subsistence farmers) as a class beyond a point. Third: rapid technological progress in agriculture throughout this period. This led to a continuous improvement in the incomes of the farmers which in turn blunted the edge of class conflict.

To Varshney, the third belongs to a subsidiary order of explanation, which he develops to rebut the Indian left's argument that notwithstanding the green revolution, the 'urban bias' of Indian development has ensured that the peasants have 'lost out' despite their impressive political mobilisation. As a result it does not find any mention in the introductory chapter where Varshney lays out his thesis, but only emerges in Chapter 6, where he discusses whether rural India lost out. In many ways, however, it is the most important finding of his book. By juxtaposing calculations of the terms of trade for agriculture, which did not change significantly between the late sixties and the late eighties, and the return per acre from paddy and wheat in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, he has shown that farmers' real incomes kept rising even when their profit margin per quintal of produce was falling. This happened because the rise in yield per hectare outpaced the fall in profit margin. This is perhaps the most important single reason why peasant mobilisation did not progress beyond a point.

Varshney has laid out, in a systematic way the current theories relating the peasantry to industrialisation and democracy, the economic conditions that led to

the empowerment of the peasantry at the tail end of the sixties, the rise of peasant power in the seventies and its consolidation and its partial depoliticisation in the eighties. Equally interesting is the manner in which he chooses to analyse these shifts. Instead of inferring the rise of peasant power from the shifts in the economic policy of successive governments, he goes into the decision-making process and the inter-bureaucratic disputes that preceded each important change. Thus he is able to chart not only the impact of rising peasant power on policy but its modernisation by other pressure groups.

The most fascinating of the conflicts that Varshney has analysed is the one between the planning commission, supported by the Finance ministry, and the ministry of agriculture, that preceded the change of agricultural strategy in 1964-65. This change, from relying on institutional reform to increase agricultural output (while systematically denying the farmer any market incentives), to relying on market incentives and price induced technological change virtually determined the future of free India, for it ushered in the green revolution. Varshney's account is illuminating because it reveals as no other treatise has done so far, how very nearly it did not take place. He debunks the notion that the World Bank, or President Lyndon Johnson, were responsible for it, and brings out the extent that C. Subramaniam, then the agriculture minister, was responsible for pushing it through. His account of the conflict reveals the dangerous lengths to which the Indian left was prepared to pursue its pet theories in sublime disregard of all empirics. It also shows that the stranglehold of the ideologues of the Left was not loosened all at once by the economic crisis of 1991, but in two stages—first on agriculture in 1965 and only the second being on industry and trade in 1985-91.

Varshney's methodology however has its drawbacks. While it sheds valuable light on the central paradox that he sets out to explore, it does not provide a complete explanation for the most puzzling feature of peasant mobilisation in India, its partial depoliticisation in the eighties. A close look at Varshney's own extensive research suggests a convergent explanation, which differs in a few important respects from the one he has arrived at.

The main index that Varshney has used for the terms of trade, the price of agricultural products as a percentage of the price of industrial products, is an annual index built up by three year moving average of these annual figures gives a clearer picture of the movement of the terms of trade, and confirms that between 1971 and 1989, there was no perceptible systematic shift in them. But the annual movements are not, as Varshney puts it, a random walk. They show unambiguously that despite the impressive mobilisation of the peasantry in the seventies and eighties, the main determinant of the terms of

trade for agriculturists remained the monsoons. Given that market prices rise the ratio of agricultural to non-agricultural prices showed a marked improvement in the years after a poor monsoon, and deteriorated after a good one. Thus it rose to a marked peak between 1972-73 and 1975-76 under the impact of a drought in 1972 and a poor monsoon in 1974. Under the impact of three good monsoons it fell till 1980-81, then rose again under the impact of a drought in 1979-80 and a long dry period in the first half of the eighties that culminated in the drought of 1987. Varshney did not carry the series on further than 1988-89 but had he done so he would have seen another fall caused by the string of good monsoons in the nineties. The moving average also reveals a slight downward trend between 1972-73 and 1988-89 that the 12-monthly ratio tends to conceal. This may account for a trend that Varshney does not discuss in his book, perhaps because it became more marked in the nineties. This is a 2 per cent annual fall in acreage under cereal crops and a 2.2 per cent annual increase in area under cash crops.

The conclusion these figures point to is that despite their numerical preponderance and impressive mobilisation, the peasantry remained essentially defensive through the 25 years discussed by Varshney and the 30 years covered in this review. All that their mobilisation achieved was to put a floor under the price of their main crops. Since at most one-third of the marketable surplus of food-grains, taking surplus and deficit years together was sold to the government, two thirds of even the food economy remained at the mercy of market forces. Add to this the fact that during this period from 40 to 52 per cent of agricultural output was of cash crops where protection through support prices was fitful, and coverage incomplete, and it becomes clear that it is market forces rather than government fiat, born of peasant pressure, that has determined the limits of peasant action and therefore in the final analysis prevented peasant mobilisation from becoming the enemy of industrialisation. Peasants moreover have been aware of these limits to their power. That, more than their divergent socio-political loyalties, is probably why, once the protection of agriculture through support prices and later subsidies, became institutionalised to the extent that it became a given for all political parties, further mobilisation lost its purpose in their eyes. Finally, it is because of their awareness of their weakness that farmers have relied on technology, including shifting out of food and into cash crops, to improve their lot, more than on political mobilisation.

Prem Shankar Jha, columnist to *The Hindu* and *Business Standard*, is the author of *India: Political Economy of Stagnation (OUP, 1980)* and *In The Eye Of The Cyclone (Viking, 1993)*.

Descent Into Illegality

Rajeev Dhavan

JUDGING THE STATE: COURTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL POLITICS IN PAKISTAN

By Paula R. Newberg
Cambridge University Press,
Foundation Books, 1995, pp. 250,
Rs. 375.00

Pakistan has been in a virtual state of *de jure* and *de facto* constitutional emergency since its accidental birth in 1947. Its political and constitutional system has never settled down to acquire concrete shape and its institutions of governance have been guzzled by relatively incompetent military officers and for that matter overambitious civilians incapable of constitutional discipline. In the famed *Asma Jilani* Case Justice Yaqub Ali talked of the "... the history of constitutional mishaps which befell Pakistan between 1953 and 1969 bringing ruin and untold miseries to its 120 million people". Even—in fact especially, the judiciary was not able to discipline these 'mishaps' into legality and converted "a perfectly good country... into a laughing-stock". It is this somewhat contorted story which Paula Newberg, a political scientist with enviable and insistent energy, canvasses with speed, but not necessarily haste, in this book.

Whilst India's Constituent Assembly produced a lengthy, but, not on that count unwieldy Constitution by 1950, Pakistan was not able to do so even though this task should have been relatively easier for them since they had to pledge less complex interests together. A presidential usurpation of powers before 1956 resulted in the *Maulvi Tamizuddin* Case (1955-6) whereby the Federal Court led by Justice Munir (over a Justice Cornelius dissent) denied, *inter alia*, judicial review. Nor did the situation improve with the Court's answer to the *Reference* of 1955 which (as Newberg puts it) "provided a firmer foundation for (the Governor General's) ... authority". Here, too, we see, Justice Munir echoing the view that 'necessity' could validate *bona fide* emergencies! No sooner did Pakistan's India-style 1956 Constitution surface, it was taken over and nullified by the Ayub Khan 1958 Order. The Supreme Court's response in *Dosso's* case (1958) represents

the foundations of the most dangerous constitutional doctrine of the twentieth century: *The doctrine of necessity*. Such a doctrine must strike terror in the hearts of every person who believes in democratic legality and is a gift to every usurper to obtain judicial blessings for subverting the very Constitution from which the judges themselves derived power, authority and status. 'Necessity', here, does not mean making an otherwise valid Constitution work by allowing a dispensation of some otherwise mandatory aspect in order to ensure that the constitutional show is not thwarted because of some impossible circumstances. In this narrower sense, and drawing inspiration from the *factum valet* doctrine, Cyprus Courts in *Mustafa Ibrahim's Case* (1964) allowed the judicial administration to continue even though the full complement of validity appointed judges did not exist. Again, Indian courts in *Gokuraja's case* have used necessity to validate the actions of incompetently appointed judges. But *Dosso* was not dealing with validating a minor infirmity but an abrogation of the Constitution itself. The usurper sought legality and judicial validation. *Dosso* gave it to him using a twisted version of Kelson's *grund norm* theory. That theory traces the validity of a Constitution to a *grund norm* (or a set of suppositions from which the entire legal system derives validity). But in order to ensure that a *grund norm* is not a private dream but a public reality it needs to be efficacious without which it would be an idea and not an effective foundation for the legal system. At the same time, while the validity of a system had to be grounded in efficacy, (which is a matter of common sense), it does not follow that every efficacious system is valid. If that were so, every political goonda or the mafia will claim to be possessed of a valid legal system. Equally, every unconstitutional *fait accompli* contrived by whatsoever means would be entitled to validation. By reversing the *validity-efficacy* equation in Kelson's theory, the Pakistan courts in 1958 laid the foundations of a pro-usurper jurisprudence from which (despite subsequent modifications in *Asma Jilani* and other cases) it has never been able to wrest itself.

Marital law in 1969 created another 'revolutionary' change. Since the old valid dispensation was no longer efficacious and the new efficacious usurpation was not valid, logically *Dosso* would be ap-

plied in favour of the usurper. *Asma Jilani* did not quite break the Gordian knot. The Court pronounced the usurpation unconstitutional but validated necessitous actions. There was some comfort in this in that the Court did not—at least—give its blessings to the illegal take-over. Yet, by extending 'necessity' (in the narrower sense) to the very existence of the usurper regime (which, in fact, was extending necessity to its semi-widest limits), the Court had withheld only its blessings and very little else. Yet if *Zia-ur Rahman's Case* (1972) built on foundations similar to *Asma Jilani*, to make what Newberg calls "an equally awkward but workable distinction between condonation and legitimacy" and asserted judicial integrity and the power of judicial review, it failed to break the back of usurper jurisprudence. The Pakistan courts had first to assert their judicial review which they slowly tried in the post-1972 *Sindh Language Riot cases* (1973) and the *Court Martial Conspiracy Case* of 1975. Newberg rightly points out that the Court Martial cases, the Reference on the National Awami Party (1975) and the *Hyderabad Conspiracy case* "did not confront the problems facing civilians in martial law tribunals... (and) enlarged this legal lacuna".

The situation did not improve after *Zia-ul-Haq's* usurpation of power in 1977. The necessity doctrine—in its now sophisticated incarnation—returned to plague its inventors: the judges themselves. Too much cannot be claimed for the *Nusrat Bhutto* judgement (1977) whose *dicta* may temporarily enthrall. Yet, even the ingenious lawyer—Atizaz Ahsan—in the post-*Nusrat* cases was only able to draw juristic strength from claiming that condonation did not confer legitimacy. That, too, was contested by the lone dissent of Justice M. Afzal Lone in *Mustafa Khar's case* (1988) who felt that "necessity can confer on a de-facto ruler at the most the same power as exercised by a de-jure functionary". After 1988, judicial powers found a new flavour but not necessarily full-fledged strength. *Benazir Bhutto's case* (1988) is more a plea for judicial review and a dignified critique of the sad circumstances that has brought Pakistan to this constitutional state. Finally, the famous *Dissolution* cases which restored the unconstitutionally dissolved Assembly add dimension to judicial ingenuity.

The book tells the story of Pakistan's descent into illegality and tells it well—occasionally diluting the legal discourse

The book tells the story of Pakistan's descent into illegality and tells it well—occasionally diluting the legal discourse into simplicity and sometimes failing to recognise that the legal argument is an objective representation of political interests. But, it tells the story with American kindness which is more than visible in so many American discourses and policy formulations about Pakistan.

into simplicity and sometimes failing to recognise that the legal argument is an objective representation of political interests. But, it tells the story with American kindness which is more than visible in so many American discourses and policy formulations about Pakistan. Newberg should have looked at the doctrine of necessity in other locations to demonstrate its use and abuse. It was used in Ghana in 1966, Nigeria in 1969; and, most importantly, rejected by the Privy Council (in England) which refused to validate the racist regime in the then Rhodesia, and refused further to recognise even a divorce granted by the courts of that regime. No doubt, England ruled Rhodesia by remote control and the Privy Council judges were not located in Rhodesia. But Newberg has not really examined the juristic dilemmas of judges who are forced to give legality to a usurper regime. Had she done so, a more sensitive account may have surfaced. Newberg also fails to examine in any detail the manner and extent to which judicial appointments sought to doctor the judiciary. Apart from one or two cursory comments, there is little on this. But, most important, Newberg's analysis seems more descriptive than conceptual. While she can be excused from the responsibility of being drawn into the pure legal arguments, a book of this nature needs something on the judiciary as an institution of State. In my Delhi lectures, I argued that the judiciary is a hybrid institution—partly a bureaucracy and partly a market-sensitive institution whose agenda is more than partly set by the litigants who use its jurisdiction. In its bureaucratic incarnation, the judiciary is an institution of State aligned with the Executive, conservative in outlook and legalistic in its imagination. In its 'market' incarnation it becomes very much an activist institution—never quite able to shed its bureaucratic style but giving edge to activist challenges. Newberg rightly points out that the leading cases virtually portray a list of the country's political elite. What has happened—and that is no less true of India—is that the higher judiciary in Pakistan has come to be recognised as a possible arena of political struggle—at least (and, that itself is a beginning), one to which the political elite take their political disputes.

The judiciary becomes the obvious *situs* of struggle when all other institutions fail. But, what Newberg fails to do is tell us of the intrinsic strength of the Pakistan judiciary to take on this challenge. The Malaysian *debacle* in the eighties is a reminder that judiciaries with long records of sustained strength can collapse overnight without redemption. So, we end up knowing a great deal about the struggle but not about the people and the institutions crucial to its sustenance. It is in this sense that the book treats the entire period (1947-94) *en bloc* without pointing to the transformative changes in the judiciary itself. We know more about the in-depth quality of the Pakistan cricket team than its judiciary!

Indian writing on the judiciary has tended to be more detailed and more expansive. That may be because we have a larger academia. But, increasingly, writing on the judiciary seems to concentrate on the consequences of judicial decisions rather than on the legal discourse through which the decisions are made. No doubt that legal discourse must be deconstructed, but consequential analysis is not the only mechanism of such de-construction. Newberg reminds us of how little we know of our neighbour and how much more we need to know about the judiciary as an increasingly crucial institution for the democratic State. At times, the American kindness of the book replaces analysis. At the most crucial stages of its constitutional life, Pakistan's judiciary appears to have been made to measure, capitulating to provide not just condonation but legality and legitimacy to usurpers. The constitutional history of Pakistan is enmeshed in the irresistible rise of this usurper jurisprudence. Hopefully, a renewed Pakistan will see its judiciary seeking new democratic pastures with zeal and integrity. But we do not know because even after reading Newberg's fine book we do not know enough about the factors and circumstances that give pride of place to Pakistan's judiciary in its system of governance.

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Proliferating Gandhiana

M.V. Desai

GANDHI'S RESPONSES TO ISLAM

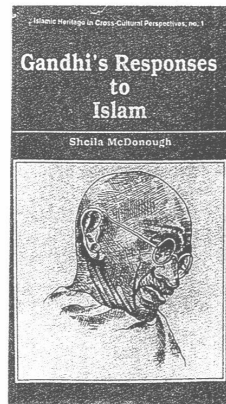
By Sheila McDonough

DK Printers, Delhi, pp. 133, Rs. 140.00

GANDHI ORDAINED IN SOUTH AFRICA

By J.N. Uppal

Publications Division, New Delhi, pp. 443, Rs. 165.00



On the eve of the official observance of the 126th Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi on 2nd October 1995, publishers have taken advantage of the occasion and responded in their own fashion to the spirit of the times. So we have had two books on Gandhiji's life and philosophy, *Gandhiji and Existentialism and Mahatma Gandhi and His Impact on Mauritius*. What still remains to be compiled is a people's oral history of modern India to which almost every middle-class family should be able to contribute worthwhile reminiscences of not just MKG and the family, but how the elders were moved to ply the charkha, stages by which Khadi became the livery of freedom and how people gave up jobs to be able to wear Khadi, why they no longer thought it right to look upon anybody as a lesser human being and untouchable, or when Gandhi came into their dwellings to inquire after one's health and to look into the toilet for cleanliness.

This is how, if Gandhi's life is a story of a struggle and sacrifices to remove poverty, injustice and exploitation, its glory lies etched in every thinking Indian's family history.

Among these books, some of specialist interest and others to be dismissed as tracts for the times, these two stand out as scholarly exceptions of wide and lasting appeal. Sheila McDonough's is the first in a learned series on Islamic heritage in cross-cultural perspectives. She makes her acquaintance with Gandhi and Islam in a chance encounter that brought to her notice in Canada a paperback putting together the "sayings of Muhammad with a foreword by Mahatma Gandhi." This he wrote some ninety years ago and not many Indians know it.

As an academician with the history of religion as her discipline, Sheila McDonough is in sympathy with Gandhi's open, non-judgmental attitude to relig-

ious traditions. So she quotes from his foreword:

"There will be no lasting peace on earth unless we learn not merely to relate but to even to respect the other faiths as our own."

She is too modest (or shall we say, respectful of other faiths?) to outguess Gandhi in interpreting what he means by what he says. But she has taken great pains to weave his life-story by putting together his observations on Islam and to discern the patterns in his religious thoughts.

She then asks: Are these consistent? Do the ideas change in response to events? Who were his friends among the Muslims? How does he treat them? What were his contacts and experiences with Islam in the context of his Satyagrahas and non-cooperation movements? How did he react to Hindu-Muslim differences and riots? Does his vision of Islam, which he shared with Maulana Azad, Dr. Zakir Husain, Dr. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Professor M. Mujeeb have something to offer to Hindus and Muslims of today?

While Gandhi can be charged with (justifiable?) arrogance and a domineering attitude, he was a proven respecter of democratic practice and one's right to dissent. Barring that the author does not seem to grant Gandhi this generosity of spirit on one or two occasions, she is fair and thorough. This is what makes *Gandhi's Responses to Islam* an indispensable introduction to the religious history of humanity.

When this politician-saint left South Africa for good, his world-view had taken a final shape. In the years to come, Gandhi said times without number that he was merely echoing what he wrote in 1908 in *Hind Swaraj* or that something else was taught him by his South African experience. Did Gandhi then cease to think or face fresh thinking? Did he shy away from living dangerously in new situ-

ations? Did he stop growing in India? The South African legacy of thought and action that still make him relevant is more alive today than before. And this is what J.N. Uppal has set out with great success to narrate.

As far back as 1903, Gandhi wrote:

"All of us have to live in the present life merely as preparation for the future far more certain and far more real. Nothing that modern civilization can offer in the way of stability can make any more certain that which is uncertain....[it offers] nothing substantial to the struggling humanity and the only consolation one can derive has to come from a firm faith not in theory but in the fact of the existence of future life and real Godhead."

(*Indian Opinion*, 20 August 1903)

Gandhi accepted that life was a series of compromises. But there were some principles that he held dear and he was prepared to lay down his life in pursuit of those principles. Uppal shows how Gandhi grew to be this kind of person on South Africa, thanks to the invitation from a Muslim. And there he befriended Muslims, Parsis and Christians because he wanted to be a better Hindu.

Uppal's researches take the reader beyond Gandhi's own Satyagraha in South Africa and add to the valuable work of E.S. Reddy, Copal Gandhi, Pyarelal and Professor Hunt. On Gokhale, Kallenbach and Polak, Uppal has consulted the papers with National Archives. Both Uppal and McDonough give copious references and useful bibliographies. The Publishers need to be congratulated for spotting the two discerning authors and their important contributions.

M.V. Desai is a journalist who is currently engaged in translating, editing and compiling Mahadev Desai's diaries.



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About Writing History

G. Arunima

EVENT, METAPHOR, MEMORY: CHAURI CHAURA 1922—1992

By Shahid Amin

Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. vii+256, Rs. 375.00

"On 4th February 1922 a crowd of peasants burnt a police station at Chauri Chaura in Uttar Pradesh, killing twenty-three policemen" (p. 9). Shahid Amin elegantly unpicks the multiple strands that go into the making of this simple 'event', combining the various elements that constitute the historian's craft. Archival insights are embellished by local gossip, rumours compete with people's memories of the fateful day, and the real concern about the regularity of pension payments amongst the descendants of the 'rioters' makes the historian sensitive to the multiple and often convoluted realities that go into the making of an historical event.

Amin's book is about the writing of history. This takes on a specific significance when the event in question has a special relevance for the history of Indian nationalism—as one that has provoked 'selective national amnesia'. In 1922 the 'riot' at Chauri Chaura was seen as 'anti-national', and was denounced as undisciplined violence by Gandhi. In 1991, post-colonial India reclaimed Chauri Chaura as a part of the 'Golden History' of the national movement—and commemorated it with an engraved stone tablet. It is another matter that the honour of being named as the 'martyrs' of Chauri Chaura was reserved for Mahatma Gandhi, Moti Lal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, with the participants being reduced to a numerical emblem—'the nineteen accused'.

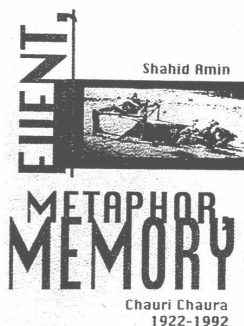
The question is why is an event as absurdly simple as the burning of a police station remembered, recorded, represented and written about in such a wide variety of ways. Amin's answer to this is by attempting to understand it both as event and metaphor—one that can be located within its historical context while at the same time is amenable to multiple readings outside this time-frame. Both these ideas are interwoven throughout the book, challenging the nationalist 'master narrative' that chose to treat Chauri Chaura as an aberrant moment in an otherwise peaceful Non-cooperation movement. While full of insights, a slightly worrying aspect throughout this book is the tendency to slip back into the use of bipolar oppositional categories in its analysis of the event. These could be peasants/nationalists, peasants/state (in this case the police), and so on. So despite Amin's desire not to celebrate any *minor-*

salist notion, there is a marked inclination towards homogenising the beliefs of 'the peasantry of Chauri Chaura' at different points in the text. We shall return to this later.

The historical backdrop against which Chauri Chaura needs to be understood is that of the Gandhian Non-cooperation movement, begun in 1920, which was centred on a symbolic rejection of the colonial system as well as the boycott of foreign goods like mill-made cloth. Swadeshi and ahimsa were to be the guidelines followed by the 'new nationalist-activist' created in the course of this movement—the 'satyagrahi-volunteer'. By November 1921 various volunteer organisations had been outlawed, and many thousands thronged the local jails. In response to this repressive state action a new symbol of solidarity emerged in the shape of the Pledge Form, which enjoined volunteers to wear khadi, practise ahimsa, oppose untouchability, and promote religious amity.

These forms, filled in triplicate, were to be deposited in the village, district and provincial headquarters of the Congress and constituted a 'nationalist record'. It was these very forms that allowed the police to 'identify' the 'rioters' in Chauri Chaura; the irony of the situation was that a nonviolent pledge form in the hands of the state could readily transform itself into inexorable proof of incendiary violence.

The attack on the police on 4th February 1922 was preceded by a significant amount of mobilising in Dumri and Mundera, market towns in the vicinity of Chauri Chaura, to picket meat, fish and liquor shops. This led to attempts by the police to destabilise proceedings, which included thrashing one of the volunteers as a warning for all those involved in these blatantly anti-governmental activities. The 4th was a bazaar day at Mundera, and hence a good day for 'action'. Volunteers gathered at nearby Dumri and debated the best strategy to be adopted. This led to the decision to demand an explanation from the *thanedar* and then picket the Mundera bazaar. The attempts by the police to force the crowd to back off led to a series of clashes between the two groups, which culminated in the killing of twenty-three policemen, the systematic destruction of police property and the burning down of the police station.



Interestingly, these acts of extreme violence were all perpetrated by invoking the Mahatma's name, and the demolition of the *thana* was seen as the first step towards ushering in 'Gandhi raj'. Police reprisal was swift and Chotki Dumri was raided the very next morning; as many of the rioters were absconding, the fact of having signed the pledge form now became documentary proof of having participated in the event.

The rioters at Chauri Chaura faced severe reprisals not only from the state; this event was roundly denounced as a violent act of 'nationalist indiscipline', indeed 'hooliganism', by Gandhi. What was unacceptable to him was not just that this was a gross exhibition of violence—but that it had been *politically* motivated. Amin demonstrates how the nationalist narrative is reconstructed by 1972, when the recovery of Chauri Chaura as a symbol of nationalist fervour led to its characterisation as a necessary response to police repression. What had appeared as unpalatable political violence in the Gandhian narrative was normalised and justified as 'nationalist' violence within the post-colonial rendering of nationalist activity. Nevertheless, the large numbers accused (an estimated 6000 people were involved, 1000 suspects listed, and 225 put on trial) were neither 'habitual criminals', nor were they truly 'political creatures'. This was the tragedy of the 'event'. Not being equipped with political skills, or nationalist backing, the rioters were left to fend for themselves as best as they could; the colonial system of appointing an Approver, or a witness for the prosecution from amongst the criminals, meant that their denials would not bear much credence in a court of law.

An Approver was not a mere eyewitness but was an accomplice to the crime. The successful conviction of all the co-accused was the price he had to pay for his pardon. The transformation of Mir Shikhari/rioter to Mir Shikhari/Approver makes for a very interesting read, though

the over-interpretative textual analysis of the legal material could have been avoided. The Approver's testimony was central to the case for the prosecution; his was the main narrative. All other stories merely corroborated Shikari's story. So why did the people of Chauri Chaura and Chotki Dumri not revile his memory?

This is an important question that does not receive a satisfactory answer in the analysis. According to the author, the accused realised the transactional nature of Shikari's testimony, and chose to overlook it as it was not motivated by past enmity, but by fraternity, in the weeks preceding the event. Thus more the reason why Mir Shikhari's comrades should have felt betrayed. An exploration of the tensions amongst the peasant participants, along with moments of solidarity would have given a more textured understanding of the psychology of the 'event'. However, in the absence of that one will have to make do with homogenous peasant agency. A similar question leaps to one's mind in the context of the apparent Hindu-Muslim unity that was forged in the area, on grounds of vegetarianism and abstinence. At a time when tensions between the two communities were increasingly tangible, it is of interest to the historian to understand why this unity, especially on grounds of vegetarianism, becomes possible. Besides, Amin himself briefly refers to tensions between the lower castes and Muslims in the region in an earlier period. If an 'economistic' reading is indeed limited, it still presents a plausible motive for picketing meat shops by communities that were meat eaters. The success of the Gandhian message in the area needs much greater explanation than has been proffered here. In the end, the impossibility of recovering 'subaltern memories' is attributed by Amin to the 'hegemonic power of judicial and nationalist discourse'. The more important question, of whether indeed there is such a distinct 'subaltern' mind (and for that matter 'nationalist'/'judicial') never gets raised.

This book is divided into five parts and the fifth part is the most exciting one. Here, like a textual Rashomon, the author lays out four different narratives of the 'event', each pointing to its own causes, consequences and heroes in the course of the retelling. So for the younger male descendants of Dumri, the Chauri Chaura *kand* was the story of physical prowess and cunning insight. Their heroes were wrestlers such as Nazar Ali, Bikram Yadav and Neer who were all trained at the local *akharas*. For them, 'the power of the Dumri volunteers resides in tough masculine bodies, it does not emanate from an androgynous Gandhian sense of sacrifice'. In contrast, the account from Mundera bazaar characterises the volunteers as 'rustics, ruffians and rogues' who could have destroyed the entire market-place. The heroes of this narrative are the zamindar and his side-kick who managed to save the bazaar from the 'mob of enraged

untouchable volunteers', and the post-riot depredations of the police.

The account from Madanpur, a trading village south-east of Chauri Chaura, attributes critical nationalist agency to the trader-cartmen. It was they who provided the brains and the ammunition for defeating the police to the embattled peasants. Both the suggestion of using the stones on the railway track as missiles and the provision of kerosene to burn the *thana* down came from them. While village solidarity is the key to the resolution of the ensuing crisis here, from Dumri itself a counter-narrative emerges that places Madan Mohan Malaviya as the central figure in the negotiation between the peasants and the state. According to Sita Ahir, son of the village chaukidar killed in the riot, and nephew of one of the main protagonists hanged for his participation in it, it was the timely intervention of the nationalist lawyer that managed to save the village from ruin. Therefore, the punishment to a select, culpable few was acceptable as the alternative to this would have meant reprisals against the entire community.

It is only in Rameshwar Pasi's widow Naujadi's story (p. 158) that one suddenly encounters the *darogain* as an important protagonist in this entire event. And she disappears, as swiftly and silently, from Shahid Amin's text. In Naujadi's version, the pregnant wife of the *daroga* was the 'voice of moderation and of justice'. The riot occurred because the police did not pay any heed to her. What is amazing is the way in which her incarceration in the house of one of the rioters, and possible rape/molestation by him and others, does not merit any serious discussion in this book. So much so that the only 'female' voice of (of Naujadi Pasi) and her remarkable reconstruction is set aside by Amin as a 'poignant slip of memory in the direction of solidarity with a woman who had suffered much'.

To me, this erasure symbolises the entry point into all that is problematic with Shahid Amin's narrative. Despite the efforts towards a 'thick description' of the event, the constant tendency towards a recovery of a homogenized subaltern experience undermines the tremendous historiographical strengths that this book presents. That this 'homogenized experience' is completely male as event, memory, and history—undermines the 'thickness' of the description further. While *Event, Metaphor, Memory* is clearly a path-breaking work in the historiography of the Indian National Movement, it is disappointing that it is still moored within those conventional paradigms that choose not to interrogate the absence of women or their agency. Maybe it is the ambiguous 'solidarity' between the two women, briefly mentioned and soon forgotten, that should emerge as the metaphor for a new democratic historiographical practice.

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Eco-balance and State Intervention

Madhavan K. Palat

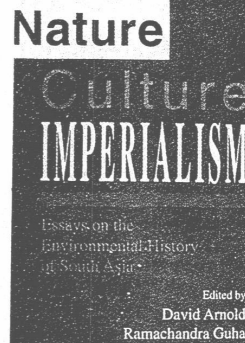
NATURE, CULTURE, IMPERIALISM:
ESSAYS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL
HISTORY OF SOUTH ASIA

Edited by David Arnold and
Ramachandra Guha

Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 376,
Rs 495.00

The editors deserve to be congratulated for having organised what must have been a stimulating conference and then assembling the papers into this volume; and the authors as much for providing us with such a lively set of well-researched papers. It deals with how human societies have related to their environment; and the common thread in this variety of themes is the counter-position of a community practice premised on ecological balance to state interventions for the purposes of extracting revenue and forcing development. It is an old theme that used to pass under the rubric "tradition versus modernity"; now it has been applied to the environment, studies on which, as the editors rightly complain, are yet in a fledgling state in India; but the general problem, however "traditional" by now, is utterly vital and will remain so for a long time as India goes through the agony known as industrialisation. Being a historical survey, most of the authors are concerned with the colonial state and its antecedents, with the two exceptions by Chetan Singh on Mughal India and Mark Poffenberger on Independent India elegantly placed at either end of book.

The editors themselves note the distinction between the Gandhian and western traditions of environmental concerns; regrettably, there is no article on this most important theme. Gandhi sought village self-sufficiency against wasteful consumption and urban civilisation while the western is derived from the romantic tradition of ruralism as it faced the Industrial Revolution. Wardha, as the editors observe, was different for its intellectual and scenic ambience from John Ruskin's home on the lakeside at Brentwood. It is worth reflecting however that Gandhi's village self-sufficiency bears a closer resemblance to a doctrine he knew nothing about, the "economic romanticism" of the Russian Narodniks of the generation before his own, rather than to the worship of nature as in the English romanticism that was remorselessly fed to the Indian intelligentsia throughout colonial



times. Yet are not Gandhi, the romantics, and the Narodniks, all linked through a common disquiet over industrial civilisation and its wanton destructiveness to satisfy the hedonistic urge to consume? Environmentalism then has an ancient pedigree, as old as modernity itself; its earlier and more innocent incarnations in the 19th century were relegated to the "petty bourgeois" or "reactionary" stretch of the political spectrum because they questioned the cost of modernity; but at least they now occupy the most radical space of popular and democratic activism in the bid to save the planet from the uncontrolled genius of the human species.

The contribution by Neeladri Bhattacharya, Atluri Murali, and Jacques Pouchepadass document the manner in which the colonial state fixed and territorialised communities who moved from place to place. They could be nomadic pastoralists in Punjab and the hills, or forest dwellers in Andhra and South Canara engaging in shifting cultivation. Neeladri Bhattacharya shows us in rich detail the colonial state's prejudice in favour of settled agriculture. While pastoralism was a form of adaptation to natural endowment, the state redefined all rights leaving no place for this kind of mobility or common use. Pastoralists degenerated ineluctably into vagrants and criminal tribes while people like Malcom Darling extolled the rational virtues of the peasant.

Tantalisingly, and far too summarily, he potemecises with another historian's thesis on the simultaneous peasantisation of nomads and proletarianisation of peasants. It could have been specified, and it certainly needs another full scale article, that the nomad suffered the dual tragedy of sedentarisation (becoming a peasant) and impoverishment (becoming a proletariat or vagrant) while the peasant went through only the latter process. With the worldwide political retreat of nomadism from the 17th century, and the expansion of agriculture

from the 18th, the nomadic condition deteriorated to the point that would sustain Owen Lattimore's dictum that the true nomad is the poor nomad. With commercialisation from the late 18th century, and industrialisation generally, the peasant now joined the nomad in the queue for sacrifice.

Similarly, Atluri Murali shows, again in fascinating detail, how settled agriculture and the forest, with its roving communities, enjoyed a symbiotic relationship that was rudely shattered by the colonial state usurping common rights to the forest and wastelands. The state had money to make by felling timber; so, from mid-century, it wrote laws and imposed "justice" which created the seamless web of coercion and bribery that we know only too well today. Not surprisingly, the grievance was mobilised by nationalism in the 20th century. There is a charming idyllic picture of the pre-colonial ecological balance of society in harmony with nature. Perhaps it is to be understood solely for the purpose of contrast; for what the environmental tensions of pre-colonial times might have been would require a separate investigation. But the point was to show the changes in colonial times, and that is done admirably; I hope it was not intended to present what went before.

David Hardiman and Mark Poffenberger show well what community initiatives did and can do. Hardiman tells us how small dams were traditionally constructed in the Sahyadris, in Baglan, leading to high fertility and the famous rice of Nawapura, aromatic and white as snow, according to Tavernier in the 17th century. Obviously, Wittfogel's thesis about irrigation requiring centralised despotisms is fatuous, as demonstrated for the umpteenth time. Equally obviously, these extensive and complex dam systems collapsed in colonial times. Why? Because the modern state worships the gigantic centralised enterprise which they can control better and from which they can earn more revenues. It appears that the dam system was set up in the 15th century by immigrant peasants from the Konkan bringing with them the engineering skills of their valleys. Maratha irruptions of 1750-53 led to damage, which the Peshwas helped to repair. States were not necessarily destructive of community activity.

The decline however began in the early 19th century when the first Collector of Khandesh perversely refused grants for repair; in 1857, some of it was still working; in 1911, only half of that; in 1922, nothing at all. Colonial taxation was destructive. Land used to be assessed according to the value of the crop, the highest rate being for sugarcane, the next for rice, and less for others. The British fixed a uniform tax which was excessive for the less valuable crop. It led to the familiar cycle of usury and debt, and the peasant ultimately abandoned these fields altogether for the poorer lands which attracted

lower taxes. Dams and channels were abandoned and they disintegrated. Nawapura, the land of the aromatic rice, was overtaken by jungle by 1864 and inhabited by Bhils practising shifting cultivation which needed no irrigation.

Poffenberger however sounds the optimistic note for our times, how communities revived Sal forests which had been degraded to the point of extinction in Midnapur district as late as the 1980s. The moral of the story is that what has been done can be undone, and indeed it must be.

We have in addition a series of articles of equally general significance but more technical in nature. Thus S. Prabhakar and Madhav Gadgil describe how the Nilgiris were appropriated over the past 200 years, David Gilmartin on the Indus basin management, and Elizabeth Whitcombe on the disastrous effects of large scale and prestigious irrigation by a greedy state.

However, one of the most riveting of all is M.R. Anderson's study of smoke in Calcutta. It is difficult to imagine that the Bengal Renaissance could have emerged in such malodorous air. Colonial rulers may be expected to find a causal relation between Bengali culture and bad air; but it is a shock for patriotic Indians to discover that the two had never been separate. Perhaps that explains colonial energy in cleaning up Calcutta (that is its air) through a Smoke Nuisances Act as early as 1863, just ten years after Palmerston imposed the same honour on London and before any such was attempted in any other metropolis of the world. Perhaps Curzon thought he was killing two birds with one stone when he moved with characteristic vigour to control smoke.

But the British had an imperial stake in Calcutta air. In imperial ideology, bad air and natives were expected to go together because the former was related to miasmas, those "emanations from putrescent organic matter"; but smog was part of London and an evidence of modernity and bad government, not to be revealed in Calcutta. The controls imposed however were typical. Smoke emissions were checked from a high point in the city and factory owners warned. They then came down on the poor Indian stokers who were required to ensure the correct fuel and air mixture in the furnaces below to minimise smoke. This was a superhuman task requiring the worker almost to bake himself by standing next to the furnace and lovingly spreading the coal evenly and at regular intervals as if it were dough for chapattis. These authoritarian and colonial methods yielded results. Calcutta became cleaner, and the colonial government and their capitalists proved to their satisfaction that the slovenly native worker was responsible for the problem.

Madhavan K. Palat is Professor of History in the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Economy in Medieval India

Rajat Datta

MONEY AND THE MARKET IN INDIA, 1100-1700

Edited by Sanjay Subrahmanyam

Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. ix+316, Rs. 300.00

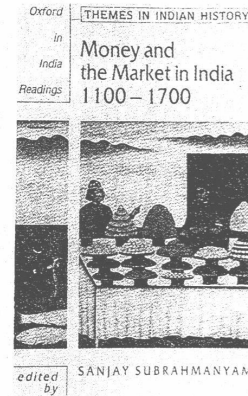
Since the 1960s there has been a growing and critical awareness of the complexities of India's economic history in the medieval period. Emerging partly out of shifting academic concerns and partly out of the need to counter a Eurocentric discourse on economic development, recent researches have delved into the structure of the Indian economy in order to locate the myriad points of dynamism in it. Researches have succeeded in advancing the frontiers of knowledge in this regard, often in the form of seminal articles published in diverse academic journals. The volume under review is welcome as it brings together some of the seminal and some not so seminal (but representative) articles on the economic history of medieval India written in the last three decades.

Some of the articles incorporated in the volume have had a long innings. B.R. Grover's "An Integrated Pattern of Commercial Life in the Rural Society of Northern India during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" has been a classic since 1965. Its importance lies in the detailed look it provides on the working of the north Indian bazaar of the seventeenth century. This was perhaps the first attempt to look at the problem of local trade in Mughal India and at demonstrating the links between the different levels of economic production and a hierarchy of markets. The centrality of these interlinkages and the crucial role of market transactions in south India is also demonstrated by Kenneth R. Hall's "Price-Making and Market Hierarchy in Early Medieval South India". Hall shows the intricate connections between economic exchange and commercial centres in the Chola empire. Particularly illuminating is his discussion of the variety of merchants operating between the *pattinam* and the *nagaram* and the complex manner of exchange below the *nagaram*. The paper is additionally valuable because it is chronologically an anterior confirmation of Grover's findings for north India. This would strongly indicate the subcontinental dimensions of both the germination

and flowering of a commercial economy in medieval India. Hall's essay makes a pleasant departure from caste, temples and ethnohistory—three great stereotypes in the historiography of south India. The fact that there is only one paper on the entire region in a collection of nine essays which comprise this volume is surely more than a mere oversight on the part of the editor.

Additionally, Grover highlights the essential dynamism of the rural component of this economy, epitomized in the periodic market (the *haat*) and the village fair. Grover's focus initiated the possibility of studying market transactions in the medieval Indian economy outside of a restrictive revenue-centred paradigm which was the dominant expanatory variable of a certain genre of economic history from the mid-1960s. However, Grover's position that the eighteenth century saw "a definite deterioration in the commercial life of India" (p. 252) is made on the basis of extremely flimsy evidence. The lack of supporting evidence appears to make this statement a mere extension of a canonical orthodoxy which is integral to the revenue-centred historiography which, paradoxically (and perhaps unwittingly), Grover questions so effectively in the earlier parts of his essay.

The economic history of medieval India before the Mughal empire is addressed in three essays. Irfan Habib's "The Price Regulations of Ala'uddin Khalji—A Defence of Zia Barani" examines the context behind the attempt made by Sultan Ala'uddin Khalji to control supplies and prices in the core regions of his empire in the light of the account in Zia's Barani's *Ta'rikh-i Firuz-Shahi*. Why this essay is included in the volume under review is somewhat inexplicable. Habib's assertion that "grain supply at low prices depended upon the extraction of the agrarian surplus through land-tax, brought directly into the Sultan's granaries or into the grain-carriers' hands by the rigour of the tax-demand" (p. 97) runs contrary to what most of the other essays and articles incorporated in this book establish, namely,



the existence of a relatively integrated market and the operation of market forces in medieval India. In contrast Habib provides a static explanation: command and coercion are the two key elements in the economy of medieval India and trade is no more than an unrequited flow of surplus from the country to the town.

The possibility that the contrary may have been the case is indicated in "The Economic History of the Lodi Period: 1451-1526" by J.F. Richards. As a much-needed corrective to the state-centred explanation of medieval economic history (which argues that the prosperity or decline of the medieval Indian economy was directly proportional to political centralization), Richards demonstrates that "despite the devolution of the Delhi Sultanate into warring regional units, normal trade continued in the 15th century as it always had in northern India" (p. 140), and that there was no shortage of both gold and silver in northern India in that period (pp. 141-45). The fact that economic transactions continued unhampered in the face of political turmoil points to the underlying resilience of the Indian economy of those days.

John Deyell's essay "The China Connection: The Problems of Silver Supply in Medieval Bengal" demonstrates the role of plunder in forcing silver from the peripheries into the Sultanate's economy. In fact, the celebrated price-regulation of Ala'uddin Khalji was a desperate response of the state to prevent the economy from overheating consequent upon the coercive transmission of wealth to north India from the Deccan. The central role of Bengal as a conduit of silver through the east Asian network (p. 119) shows the potent role performed by trade in the monetisation of economy. In addition, Deyell also shows the importance of non-monetized forms of exchange in the medieval period which he classifies as a 'mixed barter/money economy' (p. 115).

Deyell's and Richards' views regarding the role of plunder in the construction of

Sultanate Indian states lead to certain interesting speculations. For instance, it can be argued that the apparent abundance of silver and gold in northern India in the fifteenth century may have been a direct consequence of the decline of the Sultanate as its decline stopped the drain of wealth from these areas to the core of the empire, thereby allowing localities to utilise their resources more productively. Therefore, the collapse of the Sultanate may have actually benefited local economies. The Mughal decline may also have had similar resonances. In that case, the crisis in the seventeenth century may have been no more than the collapse of the state's fiscal apparatus leading to a more efficient re-deployment of resources within localities.

Another aspect, that of significance of the bullion in the Indian economy during the Mughal period, is dealt with in Aziza Hasan's paper "The Silver Currency Output of the Mughal Empire and Prices in India During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries". Hasan attempted to duplicate E.J. Hamilton's controversial work on the connection between American silver and European inflation for India in the seventeenth century. Her argument, that the arrival of silver through the Cape route to India fuelled, with a time-lag, a price-inflation in the Mughal economy has numerous empirical shortcomings, most of which were shown in the subsequent debate her paper generated. The evidence of a 'price'-inflation is de-

cidely weak in Hasan's paper, as is a rather naive adherence to the unrefined Quantity Theory of Money.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam's essay "Precious Metal flows and Prices in Western and Southern Asia, 1500-1750: Some Comparative and Conjunctural Aspects" addresses some of these on the basis of secondary literature available on the subject. The interesting aspect of this paper is the attempt to construct a comparative Asian perspective of the problematic. For Subrahmanyam, the existing literature on this theme indicates that the "price inflation was at best sporadic, and limited to specific regions and specific commodities" (p. 209). Recent evidence (for instance from Bengal) shows a contrary tendency in so far as the behaviour of prices seem to have varied inversely with the amount of bullion in the economy, and it is this which introduces a degree of scepticism with any argument on the necessary connection between quantities of bullion and a rise, or fall, in price in early modern India.

The effectiveness of the connection between precious metals (as additions to existing monetary media) and symptoms of inflation, or its reverse, have to be seen in the probable manner in which each accretion to the monetary stock was distributed amongst expansion in output and the tribute extraction system on the one hand, and the level of prices on the other. Explanations of the inverse relationship between precious metals and

prices would involve separate discussions of output, demand, currency, trading networks and revenue squeeze at different points in the eighteenth century as the economic variables which would determine a rise or fall in the price level. An argument, such as the one advanced by Aziza Hasan, which hinges merely on a supposed increase or decrease in the quantity of the monetary stock as its major explanation of inflation or deflation, and thereby of commercialisation or de-commercialization, is clearly inadequate.

K.N. Chaudhuri's essay "Market and Traders in India During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" takes a close look at the institutional mechanism (the market) for the circulation of both cash and commodities in the economy. Chaudhuri gives us a picture of an interconnected hierarchy of markets and traders over much of northern India in this period. Additionally, Chaudhuri is in sharp disagreement with the view which sees Indian trade as an aggregate of petty pedlars and presents instead a picture where tiers of markets and traders operate with various degrees of functional interdependence. A complex credit and financial network permeated the entire commercial world of those times. However, these markets were "painfully dependent on a smooth flow of bullion" and "particularly susceptible to rapid fluctuations in price due to irregularities in supplies" (p. 261).

Frank Perlin's contribution "Changes in Production and Circulation of Money in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century India: An Essay on Monetization before Colonial Occupation" attempts to compare the monetary situations of the seventeenth with the eighteenth century. By doing so it tackles inter alia one of the major controversies in Indian historiography, viz., the nature of the Indian economy in the eighteenth century. Perlin sees a greater use of money in this century by a "large number of urban and rural producers" in an "increasingly complex, differentiated and localized type of economy" (p. 288). Money, i.e. its physical quantity, in circulation therefore increased, a symptom of which was the proliferation of mints "in commercial and relatively remote regions alike" (p. 289). The evidence marshalled by Perlin provides a major empirical ground for a fresh re-evaluation of the economic aftermath of the decline of the so-called Mughal economy. Perlin also highlights the extensive use of cowries as an example of the prevalence of economic exchange through a non-coined medium. This is a living example of alternative modes of commercial transactions which testify to the dynamics of localized exchanges in the creation of a market economy in medieval India.

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Envisioned by Mohammad Quli Qutub Shah as a replica of heaven on earth, Hyderabad bore the brunt of Aurangzeb's fury and after a long period of neglect, rose to be the capital of the expansive Deccan province. The city witnessed the phenomenal expansion of the province under Qamruddin Asaf Jah I, as also the dissipation of his legacy. The city silently watched the consolidation of British might in India and was the home of Nizam VII, the last Asaf Jahi ruler. The city has changed utterly over the years and now recounts her moments of excitement, bouts of depression, growth, expansion and long periods of neglect.



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Civilisational Encounters: Silent Chain of Causality

Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr.

CONFLUENCE OF CULTURES: FRENCH CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDO-PERSIAN STUDIES
Edited by Francois 'Nalini' Delvoe
Manohar Publications, 1994, pp. 256, Rs. 300.00

Encounters of civilisations and cultures are fascinating subjects for study and analysis. At the same time, they are also subjects which are hidden behind invisible veils, taking shape through a slow, subterranean process of social osmosis. There are no clear-cut points of interaction and visible channels through which ideas and styles travelled to and fro from one society to another. As a result, when historians have to explain the intangible issues of civilisational contacts they are forced to resort to cultural-metaphysical terms. Most of the time we are left with vague generalisations and numerous, and sometimes significant, examples, which tickle intellectual curiosity without satisfying the inquiring mind. But it is a task that beckons scholars. It is irresistible. It is the great temptation of the historian, and like all temptations it is full of intellectual perils, and there is even the terror of scholarly perdition. It is difficult to demarcate the boundaries and map the exact contours of cultural transactions with the exactitude that would make the whole enterprise rewarding for an historian.

Arnold Toynbee attempted to tackle this phenomenon in his ecumenical approach to civilisations and cultures: *A Study of History*. Toynbee's capacity to marshal facts from religion, philosophy, politics and literature to support his views is quite admirable, though it is impossible to agree with his inferences based on a difficult-to-prove chain of causality. Most of the self-proclaimed professional historians of this century, led by eminent men like E.H. Carr and Hugh Trevor-Roper, have treated Toynbee's effort with scholarly derision. They not only pointed out the innumerable errors of fact, but also made it clear that he did not know how to write English. Given the high literary standards of English history writing set up by David Hume and Edward Gibbon, Thomas Babington Macaulay, and George Trevelyan, Toynbee's manner of English writing seemed to lack any grace. But Toynbee struck to his path. It is, however, doubtful that he has had much success in offering a credible history of the encounter of civilisations.

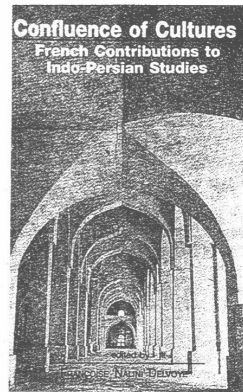
The important thing about the Toynbee enterprise is that he felt the need to work out the principles of a world history. That is, he realised that it is not possible to construct a world history in separate chapters dealing with discrete

units of national histories. At the end of the 20th century, historians feel the need for a world history despite the fact that nationalists are asserting their separate identities. No national history makes sense on its own.

It is therefore a matter of great interest then that a band of French scholars has set out to explore the Indo-Persian cultural encounter. The view offered by these scholars is distinctly French. The French view of civilisation is an expansive and inclusive one. Like the ancient Romans, the French believe in co-opting the outsiders into their civilisation. The French colonial project differed in this aspect from the other European powers. The French are more inclined towards interactive episodes of history than the others. The three millennia-long history provides many examples of the interactive type.

The response of Indian historians to the Indo-Persian encounter has been of two kinds. On the one hand, there was an attempt to keep Hindu India and Muslim India apart, in separate, water-tight compartments. This school of historians has, surprisingly, never bothered to raise the important question as to how two societies exist together without influencing each other. On the other hand, the secular and progressive school of historians was in a hurry to postulate that there was a medieval synthesis which has created a cosmopolitan culture. The reality, as always, happens to be more complex. There is no doubt that apart from the many other distinct segments, there is something which can be described as 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' societies. They have impinged on each other in innumerable ways, but at the same time they have managed to retain their separate identities. The historian is thus called upon to chart the interaction. To do so, one has to assume that there are distinct segments of society, which are not necessarily antithetical and antagonistic to each other. The secularists are anxious to collapse the distinctions, while the believers in the old order would like to pretend that there was no interaction of any kind between the two major 'societies'.

The French try to grapple with the 'two societies'. Some scholars might prefer to describe the area of study as that of 'two cultures'. Mostly, they are looking at the Persian and Islamic side of the story. Francois 'Nalini' Delvoe *et al* deal with stray aspects of Indo-Persian culture that



emerged in India after the setting up of the Slave Dynasty at the end of the 12th century. Though it is not a new area, these scholars have certainly dealt with topics which have not been so far considered by historians of medieval India. For example, "Indo-Persian Literature on Art-Music: Some Historical and Technical Aspects" by Francois 'Nalini' Delvoe looks for the first time at the Indo-Persian interaction in the field of music. It is an exploratory and bibliographical essay. In the absence of previous studies, she is left to make a preliminary survey of material that can be culled from the works of court historians. All that can be inferred from Delvoe's essay is that writings in Persian take note of the existing musical system, and have translated them abundantly into Persian. There is a rich musical vocabulary available in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. But it is as yet not possible to describe the actual synthesis either in musical theory or performance which emerged from the medieval encounter. Delvoe notes: "... though the curiosity and the taste for experimentation of Akbar are well-known in other fields such as architecture and painting, it is as yet too early to arrive at any conclusion about the existence of a third trend i.e., an Indo-Persian form of music performed in the court of Akbar and other Mughal emperors."

Similarly, Klaus Rotzer and Khandu Deokar in their essay, "Mughal Gardens in Benaras and its Neighbourhood in the 18th and 19th Centuries" open up an architectural area of historical and cultural interest, and they have some valuable observations to make. Describing the Udaipur lakeside palace of the Rana, the authors say: "Built in the Rajput style, the interior of this multistoreyed palace is an intricate maze, full of surprises, the very opposite of the clarity and symmetry of Mughal architecture." The architectural synthesis has its inner limitations.

Two of the essays deal with the extremes of the Islamic religious spectrum: the puritanical and reformist Wahhabis

in Marc Gaborieau's "Late Persian, Early Urdu: The Case of 'Wahhabi' Literature (1818-1857)" on the one side and the reformist Shi'ite sect of the Ismailis in Michel Boivin's "The Reform of Islam in Ismaili Shi'ism from 1885 to 1957" on the other. These two essays show that there has been a vigorous Islamic response to the challenge of western modernism in India, which was also crucial to the rest of the Islamic world. The Wahhabi movement helped to make Islam accessible to the common north Indian Muslim through the greater use of Urdu. And Sultan Muhammad Shah, who was the Imam from 1885 to 1957, and known as the Aga Khan, the spiritual head of the Ismailis, tried to evolve a contemporary spiritual and political agenda for the Muslims. Though the ramifications of these two movements are too wide to be encompassed in these two essays, the significant fact is that they show that India has played an important role in the evolution of modern Islam.

In a volume of specialised essays of this kind, there was need for an overarching framework, which spelt out the historical premises. No doubt, this group of French scholars is following the French historical traditions of the *Annales* school and that of its eminent practitioners like Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel. Of course, narrowly focussed monographs are essential for building a general picture. But they do not stand on their own.

The scholars who have contributed to this volume have not taken note of a crucial anomaly. The Persian culture that pervades medieval India is not the native culture of the Muslim rulers. The Mughals are Turks, with their roots in the steppes of Central Asia, and so were the earlier dynasties of Qutbuddin Aibak and his successors, the Khiljis and the Tughlaks. The Lodis were Afghans. (The only Persian invader, Nadir Shah in the 18th century, was both a tyrant and barbarian.) It is true that they have been influenced by Persian culture. However, both Babar and Jahangir, separated from each other by more than 50 years, wrote their autobiographies—*Babar Namah* and *Jahangir Namah*—in the Turkish language. Though Persian played a predominant role after Humayun's sojourn in Iran, there are other key elements in India's Islamic tapestry.

Another issue that faces the student of Indo-Persian culture is: how authentic were the Persian elements that came to India? When culture travels to other lands through immigrants, fortune-seekers and exiles as it was in the case of Persian India, the cultural baggage in effect becomes a portmanteau of uncertain quality. There is a need to raise the question: how Persian was the Persian culture that was brought to India? To answer this question, it becomes necessary to look at Iranian history along with the Indian.

Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr. is with the Indian Express.

Human History of Partition

Shama Futehally

INDIA PARTITIONED: THE OTHER FACE OF FREEDOM VOLS. I & II

Edited by Mushirul Hasan

Roli Books, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 256 and 279 respectively, Rs. 595.00 for the set.

"It is difficult," said Professor Mushirul Hasan in a recent interview, "to deal with something so big. . . . Also one can't distance oneself enough—you don't wish to talk about it."

Professor Hasan was referring specifically to why the cataclysmic event of Partition has not produced literature to scale. It is perfectly understandable that those whose lives, limbs and consciousness were severed in two by it, should have tried to abandon the experience as one abandons a house where a loved one has died. But Partition is like a hideous folly committed in one's youth, which, as one grows older, one learns to see as crime. One learns also that the truth resolutely hidden continues to poison ordinary life and to corrode ordinary relations. So that in middle age one might, perhaps, allow the truth to trickle out; to begin sharing grief and guilt.

Some such thing, let us hope, is happening to us now. Obviously it was Ayodhya which made it impossible, so to speak, to keep the lid on Partition any more. It was in the tense months preceding the demolition that the tele-serial *Tamas* was shown, evoking audience involvement on a scale unknown before. Since then, there has been a marked revival of interest in writers like Manto and Intizar Husain. In the last year or two there have been three collections of fiction/oral history, all by distinguished editors, which focus on the experience of ordinary people during Partition (Alok Bhalla's 3-volume *Stories About the Partition of India*, the August '94 issue of *Seminar* entitled *Partition*, and the present work.)

It is this new focus, i.e. the ordinary person's experience of Partition, which—to continue the metaphor—constitutes the real 'opening of the lid'. In the words of Urvashi Butalia, editor of the *Seminar* issue mentioned above, "the human history of Partition has (always had) a 'lesser' status than the political history." This may well be another manifestation of our inability to face the thing itself.

Of the three collections I have mentioned, Alok Bhalla's comprises fiction. The special issue of *Seminar* contains recollections of various sorts; memoirs, interviews with survivors, etc. This collection comprises both. Volume I contains literature which, according to Professor Hasan, so accurately portrays the reality of the Partition experience that it can be used to increase our historical understanding. Volume II contains, again, recollections—journals, memoirs, essays and interviews.

Obviously, the feature which distinguishes this anthology from others is the fact that it is informed by the perspective of the historian. Many of us, confronted with the same material, would conclude generally that Partition was a nightmare and that nobody much seemed to want it. This anthology allows us to see the same thing very clearly, to relive it very closely, and finally to make, with some authority, certain specific inferences.

To begin with, the editor draws our attention to evidence that the decision to divide India was made with a haste which was at best uncomprehending and at worst cynical and inhuman:

They (the ordinary people) were indeed hapless victims of a triangular game plan, worked out by the British, the Congress and the League without care or consideration for huge numbers of people who had no commitment to a Hindu homeland or fascination for an imaginary *dar al-islam*. They had no destination to reach, no mirage to follow. Like the characters in Bhisam Sahni's story, they were unclear whether Lahore or Gurdaspur would be in India or Pakistan. . . .

(from the Introduction by Mushirul Hasan, Vol. I, p. 33.)

It follows that the demand for Pakistan was very far from being either spontaneous or unanimous among Indian Muslims. Here Professor Hasan draws on characters like Phunna Miyan and Haji Ghafoor in Rahi Masoom Raza's novel *Aadha Gaaon*. According to him, they reflect the state of mind of many ordinary Muslims of the time:

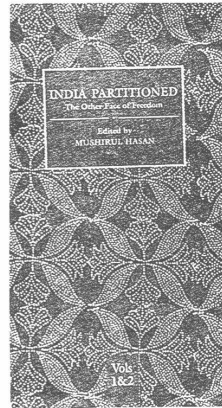
"Have all these boys gone mad or what?" asked Phunna Miyan.

The amazing thing is, Mir Sahib, that the people who are shouting and screaming are the ones who aren't voters. I'm a voter and no one asks what I think. But whoever you see will be making a speech. And they're all looking for Pakistan to be made. This Jinnah Sahib, now, where's he from? . . .

"Who knows who he is and where he comes from. I've heard that he was a lawyer in London."

"So have the British tutored him in all this and sent him here?"

"To hell with all of them!" said Phunna Miyan. "If Pakistan's made, it'll be a long way from Gangauli. You go and look after your spinning wheel, and keep your warp straight. Pakistan-Akistan is just a game for filling stomachs."



Phunna Miyan went on.

(Vol I, p. 63-64)

Perhaps an even more significant exchange is the following, taken from the same story:

"When the British go, the Hindus will rule here!"

"Yes, yes, so you say. You're talking as if all the Hindus were murderers waiting to slaughter us. Arre, Thakur Kunwarpal Singh was a Hindu. Jhinguriya is a Hindu. Eh, bhai, and isn't that Parasuram—va a Hindu? When the Sunnis in the town started doing *haramzadgi*, saying that we won't let the bier of Hazrat Ali be carried in procession because the Shias curse our Caliphs, didn't Parasuram—va come and raise such hell that the bier was carried? Your Jinnah Sahib didn't come and help us lift our bier!"

(Vol I, p. 48)

So, page after page, there is testimony that the communal conflagration by no means reflected a real divide in society. Page after page stands witness to hate artificially created, suspicion artificially fuelled. There is a poignant scene in Krishna Sobti's story *The New Regime* (originally *Sikka Badal Gaya*) where the peasant Shera has half-decided to kill the wife of the Hindu zamindar, who has always been like a mother to him, because of the temptation to please a political conspirator named Firoz. A constant refrain, in stories as well as memoirs, is that "the killers were all from outside", although they may later have been joined by people of the village (Vol II, p. 32). This leads naturally to the ordinary victim's gut feeling as to who was responsible. "From what I understand," said Amrik Singh of Doberan village, after suffering unspokeably, "Partition is all politics" (Vol II, p. 133).

It hardly needs saying that these lessons about "politics" are crucial to the prospect of a liberal India. It is entirely appropriate that they are being presented here by a person whose commitment to

such an India has shown itself in action as much in words. Indeed they are being presented by some of the most important writers and thinkers that modern India has had. Volume I contains fiction such as Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Lajwanti*, Mohan Rakesh's *Malhe ka Malik* (translated here as *Lord of the Rubble*) Kamleshwar's *Kitne Pakistan* and the poems of Makhdoom and Faiz. Volume II contains documentation as varied and significant as an interview with Lakshmi Sahgal, Josh Malihabadi's account of trying to find a home in either country, and the diary of Khushdeva Singh, a doctor in Dharampore who stood staunch against the prevailing hatred. For me personally, the most moving part of this volume was the memoir by K.A. Abbas entitled *Who Killed India?* In reading this I lived through the experience of first hearing Partition announced on the radio, and for a few moments I felt that I was born after our country's history had already happened.

I would suggest that one reason this piece is more affecting than others equally valuable is that it was originally written in English and thus escapes any loss in translation. This brings us to the question of translation generally, which is equally important to both volumes. Unfortunately the quality of translation is very poor throughout.

It would be silly, however, to blame the individual translators. In fact they are much less to blame than the rest of us, for reasons which I hope to clarify. The writing in these volumes represents the best in Hindi and Urdu literature over the last fifty years. Therefore, if it has not been adequately translated, the fault cannot lie in the performance or non-performance of a few individuals. It lies in the fact that we—the English-speaking generation—have still not developed a bilingual consciousness. In our minds, English and the Indian language do not meet on equal terms; they meet in the spirit of a tourist meeting a craftsman. I am setting out our sins at such length because the absence of a bilingual consciousness obviously reflects another kind of failure in regard to our past. It is the failure to throw off a colonial attitude; and it is ironic that this should interfere even at the moment when we are making an inspired effort to uncover our history.

Obviously it was Ayodhya which made it impossible, so to speak, to keep the lid on Partition any more. It was in the tense months preceding the demolition that the tele-serial Tamas was shown, evoking audience involvement on a scale unknown before. Since then, there has been a marked revival of interest in writers like Manto and Intizar Husain.

The extent of the interference can be seen by looking at a few lines of the translation. I quote below a couple of sentences from the opening of Bhisam Sahni's story "Amritsar Aa Gaya", which has already been referred to:

Gaadi ke dibbe mein zyada musafir nahin the.

Mere saamne wali seat par buithe sardari der se mujhe laam ke kisse sunate rahite the. Woh lamm ke dinoor mein Burma ki laddai mein bhaag ley chuke the aur baat-baat par khee-khee kar ke hanste aur gore faujiyon ki khilli udate rahite the.

Here is the translation as it appears in this collection:

There were not many passengers in the railway compartment. The Sardari, sitting opposite me, who had fought in Burma regaled me with stories from the war front. Everytime he spoke about the British soldiers, he would run them down, laughing heartily.

(Vol. I, p. 113)

Now, Bhisam Sahni's actual words do many things at once. *Baat-baat par Khee-khee karna* gives an impression of carefree, mindless giggling which is to contrast starkly with what will follow. The phrase 'laughing heartily' is no substitute. The word *gore* has overtones of unwilling submission/would-be contempt which express acutely the feeling about the British in 1947. 'British soldiers' does not convey it. *Khilli udana* suggests taking the Mickey out of something in delighted village-boy fashion. To translate this as 'run them down' makes it sound as if the whole scene were taking place in a British board-room.

I have analysed only two sentences; it may be imagined how much damage is done to the entire story, let alone to the collection as a whole. The interviews in Volume II suffer from the same fate.

In contrast, here is part of an interview translated into English for the special issue of *Seminar*. These are the words of a simple Sikh shopkeeper, not of a famous writer. Yet they have been rendered into English with such care and precision that we hear the voice of this Sardari as we do not hear the others:

What I'm really saying is that today I feel ashamed of this. I went to a Muslim's house and he asked what I would eat. I said what will I not eat, you tell me. I'll eat everything. What is there in eating and drinking?

(Interview with Bir Bahadur Singh, Delhi shopkeeper, in *Seminar* Aug. 94)

Finally, one would wish for a very different standard of copy editing, proof-reading, production. At least two stories are unintelligible because of missing or transposed pages, and the text abounds in misprints which are unworthy of so momentous a publication.

Shama Futehally a writer and critic is the author of Tara Lane and has translated Songs of Meera.

'Thought for Food'

Meera Chatterjee

THE FOOD INDUSTRIES OF BRITISH INDIA

By K. T. Achaya

Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 316, Rs. 450.00

This is a most unusual book. Where else could one learn of life's basics—salt and oil, of colonial epicurism, guano and maws, handscrew presses, *gudhabuddhaka* and the beginnings of industrial development? Author of two earlier books on food which delve into culture and taste, Dr. Achaya has once again proved himself a renaissance man. This time the revival spans almost 200 years between the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and World War II, and centres on the industrial production and packaging of foods, both ordinary and exotic.

Following the Battle of Plassey, the British established an administrative presence in Calcutta. Salt production was the first food industry to engage their attention. They went on to establish industrial production based on sugarcane, alcohol, milk, meat, fish, rice, wheat, fruits, vegetables and vegetable oils. These were followed by industries which had no existing agronomic base but became centrepieces of colonial work and culture: tea, coffee, bread, biscuits, confectionery, soft drinks, hydrogenated fats (*vanaspathi*). Accordingly, the author has spun a tale on each of these items devoting twelve chapters to them. He has ended this feast with a product born of industrial need, packaging, and a brief review of some factors that shaped industrial policy and development during India's two centuries of British rule.

Achaya is at his best when he is tracing history. Each chapter which begins with a brief reference to the commodity in Vedic sources and goes on to dwell at length on colonial developments makes interesting reading. Though the British 'mined' the areas they controlled as well as the principalities of many of their royal friends to produce salt from nine different sources, their trade practices in this commodity led to high local prices and, ultimately, the levy of the salt tax which proved so unpopular that it became a catalyst of the Indian Independence movement. Despite the political nature of British dealings around this essential constituent, Achaya steers clear of political pronouncements in this chapter and virtually throughout the book.

The chapter on sweeteners—sugarcane, palm jaggery and honey—is a smorgasbord of botanical details and administrative intrigues. Among colonial figures who were involved in developing sugar production there was a Cooke and a Crooke. The latter gentleman set up the first privately-owned sugar factory in

India in 1784. The former profited from sugar exports to the London market after 1836, when the terms of trade for East Indian sugar were equalized with those for sugar from the West Indies.

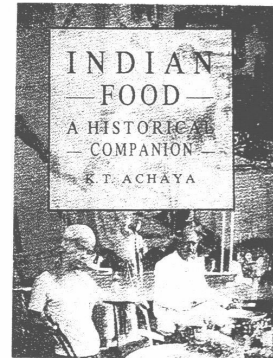
Alcoholic beverages have been known in India since ancient times, including distilled liquors, beers from malted grains, and wines—*sura* from the *mahua* flower, *arak* from toddy, *pichwaii*, a rice beer. Eminent names such as Carew, Parry and, of course, Dyer and Meakin were associated with the development of distilleries. The United Provinces were the locus for the establishment of breweries and distilleries, while Kashmir produced "gold medal" wines and brandies!

Similarly, a wide range of dairy products existed traditionally. The British introduced military dairy farms, and large agricultural farms. Names such as Aarey, Polson and Keventer are familiar even to those who were born well after Midnight and grew up in Independent India. A lesser known fact, however, is that the Kaira Cooperative Milk Producers Union as formed in 1946 at the instigation of Vallabhbai and Vithalbai Patel to break the monopoly that Polson enjoyed at Anand—ultimately destroying the company.

The chapters on animal products and vegetable oils are perhaps the most interesting. The first provides a fascinating account of the fish industry, its natural resource base, and a variety of mouth-watering end-products. If you wondered what guano and maws are, here are the answers: guano, a fertilizer produced from the dried residue of fish pressed for oil; maws, the air-bladders of fish from which isinglass, a substitute for gelatin, is produced. *Gudhabuddhaka* were ancient stalls set up to sell alligator and tortoise meat. The production of vegetable oils—in the hundreds of thousands of tonnes—was based on a range of quaint technologies, from *ghanis* to handscrew presses, until large-scale power mills were established in the 1930s.

Sadly disappointing are the brief chapters on tea and coffee, and on confectionery. One would have thought that with the British penchant for these items, there would be more exciting tales to tell—to explain, on the one hand, the great success of the tea industry, and on the other, why sweets and chocolates produced in India under the nose of colonial epicures never quite reached the standards achieved "back home".

The only analytical chapter in the book



is the last, entitled "Factors in Industrial Growth". Here, aspects of the food industry are examined alongside other major industrial developments that took place between 1757 and 1947. The author briefly reviews the history of industrial development from traditional modes of production and trade to scientific and technological organizations which were set up to foster industry. He then looks into matters such as transport and tariffs, explaining the impact of these on industrial development. And finally, he evaluates the effects of industrial growth on capital formation and the drain of wealth.

It is not my intention to give a way his punchlines. Suffice it to say that there is as much food for thought in this last chapter as 'thought for food' created by the earlier ones. Why did Indians not play a more visible role in the development of food industries which already had such a robust natural and cultural base before the advent of the British? What role did the Indian Industrial Commission of 1916, of which Madan Mohan Malaviya was a member, play? Were there any checks on the expropriative nature of managing agencies set up, of duties and tariffs, or of the transport systems developed? What was the impact of the two World Wars? Ultimately, why is it that food industries in India have remained monopolistic despite the very rich, varied and widespread resource base?

Towards the end of the book, Achaya provides a quote from Chatterton, another member of the Indian Industrial Commission. At the turn of the last century he said: "There can only be a vigorous and healthy industrial life when it is carried out by the people themselves—that is, they must supply the capital, take the risks, enjoy the profits, bear the losses, and, above all, undertake the management and control of the many branches into which it is subdivided..." "Grave food for thought as this century turns in the climate of liberalization and globalization.

Meera Chatterjee is a nutrition scientist and health planner who has worked extensively on India's nutrition and health situation, programmes and policies.

Imperialist Turned Mystic

Parshotam Mehra

YOUNGHUSBAND: THE LAST GREAT IMPERIAL ADVENTURER

By Patrick French

Harper Collins Publishers, 1994, pp. 440, £20

A rare and in some respects even unique blend of an explorer, a geographer, writer, diehard imperialist, philosopher and mystic, Francis ('Frank') Younghusband occupied, in so far as British India was concerned, the centre-stage in the last two decades of the 19th and the opening decade of the present century. In the 1880-1890s, as a formidable explorer and mountaineer: across Manchuria and then the Gobi and down the Mustang. And later as the Raj's trouble shooter in Hunza, Sinkiang and the Pamirs. In 1903-4, he was to lead an ostensibly peaceful mission across the Jelep la into Tibet which before long took the shape of an armed expedition with the twin objectives of countering non-existent Russian intrigue and opening up the land to an almost negligible Indian overland trade. For Britain, and the world he was to span another three decades and in a variety of fascinating roles: as father of the Karakoram exploration; an Everest enthusiast; a member of the Great Game elite; a devout Christian. Above all, a founder of the World Congress of Faiths. In the 1930s, he was sympathetic to the cause of Indian nationalism and, during a brief visit, deeply struck by "the fearfully keen and intelligent Congress wallahs".

Not unexpectedly, a major part of this large and impressive study—a little over two-thirds of its volume—deals with the explorer and the Great Game imperial adventurer. And while not a few in this country would be interested in Younghusband's later preoccupations with the realm of the spirit, it is to his earlier career that many will doubtless turn.

Born at Murree (1863), now in Pakistan, Younghusband's upbringing had been Victorian in the best sense of the term: regular daily prayers; inculcation of filial piety; and the veritable Sunday school. At 13, he went to Clifton College which had a traditional role of preparing boys for a career in the Army; at 17, he was inducted into Sandhurst where Allenby and Sir Herbert Lawrence (later Haig's chief of staff) were his contemporaries. Two years later, Younghusband was to join the 1st Royal Dragoon Guards, then stationed at Meerut, as a subaltern.

On the premise that the next Russian move would be in the direction of Manchuria, Younghusband was able to persuade his somewhat unbelieving superiors that intelligence gathering there was

an urgent necessity. In the event, a 3-member mission (including Younghusband) spent a little over six months (May-December 1886) surveying the land. Sadly though for all their labours, they had to conclude that there were "no signs of an immediate Russian threat" to this remote part of Chinese territory!

Hardly had his Manchurian venture drawn to a close when Younghusband embarked on a singularly impossible journey across the Gobi through Hami, Turfan and Kashgar—to Kashmir. Even though "all the terrible vagueness and uncertainty of everything" impressed itself upon him, he was determined to blaze a trail. And did.

The crossing of the inhospitable, trackless Gobi was hazardous enough—"a succession of gravel ranges without any sign of life, animal or vegetable, and not a drop of water", yet worse was in store. And this was the descent of the 19,000 ft Mustagh pass on the edge of K-2 which marks the watershed between India and Central Asia. It was an amazing feat of physical daring, especially because he and his men had no equipment worth the name. "Knotting turbans and reins for ropes" and backing steps in the ice "with a pickaxe and trusting to a grip from frozen, bootless feet," Younghusband managed what the veteran Swedish explorer of these parts was to call "the most difficult and dangerous achievement in these mountains so far."

Younghusband's next two journeys—to Hunza and the Pamirs—were exer-

Not unexpectedly, a major part of this large and impressive study—a little over two-thirds of its volume—deals with the explorer and the Great Game imperial adventurer. And while not a few in this country would be interested in Younghusband's later preoccupations with the realm of the spirit, it is to his earlier career that many will doubtless turn.

cises in combating what was then rated a major threat to the Raj: the possibility of a Tsarist Russian invasion through the empty spaces of Central Asia. The Chinese, then in the death-throes of the long-lived Manchu regime, though resilient to a degree, were yet finding it difficult to resist the Muscovites. Younghusband's three-fold objective was to plug in the secret pass through which the Kanjutis (a Kirghiz name for the people of Hunza) plundered the caravan route between Leh and Yarkand; seek out the skulking Grombchevsky, the Russian agent actively engaged surveying these parts; and tame the Mir of Hunza whom the British were finding increasingly recalcitrant.

His success was limited. The Mir for one was not willing to change his ways; nor Grombchevsky cease his travels, in the short run at any rate. The above notwithstanding, Younghusband was presently able to persuade his masters to undertake a journey to the Pamirs, to investigate a gap between Afghanistan and the Chinese empire which could pose a danger to the security of the Indian frontier. In the event, his celebrated brush with a party of Cossacks headed by Colonel Yanov at Bozai Gumbuz nearly brought the two empires to a clash of arms.

The centrepiece of the book, as of Younghusband's Indian career, was the expedition to Lhasa (1903-4). Conceived by Curzon, the overbearing imperial proconsul, its essential purpose was to unmask an imaginary conspiracy to take over Tibet's Dalai Lama under the Tsar's wings. And in so far as Chinese control over the country was conspicuous by its absence—professions to the contrary notwithstanding—the Raj feared for the worst.

Curzon who had met and known Younghusband long before he took over as Governor-General (1899) had little difficulty in choosing him as leader of the expedition. Both were rabid Russophobes and, as is well-known, literally hijacked a weak, and very unwilling British government into acquiescence, by blatant half-truths and deliberate distortions. In the event, a diplomatic mission originally intended to sort out some vague allegations of intrusion on the Sikkim border and opening up a trade mart inside Tibet, ended up as an armed expedition to bring the Tibetan ruler to heel and expose his nefarious intrigues with St Petersburg.

It was a sad, sordid business. The "hostile" Tibetan army proved to be a phantom; Russian intrigue, pure figment of a fevered, if fertile imagination. And yet in the process of these discoveries, hundreds of Tibetan yokels, "armed" with sticks and slings, and "protected" by amulets from their uncouth lamas, were massacred in cold blood even as they offered uncompromising resistance to their uninvited, and unwelcome, guests. The end result could never be in doubt: the "victorious" British army marched into Lhasa and dictated terms of peace to a

hastily constituted authority that it had managed to establish. For hot on the heels of Younghusband and his men, Tibet's Dalai Lama, both its spiritual as well as temporal ruler, had made good his escape.

Sadly for Curzon and his protegee, the Lhasa adventure proved to be a disaster. The Governor-General, increasingly out of step with his political masters in Whitehall, soon found himself out of his job; Younghusband, who had exceeded if not deliberately disobeyed instructions, practically at a loose end. The Lhasa convention that he had so solemnly concluded was materially modified; the honour he had so covetously sought, flatly denied. His political career drew virtually to a close.

A word here on Younghusband's works which relate to his Indian career and on which the book under review has leaned heavily for its narrative. *The Heart of a Continent*, first published in London in 1896—and which has since run into several editions—gives a fascinating account of Younghusband's travels in Manchuria, through the Gobi and down the Mustang; the Tibet expedition is retailed in *India and Tibet* (1910) while *The Light of Experience* (1927) takes care, inter alia, of his journeys in Sinkiang and the Pamirs.

The last phase of Younghusband's life—he retired in 1912 after a brief stint as British Resident in Kashmir—was taken up by a number of causes he now steadfastly owned and above all, by mysticism and a spiritual quest for a world leader. In the process he spawned numerous societies to realise his dreams and authored an unending stream of books—sadly not all of them listed by his biographer. Out of nearly a score and more, a few titles picked up at random may bear mention: *Life in the Stars* (1927); *The Coming Country: A Pre-vision* (1928); *The Reign of God* (1930); *The Heart of Nature* (1931); *A Venture of Faith* (1937). And what proved to be his swan song, *The Wedding* (1942).

With growing spiritual attainments and some vague mystic experiences, Younghusband drew into his fold a variety of characters. The most intriguing, as revealed in this study was an attractive young woman, Madeline Lees. Married, a mother of seven children and almost half his age, Madeline drew closer and closer—both physically and, no doubt, spiritually—to "My very own, my very dearest Sir Francis" and confessed to loving him "More and ever more my beloved one." Not that Younghusband did not return her outpourings:

Oh! my Madeline, oh my precious precious Madeline—how can I bear the joy... Oh! what a blessed, blessed time that was—to feel that you were always there—just at the end of the passage and that at any time we could go to each other. And when we did go to each other. Oh! what happiness we had—unbelievable!

In the event, Younghusband seriously revised his earlier plans to be buried in

the Himalayas which had always fascinated him and wanted it to be close to Beacon Hill; his resting place a shrine that "wd. commemorate our romance." The interesting part of this liaison was its passionate pursuit during the dark, stormy days of World War II (1940-2) when London and much of England was exposed to the relentless Nazi blitz.

Patrick French is English, a student of American literature and, at 27, remarkably young. The research and travel in China right up to the border in Sikkim, where Younghusband launched his expedition and a number of places where he spent his years in India that have gone into his first book are well-nigh exhaustive. French's language is crisp and the text well-honed. The clever juxtaposition of the author's personal impressions of men and places with those of Younghusband in his own day makes for illuminating comparisons. All through the text, marking sub-sections in each chapter, sit scores of the seated Buddha, a replica of the present the Tibetan regent, Tri Rimpoche, gave Younghusband.

If one may end on a brief personal

note. A little over four decades ago, fascinated by the mission to the land of the Lama, this reviewer undertook a detailed study which apart from a research degree and a work published in London, brought him into close contact with Dame Eileen Younghusband, her father's daughter and indeed only surviving child. A formidable social activist, happily she was singularly receptive to all enquiries and gave me uninhibited access to all her father's papers and diaries then stacked in two huge sacks in her London flat. With a narrow field of interest, a thorough examination of this rich, almost virgin source material, was not called for. Today, with Dame Eileen no more, the sacks and their contents have found their way into the British Library archives; their long-postponed scrutiny by Patrick French yielding a remarkable study of the man behind the mission to holy Lhasa.

Parshotam Mehra is a former Professor and Chairman, Department of History and Central Asian Studies, Punjab University, Chandigarh.

India Re-invented

Sabyasachi Bhattacharya

INDIA: IMPACT OF THE WEST

By Amita Das

Popular Prakashan, 1994, pp. ixv+113, Rs. 225.00

The proposition that India was re-discovered by the nineteenth century Indian nationalists has a corollary that is now receiving attention. It is the equally self-evident statement that India was also re-invented. Does that suggest an alternative to the title of Jawaharlal Nehru's *Discovery of India*? Such an irreverent suggestion, if I remember correctly, has been made. The point of that is to underline the role of the nationalist ideologues in creating India anew in the imagination of our people. That vigorous creative effort was never matched by professional historians. In particular that book remains unique. No doubt its reach remained limited to the few who read it in the English language. Its appreciation was perhaps still more limited, given the nuances and ambivalences of a mind finely-balanced between love for a civilization that was his heritage and empathy for the European civilization which he acquired. Nevertheless, in the battle for the mind of India the book was a landmark. At the Nehru Centre in Bombay researchers and museologists have been at work for many years to create a visual presentation of the message of *The Discovery of India*. The Director of that work, Dr Amita Das, now offers a succinctly written account of *India: Impact of the West* in juxtaposition with Nehru's

historical writings on that theme, particularly from *The Discovery of India*.

Dr Das's book begins with a brief historical account of the early European infiltration into India, followed by chapters containing evaluations of the impact of English rule on India's economy, educational and scientific endeavours, and social reforms. The writings of Nehru are appropriately placed in this context, with added details from recent research. In the chapters on modern Indian languages, literature and on visual arts, the author goes well beyond Nehru's cursory observations. She offers a very useful account of cultural nationalism manifested in visual arts in the early 20th century. In the last chapter there are illuminating observations on the reverse flow, the Indian influence on the West. Unfortunately television presentations of intellectual themes or history are monstrously inadequate. Ogden Nash wrote in the great days of the cinema: 'Cecil B. DeMille/ Rather against his will/ Was persuaded to leave Moses/ Out of the Wars of the Roses.' Despite these deterring thoughts the idea of an audio-visual presentation on the lines of this book is tempting.

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Manipulating the Dance of Numbers

Sanjiv Kakar

REGULATING REPRODUCTION IN INDIA'S POPULATION: EFFORTS, RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

By K. Srinivasan

Sage Publications, 1995, pp. 336, Rs. 350.00

Of the many and diverse interventions in the area of population control, this is one by a demographer. Large as India's population is (slated to touch the billion mark by the end of the century), regulating this is a task of even greater magnitude. It is this mixture of abundance and concern that sums up the spirit of this book.

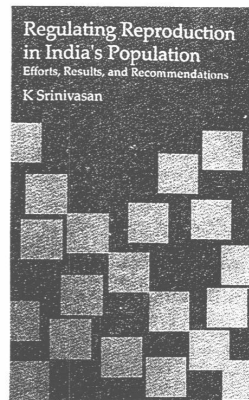
In the first chapter, "Population Concerns before Independence" the author dabbles in historical study with the result that this is the weakest chapter in the book. There are useful bits of information no doubt: India's population registered steady increases only since the 1920s; Neo-Malthusian leagues were formed in India in the early years of this century, derivative of similar lobbies in the Mother Country; public debate on artificial means of birth control emerged in the 1870s in Britain and by extension to some circles in India, especially in Madras and Bombay cities; Gandhi's opposition was damper, but the All-India women's Conference went ahead nonetheless, and birth control measures were approved at their 1935 annual meeting.

What is lacking is a historical perspective. The author is unaware of the political dimension to public health in British India, where imperial priorities dictated agendas and budgets rather than the health needs of the Indian people. Secondly, there is an innocence about the implication of medical persons within the wider ideology of imperialism. Some bland comments need to be rethought and located within a political context: "The British rulers had adopted a policy of non-interference in Indian social matters, and, as far as possible, did not take any measure which could be considered as an intrusion in Indian traditions, customs, values, and beliefs." In reality such interference did take place, but only when it was politic, when commercial interests were threatened, with calls for boycott of Indian goods during plague, for instance.

Soon after Independence the official programme of family planning was launched, drawing on the report of the Bhore Committee (1946): the Report, incidentally, is one of the landmark docu-

ments in our public health history. But official sponsorship was not much more than a genuflection, as the second chapter, "Population policies and programs since Independence" outlines. The First Five year Plan (1951-56) envisaged that an intrinsic demand existed for family planning, and conceived the role of the state to offer necessary services. Successive plans expanded clinical and other facilities, and the sterilization programme was launched. Not until the Third Plan (1961-66) was the clinic-based approach made more broad-based: the extension-education approach, and making family planning integral to the public health system in every state, remain the hallmarks of the programme to date. The author informs us also of the uniqueness of the Third Plan, where "for the first time, a demographic goal was set: a crude birth rate of 25 by 1972, a goal judged in retrospect as overly ambitious." The Fourth Plan placed family planning on a higher priority and oral contraceptives were sought to be popularized. But the high rate of population growth continued unabated, from 439.2 million in 1961 to 548.2 million in 1971. The Fifth Plan (1974-79) envisaged a more rigorous effort, with insistence on performance targets from all concerned sectors.

But the scenario changed with the imposition of Emergency in 1976. The author's comment is worth quoting in full: "Family planning program performance during 1976-77 was the best ever realized in the history of any country, with a total of 8.26 previous four years. Had this tempo continued, even on a slightly more modest scale, for a few more years India's birth rate would definitely have plunged as dramatically as it did in China." Two points need to be made here: firstly, that nowhere in the book are the dangers of dealing with targets and achievements, without first filtering them through the prism of social justice and human rights, more explicitly visible; secondly, that a burgeoning population bursting all bounds is itself a denial of human dignity. Here lies a salutary warning to all of us, not to be lured into defending the atrocities committed during the



Emergency, which have wide communal and gender implications, in the name of population control. There must be other means.

Following the 1977 elections, family planning was replaced with a new Family Welfare Programme, with a commitment to bring down the birth rate to 25 per thousand by 1984. Subsequent plans are discussed in detail, with fine analytical insights; the author also highlights the shifts in policy, such as the change in focus during the Sixth Plan (1980-85) from the crude birth rate to the net reproduction rate, drawing from a realization that birth rates are hooked up with mortality rates, especially infant mortality. The Seventh and Eighth Plans, spilling over to 1997, carried forward these concerns, expressed in the Draft National population Policy of 1994.

The middle chapters of the book reveal the author at his best: these cover natural fertility and nuptiality, demographic and development changes, contraception, and the impact of modernisation on fertility. The strength of these chapters lies in the easy access to data, quite shorn of specialized terminology. These chapters are a treasure trove of insights, and they have to be read. Here some scattered examples must suffice. Demographic changes in India are examined with great sensitivity, with the view that "India's population problem is not only its large size but persistent high rate of growth." Growth is analyzed regionally, but it is also gender sensitive: the sex ratio has declined over the last decade, with a continuing deficit of females to males. Urban-rural differentials, mortality patterns and the role of public health bodies are read in the context of the developmental and industrial interventions, as well as in comparison with other regional nations. Chapter 7 offers "Case Studies of Three Successful Fertility Transition States: Goa, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu". The object is "to draw lessons... in the other areas of the country that have

not been so successful in fertility transition." Goa is cited as a state where women's status is "quite high"; socio-economic factors such as living standards and a widespread acceptance of contraception are the causes of fertility decline, rather than governmental efforts, which really endorsed existing practices. The author found in Kerala a balanced "top-down" and "bottom-up" approach conducive to fertility decline. Women's access to literacy and their improved status are cited as being central to the demographic transition here.

What then is to be done for the rest of the nation? Since Independence life expectancy in India has increased, so has literacy, and infant mortality is down. But compared to other developing countries, the record is disappointing: in 1990 China had 0.76 infant deaths below the age of 1 year, whereas in India the figure was 2.3 million. India's population continues to grow at about 2% a year, which takes us back to the situation of the 1950s. The decline in fertility in Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu compare with China and South Korea, but the slow pace of fertility decline in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh pull down the national figures. Political will, devolution of responsibility to the states, shifting the focus from sterilization to spacing methods, and targeting the programme to potentially fertile couples are some of the measures that the author urges us to pursue. Of vital importance is the crying need to improve child survival, with which discussion the book concludes.

Finally, the tone of the book is optimistic: "The problems of achieving replacement levels of fertility in India as a whole, especially in the large northern states, though difficult, are not insurmountable, if... tackled with tact, concern, and care." This study serves the valuable role of pinpointing just what is going on in this dance of numbers, so we know exactly where the population is declining, where it is increasing, not only in different states but at more minute levels, by identifying target groups which must be motivated. What is needed is to supplement this study with other kinds of interventions, and other methodologies, such as using oral testimony, especially women's voices. This is one means to safeguard against making the female body the site where the problem of the population explosion is located. Rather, the burden of responsibility must be placed squarely where it belongs, in the social and historical fabric, howsoever dispersed this may be, and woman's body be seen as the focus of support, not of blame. The author keeps coming back to this point; but his reiteration that social justice for women is the key to any successful family planning programme has tended, in this country, to fall on deaf ears.

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The Happening and the Presentation

Urvashi Butalia

Most people who have listened to or seen or read coverage of the Beijing conference, could be forgiven for thinking that the conference was little more than a jamboree, a kitty party where little of substance was discussed. Media coverage of the conference has been unprecedented: internationally and within national boundaries, the conference has received considerable attention. But what is at question is not the amount of attention, but the *quality* of this attention. Several years after women activists began the struggle for a more fair, just and inclusive media, they have learnt another valuable lesson: that it is not enough to fight for more space and more representation; equally, it is the *kind* of space you get that is as important. The Platform of Action for Beijing notes that "Print and electronic media in most countries do not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society in a changing world." It is an irony that just as this was being debated and discussed, the print and electronic media the world over were engaged in distorting and trivializing the seriousness of women's interest in a meeting as important as the Fourth World Conference on Women. More, new technologies have ensured that the views of a few—for that is what this biased coverage was—reach the world in a matter of minutes. Most Indian papers, for example, did not bother to send their senior journalists to Beijing and Huairou, and relied mainly on agency reports, or on information put together by CNN. They did not stop to ask whether American viewpoints could be any different from those of people from the so-called developing world.

Perhaps it is precisely because the meeting was an important one, because a gathering of thousands of women from all over the world was an unprecedented thing, because the seriousness of the issues being debated struck at the very roots of the fear that lies deep down in many people—both men and women: will this mean the destruction of the family, will women now seek control over their sexuality, will the invisible half of the population suddenly demand to be treated as human beings... perhaps it was because of all these things that people felt the meeting had to be trivialized. It is this that caused the Faroukh Dhondys and the Vir Sanghvis and the Rizwan Salims to pontificate about the "jamboree", to advocate "boycott", to hold forth about lesbians and prostitutes and their rights—something which has been of negligible concern to these gentlemen.

Interestingly, very little coverage of the Beijing conference has anything to do with the *content* of the conference. The arrangements, yes. The supposed surveillance, yes. Hilary Clinton, yes. But what about the hundreds of thousands of discussions, what about the seriousness of issues being debated, what about the

networks that were formed, what about the lobbying with government that NGOs did, working often into the small hours, to get their issues on the agenda. None of this finds a space.

Let's look at what *really* happened. And let me begin by establishing my credentials: unlike the Dhondys and the Sanghvis and a host of others who are spreading false propaganda, I'm writing here about what I saw and participated in. In other words, I know because I was *there*. My starting point is not a moral high ground—I would not presume to adopt that though a host of (largely) male journalists have had no qualms in doing so. What follows is one experience, one view of the Beijing-Huairou conference. There can be—and indeed there are—many others.

For a start, none of the critics of the conference, and particularly those who complain about China's human rights record, have stopped to ask themselves: was the choice of venue anything to do with the world's women? The choice was a *political* one, made at the level of the United Nations, under pressure from a number of governments, included among which was the United States. Women all over the world did not take the decision to move the NGO Forum to Huairou, 50 km away from Beijing lying down. They protested, raised questions, sent telegrams, lobbied and then put their solidarity behind the organisers of the NGO Forum who were charged with making the final decision. The organisers then visited the site, voiced their doubts, there was considerable discussion by fax and e-mail, by telephone and letter, among the international feminist community, about the pros and cons of shifting the venue, and in the end, it was decided to put faith in the decision of the Organising Committee (which was, incidentally, itself divided) and to go for Huairou.

This decision was greeted with considerable scepticism, especially by the western media. And even before the conference began, rumours had begun to spread: buildings were not complete, there were only 60 toilets, no one would be allowed to go anywhere other than within the conference site, surveillance was rife, you could not even speak in taxis for fear that taxi drivers were intelligence men, and so on.

The reality, however, was rather different. At least for the Indians. As the Indian delegation to the NGO Forum arrived at Beijing airport, hundreds of volunteers stood around the colourfully decorated airport, as women sailed through immigration and customs, giving the lie to the astonishing propaganda about how difficult the Chinese were being. Special buses waited to take the delegates to their hotels, an army of young students (some put the numbers as high as 100,000) helped people to check in, carried their bags, cleaned their rooms,

helped with changing money, gave directions, advised on food. Barely 16-17 years old, these young men and women worked sometimes 18 hours a day, just so that the visitors could be made to feel "at home".

The formidable Chinese capacity for organising was very much in evidence at these two mammoth meetings, and gave the lie to much of the negative propaganda that had dominated the media. As one delegate said: "we were really frightened. We had read that there were only 60 toilets for the whole conference. But the site turned out to be dotted with toilets at every step. And what is more, they were clean, non-smelly and remained like that throughout the ten days of the conference. This would never have happened in India."

Toilets apart, the considerable negative reporting about security arrangements, surveillance and lack of freedom for the delegates also turned out to be unfounded. It was this that led South Asians and others to get together and present a letter to the China Organising Committee before the closing of the NGO Forum, countering much of the negative propaganda. This is not to say that there was no surveillance at all. Events considered "sensitive" by the Chinese government were monitored in some way or other. This related mostly to meetings on Tibet, but contrary to many reports, no stops were put on lesbian events. There was a lesbian tent, and also a lesbian solidarity march; equally there were discussions on a whole range of other issues. None of the critics of the so-called surveillance have, surprisingly, stopped to ask themselves if there wouldn't be such surveillance if there was a meeting which discussed sensitive issues such as Kashmir and the northeast here. Security was much more in evidence at the official conference in Beijing, but this was because many member governments of the UN had insisted on security for their delegates. There is little point in blaming the Chinese for this.

So what actually happened at Beijing? Or, more precisely, what happened at the NGO conference, for we know that the main task of the official conference was to get as much agreement as possible on the Draft Platform for Action, a document that will hopefully strengthen the hands of those governments (precious few) who actually want to do something for women. Spread over a 42 hectare area in the satellite city of Huairou, the NGO Forum was host to some 36,000 women from all over the world. Spread out in rooms, tents, and all manner of other enclosures, this area saw some 300-350 workshops and discussions on a wide range of subjects each day.

Delegates were provided detailed programme guides which included maps of the area. Each day began with a plenary session on one or other subject, on which eminent women from all over the world spoke. Accompanying the workshops and plenaries were stalls and informal centres that distributed everything ranging from books to t-shirts to literature about NGOs and campaigns, and much more. A daily newspaper, the NGO

Forum newsletter appeared every day, carrying stories of events, people, programmes and campaigns, as well as last minute changes in workshops etc. And then there were the endless informal meetings, the cafeterias, the song and dance. Women did what they often do—transformed an event into something that was simultaneously serious and enjoyable; they talked, discussed things, chalked out action plans, and carried on their discussions over coffee, a drink, or simply watched and listened to cultural events from different parts of the world.

Perhaps it was because the women were not sitting around board tables, and because they seemed to be having so much fun, that the critics have been so vocal. But fun apart, a great deal of hard work was done. Shortly after the official conference began, delegates from the NGO Forum began to make regular trips to Beijing (in the buses provided by the organisers, or in public buses) to meet with official delegates, to lobby with them, to try to get them to take up issues for inclusion in the official document. At regular intervals they held press conferences, public hearings, and all kinds of meetings to discuss and debate issues relating to structural adjustment policies, their impact on women's lives, human rights, violence against women, reproductive rights, the impact of fundamentalism on women, and many, many others.

It can be argued that there was little need to spend this kind of money on a conference, that little is gained by conferences, that the kind of money that went into the NGO Forum would have been enough to feed several villages in the developing world. And women would be the first to admit that there is some truth in these arguments. At the same time, there is some truth also in the counter arguments: that international level solidarity and activism are important, that it is necessary to build bridges, to gain knowledge, to liaise at a south-south and north-south level. Discussions such as the ones that took place at Beijing-Huairou revealed both the commonalities and differences in women's perceptions: some issues had more importance for women from southern countries, while others related more to women from the north. But there has been little serious discussion about the issues emerging from the conference. There has, for example, been no talk at all of any of the hundreds of workshops that took place—perhaps because very few media people actually bothered to attend these. Instead, the focus has been on the gossip, the controversies, the sensationalist stories.

For women the world over, however, Beijing has meant some gains, some losses. While media people continue to complain about what a jamboree it was, women activists have already started work on the onerous task of trying to ensure their governments follow the priorities set forth in the Platform for Action, both in letter and spirit. At least they have their priorities right!

Urvashi Butalia is the co-founder of Kali for Women, a feminist publishing house.

Making The Whole World Kin

By H.Y. Sharada Prasad

Translations are an important link in the chain that connects writers with readers. They perform a particularly useful function by enabling people of one language to get acquainted with the best books and authors from other languages. They make the whole world kin and rescue a literature from turning too parochial. They enlarge people's mental horizons and sharpen their comparative judgement and taste.

In our country translations have also been assigned a role in what used to be described as national integration. The phrase is not as fashionable today as it used to be but the need for mutual understanding of regional cultures is by no means a thing of the past. It continues to be a matter of shame that we should be ignorant of some of the greatest writers of our own land while the work of writers of the second order from abroad are read and even prescribed for study in our schools and colleges. We should not forget that it is the translations and repeated renderings of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, as much as the Himalayas, the Ganga and the monsoon, which made our civilisation and gave our people a sense of oneness. They also contributed immeasurably to the growth of our various literatures.

I shall not indulge in that favourite sport witnessed at gatherings of Indian authors, namely English-baiting. Without English, we would not be able to talk to each other, let alone get to know the best that in being written in Bengali or Marathi or Telugu. Nor would we get to know Tolstoy and Solzhenitsyn, Balzac and Sartre, Goethe and Gunter Grass, Rabelais, or Gabriel Garcia Marquez. We must welcome the new spirit of translation from Indian languages into English and the private publishing houses which have taken up the task of publishing them with such gusto, supplementing the pioneering efforts of the Sahitya Akademi and the National Book Trust.

The increasing availability in English of books from our various languages, welcome as it is, has also done a disservice. It is inhibiting the urge to read the authors in the original by learning other languages. There was a time when people from all parts of the land learnt Bengali in

order to read Bankim, Rabindranath and Sarat in their own accents. But who is learning Kannada in order to read Karanath, Karnad or Ananthamurthy in the original? The best of translations would be no substitute for reading a writer in the original. I have translated into English a couple of novels of Karanath and a couple of stories by Ananthamurthy in the course of which the beauty of some passages so defied me that I began to appreciate the meaning of that Indian statement that a translator is a traitor.

We ought not to pass remarks on the original only on the basis of its translation, but we keep doing so. It is this tendency that accounts for the latest storm in India's literary teacup. I refer to Khushwant Singh's dismissive remarks against Rabindranath Tagore. I submit that this exercise of the freedom of opinion by no means takes away from Tagore's achievement. Khushwant Singh has only done what he loves to do—call someone names, kick up a shindy, and get talked about. I also suspect that another reason is beard-envy. But the basic trouble as I said is the habit of passing judgement without having read the original. And that is a little baffling on the part of one who is himself a good translator.

Gurudev, we need not hesitate to concede, was not his own best translator. A ready example is the best known poem of the *Gitanjali*, "Where the mind is without fear". Those who have heard the original will grant that the first line is adequately translated into English, but what should we make of a line like "where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection"? The charge that Tagore is not his best translator proves nothing about the worth or greatness of Tagore's works. The remark that his poems were not poems at all but mere songs is even more daft. In societies where poetry matters and has a wide following, poems are apt to be songs. It is in societies where poetry has become a minor form of literature that poems are read silently in libraries. The pieces in *Speaking of Siva* translated by A.K. Ramanujam were all songs, but that did not prevent them from being among the greatest poetry the world has known.

I won't go into the problems faced by

translators and other particular challenges of translating poetry and translating prose. I would only remark that while it needs a poet to translate a poet (hence P. Lal's theory of transcreation), it does not need a novelist to translate a novelist. Prose or poetry, every act of translation is at best an approximation, a limited success. A recent article in an American literary journal compares the numerous translations into English of Dante's *Divine Comedy*—there are more than a hundred—and tells us that almost none has succeeded in capturing his "rowdiness and vulgar eloquence", the very qualities which accounted for its instant mass appeal in Italy and made donkey-drivers and blacksmiths sing it at the crossroads and in taverns. To quote from the critic, an entire society speaks through Dante in endless regional, city and class accents—haughty Ghibelline warlords, suave Bolognese pimps, testy Roman popes, mild abducted nuns, oversexed Lombard noblewomen, each with a personal voice, stuttering, sobbing, mumbling. But a translator renders them all into a uniform texture of speech in another language for it is next to impossible to translate the dialects of one language into the dialects of another. The complaint against Longfellow is that he translated Dante into English dictionary, not the English language.

I referred to *Speaking of Siva* in which Ramanujan has rendered into English some poems of medieval Kannada saints. In his long and engaging introduction of the book Ramanujan explains his approach in the words: "In the act of translation, the spirit killeth and the letter giveth life". Any direct attack on the spirit of the work is foredoomed to fuzziness. Only the literal text, the word made flesh, can take us to the world behind the words.

Note how Ramanujan has knowingly distorted the original Biblical reference to the spirit and the letter. Further the original sentence in the *Corinthians* is: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The letter-spirit controversy will go on as long as translation goes on, which will go on as long as literary creation goes on.

Some years ago I had a rather depressing experience when I went through a slender book claiming to be English translations of some poems of Bendre, generally recognized as the greatest modern poet in my language—Kannada. Bendre, if anything is a poet of ecstasy with an instant vertical takeoff. No student of Kannada fails to be swayed by the sheer magic of his lines celebrating the grandeur of mid-monsoon rains.

These mesmerising lines# have been rendered in the book as:

Arrived shravana in the forest! Came to the country!

Came to the residential area! Shra-

vana arrived*

This is an instance of neither the spirit killeth nor the letter killeth but the translator killeth.

The translator indeed killeth more often than we realise. Milan Kundera in one of his books has described his travails with translators which should remove the impression that only the translation of poetry is a hurdles race and that the translation of prose is a cakewalk.

Says Kundera: "The *Joke* was translated into all the western languages. But what surprises! In France the translator rewrote my novel by ornamenting my style. In England, the publisher cut out all the reflective passages, climaxed the musicological chapters, changed the order of parts, recomposed the novel. Another country: I meet my translator, a man who knows not a word of Czech. "Then how did you translate it?" "With my heart". Of course it turned out to be much simpler—he had worked from the French rewrite, as had the translator in Argentina."

All of us who translate put our heart into the task. But as the excerpt from Kundera proves, it is not enough. Paul Valery is more near the secret of translation in his remark: "This is really to translate, which is to reconstitute as nearly as possible the effect of a certain cause." The effect takes care of the spirit 'as nearly as possible', the importance of the letter, brought up by Ramanujan.

Translation from one European language into another European language or from one Indian language to another is easier than from an Indian language into a European and vice versa. That is because languages belonging to the European civilization have a common stock of metaphors, myths, memories and historical, religious and aesthetic experiences. So have the languages of India among themselves. As one of our writers recently remarked, "The English language has no memory of Krishna; it knows nothing of the hold of the Krishna mythology on the Indian psyche". All of us know that English cannot offer us equivalents for such everyday Indian expressions as *prarabdh*, *rinavubarishtha*, *sutaka*. The translator does find it difficult to negotiate what Professor Samuel Harrington has called civilisational fault lines in a wholly different context.

* Page 14, Spring Fire published by the Ambicadaniya data Vedike and Purogani Sahitya Prakashana, Hubli.

H.Y. Sharada Prasad is a former Information Advisor to the Prime Minister and has translated a couple of Kannada books into English.

Excerpts from an address at the Sahitya Akademi Translation Awards Function, August 16, 1995. Courtesy: Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi.

ಶ್ರಾವಣದ ಅರಣ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದೆ
 ದೇಶಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದೆ, ನಿರವಧಿ
 ನಿರವಧಿ ಬಂದೆ, ನಿರವಧಿ

Plaiting History and Fiction

Richard Walker

RED EARTH AND POURING RAIN

By Vikram Chandra

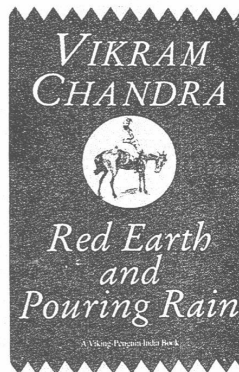
Viking, Penguin Books India, 1995, pp. 400, Rs. 299.00

First, I should declare an interest. The dust jacket of *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* says that its author is interested in computers. This is also the first novel I've seen in which the author's EMail address follows the copyright assignation. Curious, and to see whether this was bluff I sent the author an EMail message. The coded address, of course, does not indicate at which location in the world the addressee will receive the message. My message originated from my office in New Delhi. A few days later I read a courteous reply on my screen informing me, among other things, that Mr Chandra's most recent project as a computer consultant had been to computerise the Houston Zoo. Now if you'd read as far in the novel as I had by the time I learned this, it would have made you smile or tremble. In Mr Chandra's novel a monkey plays tricks on the protagonist while the author plays tricks on the reader with the same monkey. In the light of the Houston zoo project can we anticipate sequels in which snakes, crocodiles or tigers turn the tables on the protagonist and through the author, on us? But the mildly more serious point is that I could and did begin 'talking' to the author (whom I have never and have still not met) before I'd finished reading his book let alone beginning my review. It opens out all kind of possibilities to the reviewer in seeking information or clarification about an ambiguous aspect of the text while the review is still being drafted (something this reviewer has not done). The review might then become a cyclical collaboration between reviewer, text and author rather than its present format in which a questioning, commenting reviewer is confronted by a silently impenetrable text which neither accepts nor rejects a particular interpretation. It might, deconstructionists forbid, nudge authorial intention a little closer to centre stage. And then there is the further possibility for the impoverished reviewer in communicating with the author prior to the appearance of the review which the insertion of a phrase or sentence here a paragraph there, would make the reviewer's impoverishment the less; publishers perhaps will soon offer reviewers a fee or even a royalty for the right to on-screen 'editing' of their reviews. In any case, Viking are to be congratulated for the innovation (if that's what it is) of providing the opportunity for the reader of a more ready access to the author. Ad-

ditionally, Viking are to be congratulated for producing a handsome book which I have carried with me and read in three countries (India, Britain and France) and international air-space; there is currently a lot of rubbish being talked about the death of the novel (and other books) and its replacement on-screen; this has as much chance of happening as pills with the necessary nutrients have of replacing a dinner with family and friends... but we have a novel under review.

The double narrative has an honourable history and has in recent years been much favoured by writers in Britain: many of Peter Ackroyd's novels, for instance, hinge on contrasting the contemporary with the past; there is an even greater structural similarity between *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* and Graham Swift's novel *Out of the World* or Antonia Byatt's *Possession* which both counterpoint contemporary America with a 'foreign' (in their cases, British) past as does Chandra's novel which plays off aspects of India's history with a modern USA. I want to concentrate my comments on the later pages of Chandra's novel as such a long and complex book cannot be summed up in the few words this review allows. I hope that a glance at its close will provide a context for you to want to open the book at its beginning.

The problem (I know there are pleasures and privileges too) with using history like Chandra's novel does (and numerous others have) is that it lies in the way that fiction doesn't. In its final section, 'The Book of the Return', the novel focuses on that extensively discussed battleground between the Indians and the British—Lucknow in 1857, the first war of Indian Independence, not least fictionalised in J.G. Farrell's novel *The Siege of Krishnapur*. The text tells us that 'the English burnt Lucknow' and that 'Lucknow was reduced to dust' and throughout this section of the narrative it offers us a picture of a city whose every last brick and lintel has been razed to the earth. Anyone who has visited Lucknow knows that this is not the case. Given its historical—one might add political and cultural if not almost mythical—importance in India's relationship to and later perception of the British during this period it is surprising how this crucial struggle was confined to a relatively restricted area around the gently rising slopes of the then British Residency. Today as one walks round the admirably pre-



served ruins it is the intimacy of the battle rather than its grandeur which haunts one—individual bullet holes in the walls are pointedly human in comparison say with what were once the anonymous wastelands of Dresden, Moscow, Hiroshima or pockets of London. The presence of pre-British rule in Lucknow is still highly visible at the heart of the city, viz the magnificent Immambara with its gardens and mosque on the banks of the Gomti. This building which, I believe, supports the largest barrel-vaulted hall in the subcontinent and its amazing honeycomb of corridors, arches and rooms on several floors is a monument to what was not destroyed in 1857. The surprise in Lucknow is how much rather than how little remains of the city's many histories. The difficulty with Chandra's description—well conceived and executed though it is to provide a dramatic climax to a narrative that has spent considerable time at the Lucknow court with courtesans and poets—is that it exploits history for its own narrative rationale thereby fictionalising a history that is read as 'true' and extrapolated into other political, social, economic and cultural contexts. This is not uniquely Chandra's problem but is inherent in the genre of plaiting history and fiction; history has to be twisted into unrecognisable forms to suit the narrative structure. (Rushdie, of course, is of its most pre-eminent practitioners in relation to the subcontinent.) A novel such as *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* cannot but invent history and not re-invent as many a postmodernist would have it. One of the simple beauties in using history in this way is that the fiction, for many readers acquires a new context and status to be read in some senses as 'fact'. Chandra's use of history in this guise is by no means limited to the subcontinent. For a novel that in large part appears to offer a discourse between the new world (North America) and the ancient (India) the placing of its sole, brief section in the country, Britain, which bears a distinct and unique relation with both these continents offers a key to interpreting that

discourse.

When Sanjay, poet from 'a good Brahmin family' is hung following the battle of Lucknow, Yama—the ever-present of death—remarks, 'Everyone is an Englishman now' and, 'Sanjay you've been going to London all your life'. Which he does as a mute, ghostly figure. What strikes him there is the rotten stench of the overripe capital whose streaming corruption reflects the city's moral as well as physical decay. The pollution running through London's streets and its citizens is realized with all the flesh-creeching melodrama of a classic Hammer horror film. In a gruesome climax, Sanjay watches Dr. Sarthey, once a friend in India now a pillar of Victoria's establishment, murderously disembowel a pregnant woman while he mutters, 'India this is your womb'. Soon after, as Sanjay explains his relationship with Sarthey to the police he says, 'It is precisely because I'm an Indian that I'm English'. Britannia's corruption and twisting of nation—India with all that nationhood represents have been invisibly and indivisibly plaited together nowhere more insidiously than in the language, English, of the victorious and occupying nation.

Anjana Ahuja reviewing *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* in the *Times* of London suggested that Chandra should have dropped 'the modern part' since she found the prose of the American sections 'a burden' whereas she preferred 'the richness of Shakespeare, the sweetness of Tamil poetry...' she found in the Indian sections of the book. But two continents (India and North America) separated by the language of a third (Britain in Europe) is the very dynamic driving the narrative forward. To edit out modern America and a prose Ahuja finds rebarbative in the interests of a spurious 'sweetness' and consistency would have offered the reader only one side of the dialogue. This novel relishes the paradoxes, contradictions and confusions running through the English language and its use.

Learning English by learning Shakespeare, inserting codes in the printer's typeface and quite literally swallowing the English language so that in the siege of Lucknow Sanjay uses the colonists's own letters (which he had once eaten and digested) as shrapnel, 'fragments of English whistled into the English camp and killed them.' A case of the empire returning the ruler's words with a vengeance. As Sanjay notes (echoing Miranda in *The Tempest*) on arriving in London, 'in this strange new world a man had to die, and leave behind his native earth to speak a new language'.

Nowhere is the relationship between the subcontinent and the USA seen more acutely as one that is mediated through a third party, Britain, than in the penultimate section of the novel, 'The Game of Cricket'. Its opening paragraph is rich with peculiarly English resonances, 'ale in the pavilion' and equally Indian ones, 'a desert sun', 'the mountain Madar over-

combined image of the game as played in the two continents until as its final four words we read 'color in six sports'. The spelling of 'colours' indicating that the game is at last being played in a country where the codes—linguistic and other—are subtly different. Indeed, it is played in a fantasy setting created by the rich American father of Abhay's girlfriend, Amanda. The pitch is like a billiard table, the clubhouse is neo-classical but lurking in this perfection (which attracts Abhay) is a mocking artificiality. Abhay finds Amanda's mother (photos of whom had aroused him in soft porn magazines as a boy) lying by the swimming pool as perfectly sculpted and tanned as if she had been frozen by Abhay's memory; but the moment he catches a glimpse of the just visible scar showing where her breasts have been lifted he is disgusted by the trickery of the false vision. From then, the game of cricket and its too perfect artificiality in a setting—America—where it has no real place begins to unravel in a mess of politics and recrimination between Abhay and Amanda's father. The young Indian's infatuation is almost but not quite over.

Abhay takes Amanda from Bombay to a hill-station in the Ghats where they stay at the Rugby Hotel—a game hardly played in either India or the USA and so in their final hours together they inhabit a dislocating limbo peopled by the ghosts of England and Englishmen. Amanda is culture-shocked, not by India but by the English past in India's present. The hotel is damp with the monsoon (. . . *Pouring Rain*) but soaked through with an Englishness imagined through India. Abhay pictures the Ghats through squinting eyes as the Sussex downs. In the final section of the novel which opens in St James' church, Delhi, Abhay says he has come to greet what lies buried there. But as he apprehends there are as many pasts—British colonial and others—which are not only buried but are alive in India today. The very week in which I began reading *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* I was telephoned by a lady unknown to me who turned out to be Mrs Skinner, a relative of the Colonel who features in Chandra's novel and had St James' church erected. It is this intermingling and coexistence of India's pasts and presents that the novel explores.

The cliché is that if the British left nothing else in India we bequeathed a legal system, a civil service and the railways. But what about the English language which Vikram Chandra has singing and crying, laughing and whispering in *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*. Open, listen, admire and enjoy.

Richard Walker, First Secretary (Cultural Affairs) British Council, New Delhi, is a published novelist and short story writer. His novel, A Curious Child, has been published by Scettra (Paperback Division of Hodder).

Metaphors of Love, Ghosts and Old People

Kasturi Kanthan

FAREWELL TO A GHOST: SHORT STORIES AND A NOVELETTE

By Manoj Das

Penguin Books India, 1994, pp. 185, Rs. 100.00

The short story seems to be the most popular literary genre. In fact one finds so many collections of short stories around that one is sure that the 1990s discovers the short story as the most dominant form of expression. We have yet another collection of these in Manoj Das's *Farewell to a Ghost: Short Stories and a Novelette*.

Somerset Maugham once said, "One of the most difficult things that an author has to deal with when he wants to gather together a quantity of stories into a volume is to decide in what order to place them, arrange his material so that finally he can offer to his readers a pattern." This becomes somewhat easier if one writes of the same village or a few repeated characters like R.K. Narayan does with Malgudi. Manoj Das of course, does not identify his locale so specifically but he definitely sets his stories in villages in Orissa—Sapanpur-on-Sea, Vishalpur, or Parvatipuri. This rural setting offers an insight into the daily life of these villagers, meandering through lanes and life with an ease which one wishes one could easily emulate. Time seems to stand still in these villages where the teacher "has taught for forty years without having heard of Hegel or Marx or Freud or Einstein or even Bernard Shaw and Charlie Chaplin" ("The Crocodile Lady"). Untouched by time or progress, no winds of change blow through these villages/stories. The tumultuous tempests, tidal waves, whirlwinds and upheavals of society do not touch these coasts. Nestled in a warm, comfortable and sheltered atmosphere these villages are not riven by the familiar themes of caste wars, tragedy of the landless, exploitation of innocence, industry and integrity. The themes are not of desire or frustration. There is no seething anger or resentment. Voices are not raised against oppression, clamouring for reforms and redressals. If at all they are raised, they are not screams of anguish or pain, but either to question the young Zamindar on having shot the "owl of the shrine dead" ("The Owl"), or to shout at the youngsters when they talk of the old banyan tree falling: "What! The tree fall? How dare you say so?" ("The Tree), or to hold a few unreported meetings in the

village about the building of the new dam which will displace them. "Must everything go under water, Babu? Are we so unlucky that the cruel hand of the government will so unceremoniously tear us away from our God-given lands?" ("The Submerged Valley").

The vision of Manoj Das's world is an idyllic one—softly shrouded in smooth contours. It is a very personal world into which he imbues an affection and an reverence—ironic and poetic at the same time. He describes and presents but he does not question, disturb or provoke the reader. There are no gut-wrenching, heartstrings-tugging agonies, no blood, no tears. We only have smiles, sighs, a few deep breaths and tremulous eyes. The villages present a warm and concerned set of villagers. This romanticised view of the rural people implies that these are the receptacles which have preserved the vestiges of our earlier culture, traditions and values. This is not a macho world or a world of Power, Ambition or Injustice. It is a world of old men, kind maternal souls, humane, friendly, hearty and brash men interspersed with a few cowards, bullies and suspicious characters. Binu, the killer, is described not in fearful, awesome terms but as a "man of uncommon patience" and as the "only true male in the area" ("The Murderer"). The only cruelty we see here is that of Dabu Sahukar who is an evil genius and dreaded as an eclipse or the hour of Saturn ("The Murderer"), or that of a community which ostracizes Shri Jagatbandhu Das for marrying a Christian, yet comes to "steal glimpses" of his plight ("The Dusky Horizon"), or that of the abrasive young progressives all set to humiliate Sati Dei. They watch with unease and discomfort and are stupefied and bewildered when Sati Dei, instead of being disgraced is touched by their recognition and disarms them with her serenity and tenderness ("The Concubine").

Manoj Das reinforces the ambience of love and tolerance by telling us stories of old people, e.g. the ninety-year old Granny of "The Crocodile Lady", the old General in "The General" or the old Binu in "The Murderer", Ashok Bhai and Sudhir in "The Bridge in the Moonlit Night", the

old midwife, Gauri, in "The Strategy", the ninety-five year old Bhola in "Bhola Sunset" or Miss Moberly in "Miss Moberly's Targets", The old Raja Sahib in "The Martial Expedition", old Bhuvan in "The Brothers", Chinmoy Babu in "The Misty Hour", old Pratap Singh in "The Different Man", old Subrato Das in "The Irrational" or Aunt Roopwati in "The Misty Hour". The idea of fading memories, a decadent world, the old-world charm, the reminiscences of an old generation is further strengthened by the depiction of their encounters with death. The abolition of the princely states, the dying of the Zamindari system, the effete aristocracy, the slow but sure encroachment of developmental projects, denuding forests or submerging arable land: all these are signified by not only paralysed landlords, woolly-headed, forgetful old people, and depressed Rajas, but also by their almost painless and peaceful encounters with death. The feverish young Zamindar who just withers away as he tosses and turns only to plead, "I want to go to my mother" ("The Owl"), or "Granny has left us, it appears peacefully in her sleep" ("The Strategy"), or Ashok Bhai, "Surely, he has fallen asleep" ("The Bridge in the Moonlit Night"), or simpler still, poor Raja Sahab who "fell into his gloom again. This time he did not survive it" ("The Martial Expedition"), or Bhola, whose eighty-four year old wife says, "The old man must have forgotten to breathe" ("Bhola Grandpa and the Tiger"). His characters literally slide into death without any shrieks or protests, almost imperceptibly as the hours pass and seasons change.

Looking for recurring patterns or images, we can find about five stories dealing with women, political figures feature about three and ghosts in about eight stories. The women in the stories, Aunt Roopwati ("The Misty Hour"), Granny ("The Crocodile Lady"), Gauri ("The Strategy"), Sati Dei, ("The Concubine"), Miss Moberly ("Miss Moberly's Targets"), and Miss Dunkerley ("After The Sunset"), are all not protesting against any narrowness of tradition, or blustering males. There is no frontal attack on patriarchal values. What is important is not that they are all women but that they are all old. It is more a debility of age which allows these characters to go on an inward journey, darting back and forth in time, introspecting on the pasts they are entangled in memories. These stories are not at all complex—their fabric is not richly textured with gender issues or crackdowns on male facades and veneers. These are just murmurings of simple encounters and experiences, slightly varied responses to similar sounds—often tired. The fatigue and exhaustion of the characters do not rub on to the reader because Manoj Das manages to sustain our interest through the narratives, even if they seem to be far removed from the harsh realities of the world. Even his political characters like Chinmoy Babu or

Subrato Das are more characters of a romantic tale rather than protagonists in a strife-torn arena of rivalry, corruption and power. We do not have any picture of abject poverty, corrupt bureaucracy, widespread consumption of liquor which is prevalent in rural society, or enslavement of a weaker, oppressed class.

The one recurring metaphor is the ghost. These wraith-like disembodied creatures are embodied as they become spirits partaking in the "life of the flesh". The thread of some sort of magic realism runs through these stories and is not easily explained. The Granny in "The Crocodile Lady" is very much there in flesh and blood as she crouches with her chin on her knees and tells the story of her ten years sojourn with the crocodile under the river waters. The ghost of the girl in the villa "was so near, yet she belonged to a faraway world." This charming ghost would participate in all the feasts of the village. The villagers are sad when she is forced to change her abode, and they rejoice only when they are close to her ("Farewell to A Ghost"). Ashok Bhai is physically sitting with Sudhir who is busy confessing the petty and youthful crime of having torn Meena's first love-letter to Ashok. He is ashamed of this act and says that since then "by pretending to be good... I have become good." Soon another friend bursts in to ask what Ashok Bhai was looking for at the dismantled bridge (for the shreds of the torn letter, maybe?) and how he could outrun him to the house. This is when Sudhir realises that Ashok had died ("The Bridge in the Moonlit Night"). "Friends and Strangers" deals with a similar hallucination when Tirthankar and Shivabrata hear Pramath telling them that Mrs. Wilson

has already seen him, therefore he must visit her first. They are surprised as they know that she had died two months ago. When they go to check with Pramath they find that Pramath had died that noon. These two friends then believe that the other no longer exists and prefer to carry on with this unreal situation. This metaphor of the ghost underscores not only the village superstitions but also the ease with which the characters slip from one level of reality to another.

The two memorable stories in this collection are "Prithviraj's Horse" and "The Brothers". The first one is an ironic tale of the thin and weak Mukund who feels humiliated by the brawny Ghatococh. Once Mukund realises that in his earlier birth he had been Prithviraj's steed, he becomes aggressive. The finale of this story is a delightful piece of reckless impudence. "The Brothers" is a poignant expose of the deep and intimate relationship between Bhuvan, the idealist who has stayed on in the village and Saroj Mishra, the widely travelled physician who is also moneyed. Finally the younger brother is inspired and touched by the intense passion of the older brother and says, "We shall return here and you will lead me into the remote villages. My services shall be at your disposal".

The novelette "The Dusky Horizon" helps to focus attention on episodes, attitudes, fears and superstitions of the village community. Manoj Das makes use of fantasy interwoven with memories and mentions of what appears on the surface to be a banal sequence of events, probable and improbable. This mini-tale within a tale is very close to a post-modernist poetic piece. The semi-mock serious tone is charming and the story includes, with a disarming artlessness, the reader's possible comments on the story as well.

Manoj Das cannot possibly escape the demands of the man vs. nature theme in the rural setting that he has chosen. His stories show a very positive sense of interdependence between man and nature. The little story of the King clasping the banyan tree or the love of the villagers for both the banyan tree and the banyan goddess somehow seem central to their way of living. Bishu says in a trance, "I will be born again—again! I will be born as a thousand trees—here, there, everywhere!" ("The Tree"). As the villagers see the sun rising through "a luminous crack in the clouds" we are filled with the spirit of regeneration and fruition.

Finally then we have in this collection of short stories not a conscious undertaking of the responsibility of exploring the state or fate of this society. These stories do not concern themselves with contemporary issues and themes. Manoj Das is presenting little vignettes frozen in time in their own individual experience without earth-shattering societal dimensions.

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Ghalib The Medieval Modern Poet

Shamsur Rahnman Faruqi

GHALIB, LIFE AND LETTERS

By Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam

Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 404, Rs. 195.00

GHAZALS OF GHALIB: VERSIONS FROM THE URDU

By Aijaz Ahmad, W.S. Merwin, Adrienne Rich, William Huntly
Edited by Aijaz Ahmad

Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 174, Rs. 125.00

The late 1960s and the early seventies were ringing everywhere, or so it seemed to us, lovers of Urdu and Persian poetry, with the name of Ghalib. Poet and prose writer in two languages, letter writer, conversationalist, socialite, mentor in poetry to prince and commoner, none of these attributes, nor all of them put together, do justice to Ghalib the centenary of whose death in 1969 occasioned books, conferences, research papers, special issues of magazines, records and cassettes of his poetry, by the score in numerous cities over a vast part of the world. There was even a sensational discovery of a manuscript of his Urdu *divan* (collection of poems) written ostensibly in his own hand in 1816, when the poet was barely eighteen. Bitter and vigorous debate about its authenticity, or at least whether it was in Ghalib's own hand-writing, raged in the subcontinent for more than two years. In the meantime, the manuscript conveniently disappeared, just like the one of 1821, discovered in Bhopal and long regarded as the earliest Ghalib manuscript, disappeared after a scholarly edition came out in 1921. Mysteries like these, and regular discoveries, even forgeries, of Ghalib's letters and manuscripts had kept his name alive even in the popular Urdu press. There had also been a highly popular film in 1953, involving such great Urdu names as Rajinder Singh Bedi, Sa'adat Hasan Manto, and film notables like Sohrab Modi, Muhammad Rafi, Suraiya, Bharat Bhushan, and Iftikhar. But his death centenary celebrations, often orchestrated and almost always supported in their countries by the Governments of India, Pakistan, the then USSR, and by establishment institutions, the UNESCO, and many universities in the West, put Ghalib's name on the literary map of the world.

The two books being reviewed here were first published in 1969 (Russell and Islam) and 1971 (Ahmad) and can be justly described as forming an important part of the Ghalib literature produced during the centenary celebration years. The Russell and Islam book was published by

Harvard University Press with UNESCO support. Aijaz Ahmad's book was brought out by the Columbia University Press, supported by the Asia Society, New York. Both books have aged well; though Aijaz Ahmad's book is interesting from the creative writer's and poetry lover's point of view, the Russell and Islam book is a scholarly biography. Still, it is of interest to historians, literary experts, and laymen alike. The reissue of the two books, at low prices, is therefore welcome.

Ghalib, Life and Letters has been written on the pattern of Ghulam Rasul Mehr's Urdu biography *Ghalib* (originally published Lahore, 1936) which tells the story of Ghalib in pretty much his own words. The meat of the narrative has been drawn from Ghalib's letters and other prose, the connecting bone and cartilage being provided by Mehr. Both Mehr and our present authors give very little interpretive comment, letting the story unfold itself. Mehr's job was difficult inasmuch as he had to sift through a mass of material not previously subjected to critical examination. Russell and Islam can be said to have found their material in better shape, thanks to Mehr's and Mallik Ram's contribution to our knowledge of Ghalib's life. However, they wrote in Urdu, and didn't have to translate Ghalib's Urdu (Mehr rarely translates even the Persian.) The greatest challenge to anyone writing about Ghalib in English is that of translation. Ghalib's Persian is difficult. The prose is perhaps more difficult than the verse. But it is stylised, formal, and somewhat rigid, after the accepted manner of Indo-Persian prose. Its formal, baroque elegance can be rendered into English: no straining after colloquial effect is needed. The Urdu of Ghalib's letters is something else again.

In Urdu, Ghalib lets himself out. He is colloquial, gossipy, humorous, instructional, domineering, witty, learned, abusive, spiteful, and much else besides. It would be difficult to find a better example of relaxed, learned, and sophisticated modern Urdu prose than Ghalib's letters. To be sure, he was opposed to the publication of his Urdu letters, saying

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that there was hardly one that he wrote "holding the pen carefully", that is, paying due regard to the formal elegances and graces with which he adorned his Persian. It says much for the good sense and taste of Ghalib's admirers, and for the high reputation that he commanded in his own time, that his correspondents saved his letters and then let them be collected and published. Two collections of Ghalib's letters were published within a few months of each other. *Ud-e-Hindi* ("Indian Aloe Wood"—an alternative translation would be "Indian Harp") came out in October 1868; *Urdu-e Mualla* ("Exalted Urdu"—an alternative translation would be "The Exalted Court") was published on March 6, 1869, just days after Ghalib's death on 15 February.

A grateful nation has kept both collections in print, in various formats and editions. A variorum edition, in four volumes, came out from Delhi recently, edited by Khaliq Anjum. Fresh material having continuously been added, thanks to regular discoveries of new letters, no edition before Khaliq Anjum's was fully up-to-date. And even this edition may need additions before much time has elapsed. The letters have been constantly studied, written about, anthologised, prescribed in courses of study. Above all, they have been loved for their beauty. The Persian letters too have received their share of attention, and are still in print. A new edition, edited by Kali Das Gupta Riza, came out recently from Bombay. Needless to say, the letters are a fascinating record of life and letters in Delhi over nearly fifty years—and tell us a great deal about Ghalib himself. The question whether Ghalib reveals all of himself in the letters, is misplaced. Their writer belonged to a tradition which valued restraint and reticence and clearly prescribed what could or could not be talked about. Also, Ghalib was a much more complex person than is generally allowed. It would be expecting too much from him to "tell all" in his letters, many of which were addressed to social superiors, or junior contemporaries. And the letters in any case had the potential to become public documents.

Readers, therefore, who come to *Ghalib, Life and Letters* hoping for juicy revelations of the type which recent biographies of Dickens or Larkin or Auden have made all too familiar, will be disappointed. Readers who have direct access to Urdu and Persian, will miss the flavour, the polish, and the rhythm, of the original. Much of the urbanity, some of the humour, and a lot of the personality, however, come through.

Ghalib's life was a generally sedate one; there were no real crises, shocking upheavals, or sensational events. The uprising of 1857 did affect Ghalib, but it affected a million others in Delhi alone. True, Ghalib was arrested and brought to trial twice (and jailed once) for gambling. But Indian society has always treated gambling lightly, British morality laws

notwithstanding.

So it was more or less a plain life that Ghalib led. His personality makes it fascinating: complex, handsome, generous, and a scintillating talker. He made his letters, particularly the Urdu letters, as easy-flowing as his conversation. We learn about his likes and dislikes, his hopes and fears; even such mundane matters as the choice of a turban, can take on the hues of a delicate artistic exercise. In a Persian letter dated December 1, 1848, he writes to Jawahir Singh, the son of a dear friend:

You will remember that I had a cap made of kid-skin. Well, it is moth-eaten now, and I am without a hat. I want a silk turban. . . . But it must not be of a bright colour, or a youthful style; and it must not have a red border. At the same time it should be something distinctive and elegant, and finely finished. I do not want one with silver or gold thread in it. The silks in the material must include the colours black, green, blue, and yellow. . . . And tell me how much it costs (p. 103).

In this Urdu letter to Alai, in the autobiographical mode, he is half-serious, half-ironical, self-mocking, self-lamenting.

. . . it has sometimes happened that those who have sinned in the world of the spirits are sent to undergo punishment in this world. Thus I on the 8th Rajab 1212 A.H. was sent here to stand trial. I was kept waiting in the cells for thirteen years, and then on the 7th Rajab 1225 A.H. I was sentenced to life-imprisonment. A chain was fastened on my feet, and the city of Delhi having been designated my prison, I was committed there, and condemned to the hard labour of composing prose and verse. After some years I escaped from prison and ran away to the east where I roamed at liberty for three years. In the end I was apprehended in Calcutta and brought back and thrown into the same jail. Seeing that I would try to escape again, they fettered my hands as well (p. 255).

The date of coming into this world to stand trial is, of course, the date of his birth, the period of "waiting in the cells" is the time spent as child and youth. The date of sentencing to "life-imprisonment" is the date of his marriage. The chain is his wife. His three years of "escape" represent the time—December 1826 to November 1829—that he spent during his travels and sojourns in Lucknow, Banda, and then (nearly two years) in Calcutta. The "fettlers" on his hands are distant grandsons from his wife's side, adopted by the childless couple as "grandsons" around 1852.

The most piquant thing about this allegorical narrative, that seems to have escaped Russell and Islam, and indeed most authors, is that the letter is addressed to Alauddin Ahmad Khan Alai, a close relation by marriage. I'd have loved to place the Urdu side by side with the English translation, and show that the translation barely does justice to the origi-

nal. Without being at all offensive or peevish, Ghalib manages to convey to a relation by marriage, that after God, it is his marriage which is the cause of his toils and ills. An idea of the difficulty and near untranslatability of the Urdu can perhaps be gained by comparing the Russell and Islam version with the following one by Daud Rahbar (State University of New York Press, 1987, page 16):

. . . the sinner in the world of spirits is sent to the world of soil and water to atone for his sins. Thus, on the eighth of Rajab, 1212 A.H. I was sent here to stand trial and they held me in the holding tank for a full thirteen years. Then they put the shackles on my feet; Dhili was the jail I was sentenced to; and there I was confined. Life imprisonment at hard labour writing prose and poetry was my sentence. After a lengthy confinement, I made good my escape from jail and wandered through the towns of east India for a period of three years. Then they arrested me again and dragged back from Calcutta, remitting me to my original prison. Knowing my determination to escape, they manacled my hands.

If the Russell and Islam version sounds pedestrian before the ironical, nuance charged, cool prose of Ghalib, their English sparkles before Daud Rahbar's. His plain dull.

In this letter, we see Ghalib making gentle fun of the obtuseness (or deliberate cruelty) of a typical British civil servant, dealing justice in the aftermath of 1857:

Hafiz Mammu has been cleared of all guilt and been released. He attends upon the Commissioner asking for the return of his property. The fact that it is his property has already been verified, and only the Commissioner's order is required. Two days ago he presented himself, and his file was laid before the Commissioner. "Who is Hafiz Muhammad Baksh?" the Commissioner asked. He replied, "I am". Then he asked, "And who is Hafiz Mammu?" He replied, "I am. My real name is Hafiz Muhammad Baksh, but people call me Mammu." He said, "That doesn't make sense. Hafiz Muhammad Baksh is you; Hafiz Mammu is you; everyone in the world is you. Who am I to hand over the house to?" The file was sent back to the office and our friend Mammu went home. . . . (p. 120)

Apparently Ghalib was luckier, and also more witty, in a more dire situation. Immediately after the British restoration, the army began to carry off prominent Muslims—the few that remained—for interrogation. Ghalib too was produced before a Colonel Bura. In the words of Ghalib's first biographer, Altaf Husain Hali:

I have heard that when Ghalib came before Col. Brown (Burn). . . the Colonel. . . asked in broken Urdu, "Well, you muslim?" "Half," said Ghalib.

"What does that mean?" asked the Colonel. "I drink wine, but I don't eat pork," said Ghalib. The Colonel laughed, and . . . dismissed him. . . . (p. 149)

Ghalib's description of himself as half a Muslim was not entirely a witty stratagem. In his Persian account of the terrible year 1857-58, called *Dastambu*, Ghalib wrote:

To tell the truth—for to hide the truth is not the way of a man free in spirit—I am no more than half a Muslim, for I am free from the bonds of convention and religion, and have liberated my soul from the fear of men's tongues (p. 156).

He also tells us of the hardships faced by Muslims during those days, and the love and support that his Hindu friends gave him then, as ever. In a letter to Hargopal Tafta he says that the street on which he lived at that time received the protection of Patiala's troops, and goes on to say:

But for that I should not have been in Delhi now. Do not think I am exaggerating: everyone, rich and poor alike, has left the city, and those who did not leave of their own accord have been expelled. . . . I am afraid to write a detailed account. Those who were in the service of the Fort are being drastically dealt with. . . . (p. 150)

In the *Dastambu*, we read:

In the early days of January, 1858, the Hindus' freedom was proclaimed, and permission was granted to them to return to their homes in the city. From all quarters they hastened back. But on the walls of Muslims' homes the grass grows green, and its tongues whisper every moment that the places of Muslims are desolate (p. 156).

What would I have done had not my stalwart God-fearing. . . friend Mahesh Das sent me wine. . . . This virtuous man has spared no effort that the Muslims might be allowed to return to their homes. But Heaven's decree was against him. . . . Amongst my other friends is. . . Hira Singh. He comes to me and beguiles my sorrow. Amongst others is that wise young man of illustrious birth, Shiv Ji Ram Brahman. He is like a son to me. His son too, Balmukund, is at one with his father. . . . (pp. 156-57)

Much of Ghalib's correspondence in the years immediately after 1857 is devoted to lamentation on the sack of Delhi, his efforts to regain his suspended pension from the British, and matters relating to the printing of his books and pamphlets. All of these reveal different aspects of Delhi's socio-cultural life under the British. The changing face of Delhi, the disappearance of many of its landmarks due to the vandalism perpetrated by governance or commerce, the disappearance of Delhi's cultural leaders, are the themes that recur with the regularity of a chorus in a Greek tragedy.

Hakim Razi ud Din Khan was shot by

a British soldier during the general massacre, and his younger brother was killed on the same day. Both of Tale Yar Khan's sons had come here on leave. . . . After Delhi was retaken both of them were hanged, though they had committed no crime. . . . Mir Chotam too was hanged. As for Mian Nizam ud Din's son, . . . he came here. The Government has made its peace with him but only to the extent that his life is pardoned. (His properties) were confiscated. . . . (p. 243)

In 1859, Ghalib wrote to Yusuf Mirza, giving a long list of buildings and neighbourhoods that had been razed:

Here two roads are forging ahead—the cool road and the iron road. . . . More than that, barracks for the British soldiers are to be built in the city, and in front of the Fort, where Lal Duggi is, there is to be a great area of open ground. . . . I should rejoice in the desolation of Delhi. When its citizens have gone, to hell with the city (p. 213). And here, in a final threnody, in 1861:

My God! Delhi people still pride themselves on Delhi language! What pathetic faith! My dear man, when Urdu Bazar is no more, where is Urdu? By God, Delhi is no more a city, but a camp, a cantonment (p. 252).

The translation entirely fails to bring out the outrage and the anguish that seethe through the Urdu. Still, some of the sense of the raped city comes through. The next letter, to his dear friend and disciple Majruh again, has been partially translated by Russell and Islam, perhaps because it is at once highly poetic and colloquial. I feel that Rahbar scores here over them, but makes the tone of the letter somewhat crutsey and archaic. I therefore give both the translations in full, followed by a version of my own, just to give a feel of how thorny the job of translating this kind of prose is:

Oh my friend. . . . Delhi's devoted lover, dweller in the now demolished Urdu Bazaar, jealous maligner of Lucknow, fierce of heart, and stranger to shame, where is Nizam ud Din Mammun? And where is Zauq? And where is Momin Khan? Two poets survive: one Azurda—and he is silent: the other Ghalib—and he is lost to himself, in a stupor. None to write poetry, and none to judge its worth. . . .

(Russell and Islam, p. 253)
O young Sayyid's son, free in the pursuit of fun, lover whose heart belongs to Dihli, liver in the now-demolished Urdu Bazar, who now speaks ill of Lakhna'u jealously, whose heart contains no kindness or compassion, and whose eye contains no shame. Tell me, if you can, where Nizamud Din Mammun has gone? And Zauq, And good Mum'in. Azurda lives, they say, but speechless, sunk in grief, and Ghalib too, delirious, drunk, without relief. Neither poets nor connoisseurs of poetry remain, so any bragging now would just be vain. O Dihli! Woe is

Dihli! To blazes go, Dihli.

(Daud Rahbar, p. 134)

Dear young scion of the Prophet's family, so free from wordly care and convention, you who have given away your heart to Delhi, and who once dwelt in the Urdu Bazar now laid waste, and who vilify Lucknow out of heartburn, does your heart have no love or shame, does your eye have no modesty or penitence? Where is Nizamuddin Mammun, where Zauq, and where Momin? There is just Azurda—he's silent; and then Ghalib, he's beside himself, cut of his mind. There's here neither poetry now, nor those who know poetry. So what the hell is there to boast about? I weep for Delhi; woe is Delhi! Delhi go to blazes!

(S.R.F.)

The most remarkable thing about this letter is not just its barely controlled grief, or its slightly askewed tone—note the bantering reprimand in the long salutation—but that its second, and last, paragraph is entirely cool and matter of fact, asking about the material circumstances of somebody called Ahmad Husain Khan, of Panipat. (Some marriage proposal, perhaps?) This ability to fall on his feet, and never lose touch with the quotidian makes Ghalib one of the sanest men of his times. It is reflected in his poetry too, which swings easily from concentrated, abstract, metaphor packed moods to self-mocking, or satire, or everyday conversational rhythms.

The last five years of Ghalib's life were spent in an unnecessary and fruitless controversy, a trouble that he invited upon himself, and frequent illnesses, and money troubles. He was not exactly poor, but was always hard up and in debt because he lived in style, maintained a large establishment, and was generous with his money. The letters and other prose of the years 1864-1869 often make painful reading. Money matters loom large almost like a Balzac novel, and some of his illnesses (and their cures too) must have been extremely painful. He bore them with fortitude, and with humour. In February 1864 he wrote to a friend:

To put it briefly, between my head and feet I had twelve boils—and every boil became a wound and every wound a cavity, so that without exaggeration I needed twelve to thirteen plasters and half a pound of ointment a day. . . . Now I am well, but weak and lethargic. . . . It takes me as long to stand up as it does to build a wall the height of a man. (p. 297)

In July, 1867, we find him writing, "What you heard to the effect that Ghalib's health has improved slightly, is completely false. I was already feeble, and now I am half-dead" (p. 353).

But what hurts us most today is his repeated requests to the Navab of Rampur for money, or for prompter payment of his monthly pension of one hundred rupees per month. The Navab was generous—within reason. But Ghalib's needs

were—well, not unreasonable, but greater than the Navab's reason could see fit to fulfil. And somehow, the tone which sounds even more so in English translation. He writes to the Navab on November 17, 1863, that his affairs "have gone from bad to worse".

Altogether I need Rs. 800 to save my honour. Willy nilly, I have given up all thought of Husain Ali Khan's wedding and allowance. I will never mention it to you again, I promise you. Just give me another Rs. 800. How can I think of marriage? If my honour is saved, it is enough to be thankful for (p. 367).

Russell and Islam say that "more than a month later the Navab had still sent nothing, though he had apparently promised Dought that he would do so." In his very last letter (January 10, 1869) Ghalib was still reminding the Navab. Death must have come to the ailing old man as a relief, five weeks later. There had been no word from Rampur. His pension for January came after his death. Russell and Islam give the impression that Ghalib's plaints for relief went entirely unheard at Rampur. In point of fact, the Navab did grant a sum of Rs. 600 (not 800, which was what Ghalib had prayed for) to his widow after repeated petitions from her. The pension was not transferred to the grandson, nor to the widow. She too died shortly after the Navab's grant, on February 4, 1870.

Ghalib, Life and Letters was originally published in hard cover, on very good quality paper. The present edition is a slightly reduced facsimile of the original. It is in soft cover, and the paper also is of somewhat lighter weight and quality. Still, the price is extremely reasonable. My only complaint is that the reissue could have done with a few corrections and improvements. For example, the constant irritant of writing *Tufta* instead of *Tafta*, and *Sarur* instead of *Surur* could have been avoided. Errors of indexing, like entering *Sedaye Hindi* against page 288, while the actual name on page 288 is *Sedaya Hindi*, should have been corrected. Worse still, the authors have misread the name: actually, the name is *Shaida-e Hindi*.

Again, on this very page, there are two translations from Persian which need comment. A famous Persian line has been translated thus:

Old age, a hundred ailments, they say. This is all right, as far as it goes. But it doesn't take account certain niceties: the Persian has *piri wa sad aib*, where the *wa* is important, because it is not a conjunctive here, but a particle of similitude. It here means: "is like", or "has the same force as". The word *aib* doesn't mean "ailment." It means "blemish", "fault", "defect". In Naziri's line, the phrase *na pardakht* has been translated as "did not cherish it". There's no way *pardakhtan* can mean "to cherish"; here, it means "to polish".

Anyway, in such a large book, and with such a difficult task, these little things

lose significance. It is a pity that the second volume, which was to have dealt with Ghalib's poetry, seems nowhere near publication now.

In 1969, many of us were excited and pleased to receive a thin but elegant booklet called *Ghalib*. Edited by Aijaz Ahmad, it was a unique experiment in transcreation. For it contained freewheeling renderings of some Urdu ghazals of Ghalib by some leading modern American poets. If nothing else, they sounded like extremely unusual modern-metaphysical poems. In 1971 came the book *Ghazals of Ghalib*, also by Aijaz Ahmad, and expanding the same theme. The original of 1971 and its reissue of 1994 are before me now.

To elaborate a little: some Urdu ghazals of Ghalib, and a short extract from a *qasida* of his, were chosen by Aijaz Ahmad, who was then teaching English at Rutgers; he rendered the poems into plain, literal English, and added explanatory comments. These were submitted to a number of leading modern American poets who composed translations/imitations based on the material supplied by Ahmad. Thus there are, sometimes, plural versions of the same ghazal. Also, poets didn't attempt to do all the shers: a poet chose some shers from ghazal from which another chose some others. This presents before us not only a mapping of the intricacies of the translative-creative spirit, but also a delightful interplay of different, and foreign, sensibilities with the sensibility of a great medieval-modern Urdu poet.

For example, there are four versions of ghazal 33. Three of them, by Thomas Fitzsimmons, W.S. Merwin, and Mark Strand, are more or less "faithful". But the one by David Ray is a much freer play of imagination, sometimes vaguely recalling Ghalib. Ray places his version of the first sher at the end, puts Ghalib's fifth as his fourth verse, the fourth one as his third, and introduces entirely new material to stand for shers 1, 2 and 3. Thus we have a fine English poem which is tantalizingly Ghalib-like.

Since Ahmad himself chose the ghazals, and the shers from each ghazal—five were chosen from each selected ghazal as a rule, with one or two exceptions—and it was he alone who provided the translation aids, it is clear that he took upon himself a vast responsibility. In his brief note on the 1994 edition, Ahmad calls Ghalib "doubtless the most cunning" among all Urdu poets. In my view, Ghalib is very nearly that, and much more besides. Ahmad undertook a job which thrills for sheer audacity, imaginative application and resource management. His knowledge of Ghalib, and classical Urdu-Persian poetry was, at the time he compiled this book, less than one would desire. As Aijaz Ahmad himself observed in his original Introduction, it is difficult for a foreigner at all times to come to terms with Urdu ghazal. Although he did his best, Ahmad couldn't, of course, over-

come all his deficiencies in Urdu and Persian to prove a fully competent mediator between Ghalib and modern American poets. But he, and they, had a perfect idea of the resources of English, and had a fine feel for poetry in any language. The result is a book of poems of great beauty, poems which establish many connections and set up reverberations of Ghalib with a lot of staying power.

Most of the poems follow the two-line scheme of a ghazal sher. Many achieve the chiselled brevity and memorability so characteristic of a good ghazal sher. Ghazal poetry is not epigrammatic or aphoristic. It is just that a good practitioner can incorporate much in the two-line world of the sher without seeming to strain himself, or the structure of the poem. Much of the polyvalence and symbolism is lost in translation, but genuine and mature poets like the ones who contribute to this book can still bring back much from their voyage of discovery.

Let me now give you a few of my favourites. They have, more or less, the flavour of Ghalib in the original, in his different moods and modes:

*Killing me off she sobs: "I never meant to hurt you."
Tears of repentance, wept three seconds too late.*

—Adrienne Rich, ghazal 2

*Waterbead ecstasy: dying in a stream;
Too strong a pain brings its own balm.*

—Thomas Fitzsimmons, ghazal 5

*Exiled, how can I rejoice, forced here from home,
and even my letters torn open?*

—William Stafford, ghazal 8

*The dove is a clutch of ashes, nightingale
a clench of colour.
A cry in a sacred, burnt heart, to that, is
nothing.*

—William Stafford, ghazal 21

*Love holds
prisoner he says
and something has him sealed
like a great rock on his hand*

—W.S. Merwin, ghazal 21

*Stubbornness is something else. She is
not bad-natured.
She will try to break promises, forget, end up
keeping them.*

—Mark Strand, ghazal 33

*Ghalib, I can't content with love. It's a fire
so dead I can't light it, so hot I can't
put it out.*

—William Stafford, ghazal 34

*Again I watch for her at her window
waiting for the wind in her black hair.*

—Adrienne Rich, ghazal 26

*I am nothing but dust being blown around
in her street
O wind, let me down, I have no wish to be
a bird again.
I have had enough of flying.*

*It is the dust in the streets now
I'd like to descend to.*

—David Ray, ghazal 24

(Incidentally, the above should have been placed under ghazal 29. That it is

under ghazal 24 seems to be a mistake of editing or pasting.)

*Fire licks out from the rims of my eye,
Asad; when I look at a dry leaf it starts to
smoulder.*

—Adrienne Rich, ghazal 19

Well, it is a wonderful book. For all its deficiencies, it gives a better idea of the plentitude of Ghalib than most dissertations. I only wish that the editing had been a little more careful. The apparent error in placing David Ray's verse at 24 instead of 29 has been noted above. Among others may be mentioned the inclusion/non-inclusion of a sher by Bahadur Shah Zafar in ghazal 29. Inclusion, because it is dealt with in the explanatory apparatus, complete with a weak explanation why a Zafar sher should be included here at all; non-inclusion because it does not appear in the Urdu text. The Urdu text of the ghazals has been photographically reproduced from the then definitive Arshi edition of 1958. Arshi however used a number of symbols and marks in the text to denote different things. They can mean nothing, and in fact cause confusion, to the reader who does not know the Arshi edition. They should have been blanked out.

Certain grievous errors of translation should have rectified, at least in the present edition. *Gul-e-naghma* (ghazal 12) does not mean "flower/blossoming of song" (whatever that may mean.) In the same ghazal *parda-e saz* does not mean "curtain/tapestry/web/shelter/note of music". In ghazal 25, sher 5, the Urdu text and the editor's translation/commentary are totally different: the text is that of the last sher of the ghazal in Arshi's edition (page 225), whereas the translation and commentary relate to the last sher but two from the same ghazal, same page. The poor American poets, not knowing Urdu, were misled into translating a sher whose original does not appear in the printed text, and having their translation appear alongside a totally irrelevant Urdu original. In ghazal 19, sher 4, *bul-havas* does not mean "father of lust". It just means "one who has lust". Words like *shauq, jauhar*, and *bihisht* have been transliterated incorrectly, and so on.

The present edition is a slightly reduced facsimile, on somewhat lighter paper, of the 1971 edition. Considering its size and quality, the book is very moderately priced. One only wishes that Aijaz Ahmad had done a little cosmetic cleaning up of the text before sending it out for reissue.

Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, scholar, critic and poet, is the author of several studies of Mir, Ghalib, Iqbal and other modern Urdu poets. His Tanqidi Afkar, a collection of essays, won the Sahitya Akademi award in 1986.

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Edited by
Michael J. Baker
University of Strathclyde

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Like Curate's Egg

Prakash Chander

IQBAL: THE POET AND THE POLITICIAN

By Dr. Rafiq Zakaria

Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 1993, pp. xii+187, Rs. 195.00

*Like a candle burning itself to remove darkness
I spend myself, shedding blood and tears
So as to bring light to others
And fill their life with beauty and joy.*

Allama Iqbal describing his life's mission in a nutshell was not being an egoist; he was stating the plain truth about himself. No one contends that it was a mere poetic thought in his *Ramuz-i-Bekhudai* (the secret of selflessness). He lived up to it in all his poetry.

Iqbal stressed the supremacy of man even over God. He was a votary of the oneness of humanity. Though passionately devoted to Islam, the religion of his birth he was not a narrow-minded fundamentalist even though he considered Islam the best. His breadth of vision enabled him to see the best in other religions too, more specially Hinduism. Many explain his love for Hinduism as springing from the fact that his forebears were Kashmiri Brahmins. If so, this helps explain his erudition about Hindu scriptures. His doctoral thesis refers to Vedanta and the *Upanishads*.

Iqbal's poetry is suffused with references to Hindu thinkers like Buddha, Nanak and Bharthihari; "he had learnt Sanskrit and was fond of the Gita. He was equally impressed by the Vedas." Iqbal admired Swami Rama Tirtha. All this needs reiteration if only to sustain Dr. Rafiq Zakaria's lucidly argued contention about Iqbal's catholicity of mind and absence of anti-Hindu bias.

With the help of copious quotations, the author distills the essential Iqbal for those who do not know Persian or Urdu but are keen to study the poet's thought. Verses to support the contention about Iqbal's catholicity have been carefully selected. Khushwant Singh in his perspicacious interjection drives home the point that Zakaria has tried to synthesize Iqbal's commitment to Islam with his love for India. No doubt he has admirably succeeded in doing so. The author's presentation is so racy that the reader's interest does not flag.

So much for what Khushwant Singh calls Zakaria's "remarkable contribution to the understanding of Iqbal" vis-a-vis

India, its culture and the Hindus to remove many of the cobwebs which have gathered round him". None will disagree with the learned Sardar who has laid down that nothing but Iqbal's superb poetry interests him, nothing else matters except that he is poet par excellence. The "provocation" (Zakaria's word) for the book was provided by a BJP M.P.'s denigration of Iqbal as a politician who sowed the seeds of partition. Maybe the stress on his catholicity of mind is only a contributory proof in countering that charge! I wish Zakaria had confined Iqbal the politician who, even he admits was ill cut out to be a politician; not for him the cut and thrust, bluster and cynicism, cold-bloodedness and scheming that characterizes a practising politician. Iqbal was too simple a soul to be able to cope with hard-headed leaders. That is why Iqbal and he never saw eye to eye with each other.

But since Zakaria has chosen to discuss Iqbal's political ideas and actions I cannot gloss over the matter. He has taken them as seriously as Iqbal's detractors. In 1904 Iqbal gave us Tarana-i-Hindi "Saare Jahan se Achha Hindustan Hamara", which millions of school children still learn and which heralds the daily DD transmission. So much for Zakaria's charge of India's anti-Iqbal bias. Four years later he composed Tarana-i-Milli which Zakaria mistranslates as a 'national song' while Ralph Russell correctly classes it the 'anthem of the Muslim community'. While Zakaria has described how a revolutionary Lala Har Dayal persuaded Iqbal to write a poem which according to one Iqbal scholar could be the national anthem, Tarana-i-Milli is just mentioned on page 51. Why, despite what Zakaria can say? Because its opening couplet is

*Cheer-o-Arab hamara, Hindustan Hamara
Muslim hain ham watan hai sara
jahan hamara*

What Zakaria conveniently omits is that Iqbal wrote Tarana-i-Milli at the instigation of his mentor Sir Abdul Qadir to

write something to pander to the Muslim sensibilities. Why did the great poet-philosopher succumb to this logic? Perhaps Zakaria knows but keeps it to himself.

As a precursor to Tarana-i-Milli, he has supported the 1906 partition (later annulled) of Bengal into Hindu and Muslim provinces, shadow of the coming 1947 division. Zakaria is unwilling, or unable to concede the fact that Iqbal the nationalist was getting disillusioned with the deterioration in communal relations. Thus the controversial 1930 address to the League session at Allahabad was the finale of his disgust. "The formation of a consolidated northwest Indian state appears to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of north-west India." Zakaria himself confirms the change of heart on the part of Iqbal towards the end of the book.

The author quotes Iqbal: "Muslims were being sold to the Hindus" (p. 75) and "separate federation of Muslim provinces is the only course by which we can save Muslims from domination of non-Muslims (June 21, 1937)" (p. 144), "there is a real difference between the Hindus and the Muslims which it is not possible to ignore" (p. 123). Now Zakaria himself: "in the Lahore session of the League held in 1940 no reference to Iqbal's views or his Allahabad proposal was made in the so-called Pakistan resolution, there was no mention of his role in its formulation" (p. 135). What do 'Allahabad proposal' and 'role' mean? Again "Pakistan can at best claim Iqbal the politician as their mentor; but not Iqbal the poet" and "I was not one of the Indian Muslims who firmly believed that Iqbal had not asked for Pakistan. I realise now I was very correct in my belief" (both p. 144). How does Zakaria then reconcile all this with his claim that Iqbal was not the initiator of the two nation theory? He facetiously argues that Iqbal's view was not acclaimed at that time. Does that entitle one to argue that it was not his view? Why he grew disillusioned is another matter.

Zakaria cites the statements of Bhai Paramanand and Lala Lajpat Rai on the desirability of dividing Punjab on religious basis. Firstly it is not the same thing as Iqbal wanting the division of the country. Secondly this cannot justify Iqbal saying it just as much as the two Hindu leaders deserve to be criticised for their views.

All in all the book is an extraordinary exposition of Iqbal's secular poetry as it is a poor defence of his political theories. Why cannot we separate the wheat from the chaff rather than justify the existence of chaff because it is allied to wheat? The book's value would have been enhanced if the sub-title were 'the poet of unity' without the mire of politics intruding into it. Also it would have been better if at least the Urdu originals were included if not the Persian.

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A sense of deja vu

Pushpesh Pant

KUNTO

By Bisham Sahani

Rajkamal Prakashan, 1994, 2nd Impression, pp. 327, Rs. 125.00

भीष्म साहनी
कुंतो



Reading *Kunto*, one must confess, has not been an unalloyed pleasure. To begin with, there was the anticipation of a treat—another novel by an author one has read with such joy since adolescence. But, as one began devouring the pages expectantly, a tinge of pain began to surface. What was imagined to be a many splendoured repast with tempting aromas of as yet untasted delights began to take shape unmistakably as left overs—a best crumbs of a cake. Since, I have persuaded myself to reread the 'novel' at least twice—and revisited some pages more than this. Much to my regret I have not been able to get over my childish sense of disappointment. Perhaps there is a moral in this somewhere. Readers do not necessarily mature with age. I should have resisted the temptation.

Kunto begins well enough. Pre-partition Punjab is evoked expertly—with the practised ease of a professional artist delivering commissioned portraits or landscapes in his favourite style. The reader can easily share the excitement of the romantic escapades of young lovers or the adventure of ideas unfolding before the hero. The land and the people before the loss of innocence. The Hindu

The backdrop is enticing enough but as soon as the cast appears the sense of *deja vu* is strong. Where have we met these characters before? In *Tamas* or even earlier in *Yashpa's Jhutha Sach*.

joint family as yet undivided although not entirely free from stirrings of frustrated discontent. The ideological skirmishing between the Aryasamjis and the Sanatanis. The encounter with the Punjabi NRIs in embryo. The rumbling thunder of the freedom struggle in the distance—not the effete nonviolence of Gandhi but the dangerous clandestine conspiracies inspired by the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh and the like. The backdrop is enticing enough but as soon as the cast appears the sense of *deja vu* is strong. Where have we met these characters before? In *Tamas* or even earlier in *Yashpa's Jhutha Sach*—a massive novel spilling over two fat volumes? This is not the only cause for disquiet. The characters are hardly allowed to develop. Their passions and the prejudices of their well wishers as well as the historical forces combine to set them on a rather dizzy course. There is that seductive forbidden fragrance—incest, not quite the unspeakable attachment for a sibling but the irresistible pull towards a favourite cousin thickening the plot, affecting not one, but two principal actors in the story.

The spell, alas, fails to work. The words do not work their old magic. The course of the narrative is predictable by now. Marriages can be arranged, not love. Bodies can mate without the minds meeting. Check! Stalemate? The author after placing the pieces on the board seems to be content to play solitaire. The reader is welcome to watch. There is nothing Nabokovian in this memory doublespeak. The temptation is always there—a prurient one though—to identify the characters depicted in real life. Jaidev is Balraj Sahani, why else does Kunto call him Bali? Girish can be none other than the imperturbable, inscrutable Agneya—all mind, nobody but what style—that's our man! Kunto and Sushma can now be easily matched with the originals—the Shantiniketan clue is a give away—sommambulism *a la* Lady Macbeth. If additional help is required the references to teaching, broadcasting, street theatre, films, declassing in Bombay are there. Echoes and images from *Balraj My Brother* as well as hazy recollections of Kwaja

Ahmad Abbas and Balraj Sahib's own brilliant pieces recreating those heady days when *Hum Log* and *Neecha Shahar* were being shot in circumstances at once depressing and intoxicating.

It is not very long before the novelty of this *Let's Us See If I Can Identify Every One Portrayed Here* game loses its fascination. I hasten to add that the author's contemporaries might well find the book compelling. My late mother for instance often reminisced about Shantiniketan and I must confess that the rather unusual bedtime stories she told sustained me through the pages of *Kunto* much after the threshold of disappointment had been reached.

Bhishmaji himself seems to have tired of the pretence of fiction. The reader gets the distinct feeling of being rushed towards the end. Or, is it once again art surrendering to real life? This is *How It Was*. Is it not enough to just report and record faithfully? What is the need to elaborate, explore, embroider or embellish? Remembrance of things past is a perfectly valid occupation but can hardly engage loyal readers' yearning for a more substantial 'signing off'. (Did not Dr. Ramvilas Sharma falter similarly a few years ago misjudging the mood of his readers when he penned *Ghar Ki Baat* turning the usually critical gaze—a trifle tenderly perhaps—towards his own kith and kin? Ruthlessly baring one's most intimate memories—pleasant and painful—may be excruciatingly difficult, it still leaves the reader unmoved if the essence is not distilled as art. *Ghar ki Baat* in any case was presented as autobiographical.)

Kunto, offered as a novel, has perforce to be read as one. One would like to know when this novel was written. Now, in the recent past when the author finally had time to address himself to purely personal or much earlier—before the writer had quite harnessed his impressive powers?

A lion in winter is a sight which seldom, if ever, contributes to euphoria and ecstasy and not everyone goes raging defiantly into that night. Surely, it is very stupid on my part to keep grumbling. I should be grateful for that fabulous read *Tamas* and much more. But, the question that persists continues to haunt me—is *Kunto* really a novel? Thinly disguised autobiography maybe—rough draft of something more monumental, notes of a writer about, what else, family and friends. Not an entertainment in the old fashioned sense—a self-indulgent diversion? Or, is it a personal catharsis painfully and deliberately undertaken by a detached old man in a ritual manner? Of course, my 'professional students of literature' friends have tried to educate me about the *roman-à-clef* but the uncomfortable question continues to nag. Why?

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Laila's Pot-pourri

Laila Tyabji

SILENT SPACES AND OTHER STORIES OF ARCHITECTURE

By Gautam Bhatia

Penguin Books, 1994, pp. 312, Rs. 125.00

LANGUAGE OF LOVE

Edited by Aruna Jethwani

Sterling Publishers, 1995, pp. 95, Rs. 50.00

THE SANDAL TREES

By Kamala Das

Disha Books, Orient Longman, 1995, pp. 141, Rs. 65.00

MATRIMONIALS ARE DEADLY

By Shreelata Rao Seshadri

Penguin Books, 1995, pp. 175, Rs. 125.00

An Austrian photographer friend in India for the first time was visiting a tribal village in the Koraput District of Orissa. Amidst the thatched mud huts, glazed terracotta floors and the stunning geometrics of the white, *chunam* wall-paintings, she saw a small, concrete, box-like structure, painted a bright, electric blue; doors, verandah and windows barred with heavy iron grills. She innocently asked if this was the local jail. "No," she was told, "This is the house of the village rich man."

Architecture, as Gautam Bhatia's book *Silent Spaces* so eloquently tells us, can reveal not only the image of oneself we want to project, but (often unwittingly) also the reality of our inner beings—our fantasies and fears, our compromised values, our falsitudes.

Chugging into Delhi by train from Bombay we see the early morning bare bottoms of rows of defecating slum dwellers. Bared too are the naked, cement backsides of the Friends Colony deluxe residences, in all their raw, flat, damp-stained greyness. (No white plaster curliques, red tile roofs, *jaali-works* and stone *jharkhas* or Husain murals here, in the service lanes, where only the eyes of the sweeper and the DESU man see.) Both sets of bare backsides are a paradigm of a nation where much contemporary architecture is a stage set, built for a cast of hollow men.

Gautam Bhatia is both a practising architect and a writer on architecture. His first book, *Punjabi Baroque*, came out to a chorus of indignant howls. These ranged from outrage at the apparent communal slur implicit in its title, to criticism at his indiscriminately sprinkling sex, social comment and surrealist imagery in the midst of serious, architectural analysis. Much of the sound and fury generated, one suspects, was a subconscious reaction to Bhatia's iconoclastic, often terminally critical view of his peers. By mock-

ing at the form, his fellow architects were able to phoo-phoo the content.

This shrill pique, like that of the Bengalis rising up in Parliament to protect Tagore's prose from Khushwant Singh, makes one suspect that Indians lack not just an ability for objective self-analysis, but a sense of humour as well.

Sad, because Gautam Bhatia is extremely funny and an absolute delight to read. And, though a lot of the fun is also very serious stuff, when he pricks the monstrous carbuncles of our self-deception, shoddiness and second-hand derivations, Bhatia is putting himself under the scalpel too. Constructive and sensitive criticism is a vital ingredient of both one's own growth and the growth of a national culture.

I found *Silent Spaces* more thoughtful and introspective than *Punjabi Baroque*. There is less of the *enfant terrible* cocking a snook rather indiscriminately, if wittily, at every passing sacred cow. Much more, instead, of Gautam Bhatia himself—his heroes, his beliefs—his own passions, failures and follies. This is brave (besides being rewarding for the reader). It is so much easier to knock down the building blocks of other people's castles in the air, than to reveal the vulnerable blueprints of one's own *raison d'être*, or disclose the double standards with which one rationallyises their flawed realisation.

Architects and their buildings and Gautam Bhatia's own intellectual and emotional responses to them form the body of the book. Woven into the text (along with elevations, floor plans and line drawings) are the history and the culture, the venal contractors and upwardly mobile but ignorant clients, the corruption and compromise, that collectively shape both the buildings themselves and our national sensibility.

Bhatia's contemporary pantheon includes Louis Kahn, Laurie Baker and A.D. Rajee, while Mandu, Nalanda, the Shali-

mar Gardens, the *Gol Gumbaz* in Bijapur and the *Jantar Mantar* are some of the historic forms and spaces which have influenced his own internal imagery. Others whose buildings he admires are Doshi, Charles Correa and Raj Rewal. He is scathing and corruscatingly funny about the ubiquitous architect-to-order, who can deliver mud and Mughal arches, concrete square slab or Swiss chalet housing with equal ease and lubricity.

Bhatia can be both opinionated and subjective; but the passion, wit and reason with which he argues his views is never didactic. I was happy to find drawings of the sweeping, uncluttered, simple lines and spaces of B.V. Doshi's Gandhi Labour Institute, where I stay when I'm in Ahmedabad (and would love to know what he thinks about Doshi's uncharacteristic, odd, new INTACH office). It was a surprise to find such uncritical praise of Correa and Rewal, whose buildings are certainly striking exclamation marks on the Indian architectural skyline, but which have always struck me as more successful as landmarks than as living spaces. Elsewhere, Bhatia is extremely critical of the "architectural megalomaniacs" (including the emperor Akbar and Corbusier) with a grand, despotic vision that obscures their sensitivity to the rhythm, light and shade of everyday Indian life.

The contemporary planners of our public spaces and our high rise buildings too, tend to loftily disregard such minutiae as mechanisms for cleaning external windows and disposing garbage, the messiness and noisiness of Indians in an open-plan office, erratic electrical supplies, and the fatal attraction a marble

stairwell has for the average *paan*-eater.

Silent Spaces is beautifully written, and full of brilliant, unexpected, thought-provoking insights. Like the best architecture, it reveals facets of interior and exterior space, aspects of light, vistas of past and future, hitherto unperceived.

However, it has no index. (Perhaps deliberately, to prevent browsing architects in bookshops flipping through its columns, checking out their names and angrily protesting either their inclusion or exclusion.) This is irritating for the rest of us, who would like to refer back to a building, an elevation or a name. But, if it means that architects, builders and planners will be forced to buy and read the book, and (perhaps!) even think about the issues it raises, I am willing to put up with the inconvenience.

The question remains: will architects eventually learn to build spaces for the kind of people we Indians are, or will we just have to learn to live in the kind of spaces they build? More simply, will they stop putting those marble stairways in municipal offices, or will we learn not to spray them with betel-nut spittle? Will there ever be an alternative to the nightmare of Tees Hazari, Nehru Place and the Income Tax Building?

The other titles sent for review in this column are a packet of fiction. Titles can be deceptive. *Language of Love* is not Barbara Cartland or Mills and Boon. Nor, despite the two men embracing on the cover, is it a dictionary of the Gay Lib Front version of Esperanto. Feeling a need for what she calls "positive literature", Aruna Jethwani has put together an anthology of short stories with "the theme

of national/emotional integration". Laudable in these divisive, increasingly insular times and (again to quote Aruna Jethwani) "Each story is heart-warming and holds a candle to the dark, embittered world". Why then, do they make one wince with embarrassment? Mainly the quality of the translations, and the trite, cliché-ed (with every cliché slightly askew) English into which presumably vigorous, regional dialogue has been turned. How can one empathise with Amrita Pritam's *The Merial* when we read that "He took Veeran as a toy to toss her about in fun", or a dying man when "he was now counting his last breaths, while the night was crouching away" Khala in Shafiqe Farhat's *Acceptance* is a tragic, familiar figure—the widowed relative exploited and misunderstood by her family. But when the poetry of the original Urdu is turned into babu English she becomes banal and boring:

A person who never bothered for herself, she began to neglect herself. She suppressed herself beneath the burden of duties. The joy she experienced for a few days, got lost once more in the darkness of sorrow. No one ever saw her smile or chitchat after that day.

It is a relief to turn to the passion and zest of *The Sandal Trees*, a collection of short stories by Kamala Das better known to Indo-Anglian readers as a poet. Kamala Das has written hundreds of short stories in Malayalam, using a pseudonym to avoid embarrassing her family. She endearingly says that she didn't want to hurt her grandmother who was "her favourite human being". Her grand-

mother died without knowing that Kamala was Madhavikutty. The stories are full of the earthy honesty, sensuality and pain that one has come to associate with Kamala Das's writing. They are too shapeless and inchoate to be great literature, but even in translation they burn with an extraordinary power. "The Flight" and the title story "The Sandal Trees" are especially moving—with captive women seeking lives that transcend the mundane, but limited by their marriages and the earth-bound men that they are bonded to.

Matrimonials are Deadly by Shreelata Rao-Seshadri looked from the exterior like another peppy, NRI campus novel in the Kiran Narayan *Love, Stars and All That* genre. This one is a thriller with murder and mayhem thrown in among the matrimonial ads, which Viji investigates in the intervals of her post-grad literature courses at a mid-West University in the States. It starts well but the mystery never rises above Blyton-Nancy Drew level, despite Shreelata Rao-Seshadri trying to spice it up by throwing in a few recipes (in the mode *Like Water for Chocolate*, Kurt Vonnegut and Nora Ephron have made so fashionable). Chickpea curry, green rice and masala chicken notwithstanding, this is a damp squib of a book. The plot is as predictable as its adjectives ('sickening thud', 'fevered brain', a 'deathly silence') and the love interest and the writing never catch fire either.

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Thoroughfares and Cul de-sacs

"I can tell the season by what is served at my table."

In India it seems to be the season for book fairs the year round; it is either book melas organized by the National Book Trust, state sponsored fairs or those organized by the book federations and associations.

Given that book fairs make available books on diverse subjects at one spot, attract crowds like any exhibition displaying saleable commodities, one still wonders at the viability of holding book fairs. In the last two days of the World/National Book Fair which is by design a weekend, hordes of visitors walk through the stalls like driver ants. But unlike the driver ants they do not devour everything in their path.

Is this not a bookseller's nightmare? No, says Dr. Arvind Kumar, Director, NBT. "We want people to come; that they have made the effort to visit the book fair is enough; let them buy any book—a book—be it on yoga, or cookery or a guide to juggling. It is a beginning."

There has been a definite and positive thrust in book propagation by the NBT. They have come up with innovative ideas and methods for sales in what would otherwise tend to become a routine affair for boosting sales.

Despite this some publishers have reservations about the efficacy of book fairs. Some feel that as they already have an existing network, the book fair is only a convenient rendezvous point, while others hold diametrically opposite views. They feel that fairs are the only real forum where their books are visible. People would much rather sell potatoes and sarees, for that is where the money is. While there are rare instances like the ricemill-owner in Gauhati who holds an MSc. degree setting up a bookshop, and a very successful one at that, most do not find bookselling commercially attractive. Traditionally bookshops have been handed down from father to son.

There are again some who feel that the maximum sales at book fairs are of text books and Indians are only interested in career-oriented books. If so, why was the recently held 'Industrial Book Fair' at Delhi a damp squib. The reasons are one, it was a

misnomer and two, it was not well promoted. Many were unaware that technical books on all subjects were displayed.

It is not a healthy trend that more and more young professionals medical-computer etc. are investing large sums in books motivated by the emergence of new areas of study and competition. It is no longer enough to buy just *Gray's Anatomy*. Technical conferences invariably have space for displaying the latest publications which are seen and bought.

Delhiites plan and set aside time and money for the book fairs. What of the fairs held in the different states? They have a definite role. Our distribution system being what it is, this is the only time when the states are exposed to publications other than those in their own language. The attendance of the reading public at the Calcutta Book Fair is legendary. In Bengal, Kerala, Maharashtra and Gujarat the publishing world is vibrant not in creative writing but on every conceivable subject.

If this is the scene at the National and State-level book fairs, what of the international book fairs? Here again publishers hold opposing views. It is excellent for business, we make our appointments well in advance and enter into contractual agreements for co-publishing, selling and buying rights. We find that there is a good and ready market outside India for our books, said a publisher who specialises in indology, religion, philosophy and allied subjects. But this is not so was another view. We find the Frankfurt Book Fair and the like very expensive. We sell our books through our personal contacts. The Indian stalls attract very few buyers. It is not possible to strike any good deals whereas our own book fairs attract large numbers of academics and librarians. Overseas fairs are only profitable for those who go to pick up remainders, was the dismissive attitude.

John Ruskin bemoaned, "What do we as a nation care about books? How much do you think we spend altogether on our libraries, public and private, as compared with what we spend on our horses?"

Substitute consumer goods for horses—Do we echo his sentiments or say we the readers care and hence the prevalence of book fairs?

U.I.

Critiquing Yeats

Taisha Abraham

W.B. YEATS AN ANTHOLOGY OF
RECENT CRITICISM

Edited by G.R. Taneja

Pencraft International, 1995, pp. 235,
Rs. 250.00

WB. Yeats, edited by G.R. Taneja, brings together an interesting range of critical essays on the poet written by international scholars. The essays that constitute the anthology range from feminist and Bakhtinian readings of Yeats' poems to a historical study of violence and politics in his later poetry. R.B. Kershner in his essay, "Yeats' Bakhtin/Orality/Dyslexia" draws parallels with Yeats and Bakhtin despite the fact that in the Russian theorist's schema, poetry is characterised as monologic. Kershner states that both Yeats' belief in poetry as an oral form—which allows him to include speech patterns in his verse—and his belief that the roots of art are found in folk culture, lend a dialogues to his works which is Bakhtinian. Spivak, in her essay, "Finding Feminist Readings: Dante—Yeats" explores how the figure of the woman is used to achieve "psychotherapeutic plenitude in the practice of the poet's craft."

The essays are complementary and quite even in their vigour and clarity. If

Nancy D. Hargrove in "Aesthetic Distance in Yeats' 'Leda and the Swan'," refutes the statement that Yeats' poetry is too impersonal and inhuman and demonstrates it by her reading of "Leda and the Swan." Sanjay Dutta-Roy, in "Adam's Curse: Labor, Truth and Beauty" in Yeats' "Autobiographical Poems," argues differently. He points out that although the biographical connection of "Adams Curse" (poems) with Kathleen and Maud Gonne is well known, the greatness of Yeats' poetry lies in his ability to transmute these voices from the personal and temporal to the impersonal and timeless. Only few, Dutta-Roy claims, have achieved this in autobiographical writing. Debra Journet, in "Yeats' Quarrel with Modernism," interestingly, points out that unlike modernists who were searching for a kind of art that was objective and impersonal, Yeats insists on the social value of art partly lying in establishing a relationship between the artist and the public.

In "Black and White: The Balanced View in Yeats' Poetry" Rob Jackaman, seeks to demonstrate how the tension of opposites or the struggle to maintain an equilibrium between opposites, is not restricted to "The Tower" and "The Winding Stair"—which represent two conflicting responses to experience, one dramatising the claims of the soul and the other stating the rival claims of the body—but also exists between groups of poems, within poems, as well as between whole collections. Harold Brooks essay, "W.B. Yeats' 'The Tower'" shows how The

Tower unites two contrary symbols of Yeats' work and personality. Evan Radcliffe, in his essay, "Yeats and Quest for Unity Among School Children and Unity of Being," seeks to show how unity of being in Yeats' writings involves more than reconciling pairs of opposites. He says "it is an ideal of personality embodied in poetry, and one seeks it by undertaking in poetry an autobiographical quest." He uses "Among School Children" to exemplify it.

Some of the essays in the collection give interesting insights into Yeats' involvement with politics. Joseph Chadwick in "Violence in Yeats' Later Politics and Poetry" highlights to what degree Yeats was involved with fascism. Unlike other scholars who have used Yeats' Anglo-Irish class position or his political statement, Chadwick uses "rhetoric, formal techniques, and speaking personae" of Yeats' later poetry and prose to support his argument.

Suheil B. Bushrui in "Images of a Changing Ireland in the Works of W.B. Yeats," talks about Yeats' poetic vision of an ideal Irish nation founded on aristocratic, heroic and peasant ideals and the political violence that later intruded upon the poet's dream. Russell E. Murphy, in "The Rough Beast and Historical Necessity: A New Consideration of Yeats' 'The Second Coming,'" relates "The Second Coming" to "pragmatic cyclical developments of history in light of Yeats' remarks in 'A Vision'".

There are essays like Linda L. Fox's, "Nine-and-Fifty as Symbol in Yeats' The

Wild Swans at Coole", that studies the direct connection between Yeats' choice of nine and fifty in "The Wild Swans at Coole" and Yeats' central passion, the cyclical nature of time. R.W. Desai's essay, "There Struts Hamlet: Yeats and the Hamlet Mask" suggests that Hamlet's ability "to wear a mask that conceals the turbulence within" was an ideal to which Yeats aspired. In "The Rhythm of Metaphor: Yeats, Pound, Eliot, and the Unity of Image in Postsymbolist Poetry," Ronald Bush examines the use of "unifying images" in twentieth century poetry and points out how Yeats, Pound and Eliot "regarded symbols as elements of the form of their poems and understood them to be essentially related to poetic rhythm."

The study brings together essays written on W.B. Yeats' poetry in the last fifteen years. There are some obvious gaps in the collection. For example, the book focuses on Yeats as a poet and excludes his dramatic and critical works. Moreover, given the dominance of critical theory in literary criticism especially in the last decade or so, there are only two theoretical essays on the poet. The real strength of the collection, however, comes through in the balance in the essays between the larger issues concerning Yeats' work and the focus on individual poems. Taneja's introduction to the anthology provides a comprehensive frame to the understanding of the heterogeneous essays.

Taisha Abraham is Lecturer in the Department of English, Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi.

A Flamboyant Issue

Shantha Ramaswamy

IMPRINT OF THE TIMES: INDIA TODAY
(TAMIL LITERARY ANNUAL 1995)

Edited by Arun Poorie.

Copy Editor: Vasanthi
pp. 200, Rs. 20.00

The latest issue of the literary annual of *India Today*, sub-titled *Imprint of the Times*, can well be said to be an imprint of direction and purpose that lends this effort individuality. While functional journalism is content to report and comment, effort of this nature goes beyond this limited purpose in its collection of articles, stories and plays. Belying the old adage that all that glitters is not gold is this richly coloured issue which has been compared to a Kanjeevaram sari by *Kanayazhi* (another Tamil literary magazine) and rightly so.

It is true that contributions from well known writers are not difficult to gather, especially when magazines of national repute launch such a venture. It becomes meaningful however only when the reader is able to discern a certain continu-

ity of thought in the issue. This special issue scores in the planning and presentation that reflect the running thread linking individual effort.

Apart from being bulkier than earlier issues, this year's annual seeks to derive meaning and significance in the literary effort of Tamil writers. If the introduction of writers from Sri Lanka was innovative in last year's annual, focus on Dalit writing is where this year's annual stands out. Modern writing in Tamil which is multi-coloured is examined in two classified forms, a) that in which writing serves to promote the Dravidian movement and b) the anguished voice of the Dalits. Some readers may be sceptical about the stamp of Tamil which the Dravidian movement evolved as stated by A.R. Venkatachala-pati (p. 76). It might well be argued that M. Karunanidhi's short story "Anil Kunju" could have been included in the general section for it deals with communal harmony; which has been the theme not only in the present context but in the past as well. In fact this raises yet another question in the mind of the reader: Is there a need to bifurcate that section into Dravidian and Dalit literature? After all, storylines tend to centre around the exploited and the one who exploits anyway.

In spite of the fact that two generations have grown and lived in free India that

swore itself under the constitution to equality, dissensions based on considerations of caste or economic inequality or parochial tendencies have been manifest as before, if not more. Indira Parthasarathy's play "Theervu", a satire, is an attempt to describe the plight of India from 1947 to this day.

Whether the focus on what ails Dalit society will add to the tension or lead to equality may not be the acid test so far as writers are concerned. Yet the lessons of history cannot be brushed aside; the classic case study is that of partition as a solution to the problem of two large religious societies coming alive as one nation. The problems of scheduled castes were handled and a political solution was worked out by a sensitive social leader Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who did not belong to that caste. The case of the Dalit may be viewed as parallel, a point made in the article by Kaj Gautam (p. 98).

L.S. Ramamritham's "Vendappada-davargal" (Unwanted People) leads the general section followed by other well known writers Rajam Krishnan, A. Madhavan, Sujata, Nanjil Nadan, Vannadasan, Prapanjam, Subrabharatimaniyan, Yoganathan, Ramamurti and Vasanthi. A sad strain runs through all the stories.

C.N. Annadurai's story appears under the section Dravida Literature and a touching poem on Annadurai by Abdul

Rahman is also in the same section. Listing the contents is not the purpose and is also not possible. Each one of the stories is thought-provoking and makes very interesting reading.

However, for the benefit of the average reader, an editorial note by way of thematic analysis might have been helpful. Again, a few lines about the writers particularly those using dialects almost to the exclusion of the standard form that prevail in printed matter, a commentary note identifying the region of the dialect would have been consistent with the tenor of the special issue.

One also wonders at the absence of the writer Jayakanthan, not just in the latest annual but over the other two as well. The first issue in the series, brought out for the year 1993-94 was a treat of prose, poetry and drama. The following issue dealt with the branching out of Tamil literature and focussed on the Sri Lankan contribution. All three issues carry an interview with a personality from the films. The latest carries a conversation with Padmini as recounted by Vasanthi. It is interesting, is it populist?

A commendable effort, the richness and variety of the illustrations predominantly in colour making a distinct contribution to the feel of quality.

Shantha Ramaswamy is a critic.

The Immigrant Perspective

Rita Kothari

LIVING IN AMERICA: POETRY AND FICTION BY SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN WRITERS

Edited by Roshni Rustomji-Kerns
Westview Press, 1995, pp. 240, \$59 (Hardcover) \$17.95 (paperback)

Diasporic lives have written into them uncertainties, discriminations, material advantages and a whole set of uncomfortable questions. But diaspora is also a fertile ground which can breed the creative impetus. It gives it a certain verve and energy that might have something to do with living on the margins. Again diaspora may also create a limiting, self-indulgent sense of marginalisation set apart from more 'real' problems back home. *Living in America*, a collection of poems and short stories by South Asian American writers embodies this 'mixed blessing' state of living in another country.

The editor, Rustomji-Kerns, defines a South Asian American as an immigrant, 'expatriate', 'refugee', someone 'experiencing birth or death in America', 'studying and working' and of course, and acquires a specific slant in practice. There seems to be confusion regarding the criteria of selection. There is a heavy reliance

upon new, emerging authors. In the process, well-established authors like Bharati Mukherjee, Vikram Seth and Rohinton Mistry get excluded from the book. On the other hand, Meena Alexander, Bapsi Sidhwa, G.S. Sarat Chandra and Saleem Peeradina do have a voice in it.

The Introduction, followed by Roshni Sharma's essay "Crossing the Dark Waters", sets the tone and locates the dynamics of South Asian lives in a socio-historical context. How does someone from a sub-culture maintain his/her native identity in a dominating, dominant culture? Is it better to withstand the pressures or should one allow oneself to be assimilated? Assimilation to what extent and where does one draw the line? What values, old/new, Asian/American does one pass on to the next generation? Roshni Sharma asks, "Why are we all labelled homogeneously as South Asians?" Our castes, religion, community, class, urban or rural background—all these differences are glossed over in a generic category like 'South Asian'. Point taken. But then what about homogenisation that takes place within our own country where all those from U.P., Bihar, Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh are 'North Indian' or worse 'Punjabis' and those from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka termed as 'South Indians' or 'Madrasis'. Homogenisation is avoidable as much as possible, but it must be acknowledged that homogenisation stems from a need for organising and even reducing otherness.

The anthology itself has two main parts, Poetry and Fiction. Of the 35 odd contributors, a large number is from India. About six authors are from Pakistan, a couple from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and

Philippines. Typically every piece, save two begins with a 'statement' by the author on his/her life in America. On the whole, the book provides a fairly clear idea about what every author has been doing in America and his/her origins.

The poetry does not somehow rise beyond oversimplification and 'one-dimensionality'. Although the editor warns us against reading the selection as merely 'ethnic', most of the poems are just that. For example these lines from Minal Hajratwala's poem, "Twenty Years After I grew into your Lives"

I, too, am militant
in my battles for human rights,
for health over hunger, not Pandava
over Kaurava,
for freedom to be
other than mother of 100 sons.

Similarly, Rashmi Sharma's poem "What's in a Name?" is sheer disappointment especially after her insightful essay. Look at the opening lines:

Am I Krishnamurthi or Chris
Vardhamana or 'R.D'
Vijaya or Victor?
Markandeya or Mark
Shailendra of Shelly?

Poem by other contributors are similarly flat. However, Agha Shahid Ali's and Saleem Peeradina's contributions are a saving grace.

The immigrant's perspective gets much more sharpened and interesting as one goes on to the short stories. There are twenty-five of them. Naseem H. Hines' "The Dew and the Moon" and Neela Seshachari's "The Bride Comes Home" are concerned with a South Asian woman 'chosen' for and married to a South Asian

man who is in America and does not want his wife. The bearing and nurturing of children who have inherited multiple cultures finds an expression in Meena Alexander's excerpt from *Fault Lines*, Tahira Naqvi's "All is not lost" and Jyotsna Sreenivasan's "the Peacock Mirrored Eyes". Rajni Srikanth's "You Live on Your Side" leaves the reader disturbed and sad at the way innocuous affection from next door neighbours is perceived with suspicion in a different culture. Some stories deal with a very real problem faced by most South Asians—the arrogance of the immigration officers. However, with the exception of Boman Desai's "This Thicket", none of the stories in the book show concern for or awareness of racism as practised by South Asians when they look down upon blacks or other immigrants as lesser mortals. Special mention has to be made of two short stories. The first is Quiron Adhikary's "Nosey Nakshikta's adventures in America". Adhikary's prose is remarkable for its unselfconscious energy. Kirin Narayan's excerpt from *Love, Stars, and All That is interesting* because it is a literal realisation of Derridian erasure. Its concluding page is blank.

On the whole, the poems and short stories evoke a range of questions and issues that South Asian Americans face. The value of the anthology lies in its accommodation of a multitude of voices expressing sensitively (and sometimes badly) the problems of difference, assimilation and culture-shock with which South Asian Americans grapple.

Rita Kothari teaches in St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad.

PULP FICTION

THE HOT ZONE
by Richard Preston, Rs. 165.00

Imagine a killer with the infectiousness of the common cold and power of the Black Death. Imagine something so deadly that it wipes out 90 per cent of those it touches. Imagine an organism against which there is no defence. But you don't need to imagine. Such a killer exists: it is a virus and its name is Ebola.

The Hot Zone tells us what happens when the unthinkable becomes reality: when a deadly virus from the rain forests of Africa crosses continents and infects a monkey house ten miles from the White House.

Ebola is that reality. It has the power to decimate the world's population. Try not to panic. It will be back. There is nothing you can do. . . .

WINGS
by Danielle Steele, Rs. 160.00

In *Wings*, bestselling author Danielle Steele tells the story of a young woman who fights the odds and becomes a world-renowned aviator.

From her family's dusty farmland airstrip near Chicago, the child Cassie O'Malley would look at planes sitting shimmering in the moonlight. Her First World War veteran father Pat wanted his son to be a pilot, not his reckless red-haired daughter. But her father's partner Nick, fellow air ace and airborne daredevil, was willing to break all rules to teach her to fly.

When Cassie was invited to California to become a test pilot her record breaking flights soon made her a media darling. Risking her life, pushing herself to her limits, in a world preparing for the Second World War, she decided to chart her own course and pursue her own destiny, whatever it cost her. . . .

DARK RIVERS OF THE HEART
by Dean Koontz, Rs. 170.00

A man and a woman, each of them secretive and hidden, both of them loners, nomads. A chance meeting in a bar and suddenly they are—first separately and then together—fleeing the long-arms of a clandestine, illegal and increasingly powerful agency; the woman hunted for the information she possesses, the man sought because he finds himself obsessed with helping the woman.

The agent in charge of the pursuit is possessed of an uncommon madness and cruelty as he strives to make a perfect world. With access to the government's electronic information banks, surveillance systems and futuristic weapons, he is virtually unstoppable, indestructible—the brazen face of an insidiously fascist future. But the man and the woman are emboldened by their dark experiences to fight recklessly for survival—their own and each other's. . . .

RECESSIONAL
by James A. Michener, Rs. 153.45

Andy Zorn is a gifted Chicago doctor. Until a rigged malpractice suit puts him out of business. . . . Involved in a pile-up out of town, Andy's medical expertise still saves the life of a young woman, Betsy, even if he cannot stop the accident crippling her.

And when she reappears at the Palms retirement home for rehabilitation she is under Zorn's care once again. Only this time it is she who gives Zorn a new life. . . . and love.

TOM CLANCY'S OP-CENTRE
by Mirror Image, Rs. 127.50

The Cold War is over. And chaos is setting in. The new President of Russia is trying to create a new democratic regime. But there are strong elements within the country that are out to stop him.

Op-Centre, the newly founded but highly successful crisis management team, begins a race against the clock and against the hardliners. Their task is made even more difficult by the discovery of a Russian counterpart. . . . but this one's controlled by those same repressive hardliners.

Two rival Op-centres, virtual mirror images of each other. But if this mirror cracks, it'll be much more than seven years' bad luck. . . .

Harminder Singh

Communication

Mr. L.P. Singh (The Book Review, Aug. 1995) writes that "there are some (sic.) extraordinary factual errors" in my essay "The Prime Minister and the Judiciary" in the volume "Nehru to the Nineties" edited by James Manor and published last year. One would expect him at least to mention them. He cites only two. One concerns the proposal to make L.K. Jha Chief Justice of the Patna High Court. He ought to have mentioned that I did not assert as a fact that this was a reference to the distinguished civil servant, as his strong criticism clearly implies.

I set out the entire relevant portion from the account of this episode by the editor of Dr. Rajendra Prasad's correspondence, V. Choudhary, and wrote: "There is no editorial footnote to indicate whether the L.K. Jha, whom it was sought to impose on the High Court as its Chief Justice was the civil servant. . . . Since the honorific 'Mr. Justice' is not prefixed to his name, one suspects (sic.) it was this very L.K. Jha". Airing the suspicion was wrong but Mr. L.P. Singh's criticism is wide off the mark. It obviously overlooks the word "suspects" and the context.

His error is far graver in the other instance, the resignation of T.T.K. from

the Shastri Cabinet. One could of course, say that P.B. Gajendragadkar's account of it in his memoirs *To the Best of My Memory* conflicts with the correspondence now readily available in C.P. Srivastava's biography of Shastri published this year. What is indefensible is (a) to cast aspersions on the integrity of the memoirs by suppressing from the reader a vital fact recorded by its editor, Justice R.A. Jahagirdar who saw it through the press and also (b) to overlook—if not worse—the details in the book on which I relied, not "apparently", as Mr. Singh puts it, but very explicitly in footnote 26 p. 103 referring to pp. 184-7 of the memoirs.

Re: (a) R.A. Jahagirdar mentions two facts, both equally relevant. The memoirs were dictated by P.B. Gajendragadkar but the Ms. was not read by him before he died. Mr. L.P. Singh mentions only the second—wilfully—not the first in order to imply lack of authenticity. Jahagirdar is a son-in-law of Gajendragadkar and was a sitting and highly respected Judge of the Bombay High Court when he published the book in 1983 with a Foreword by some one who knew Gajendragadkar very closely for four decades—Y.V. Chandrachud, who was the Chief Justice of India in 1983. The book is far too detailed to admit of doubt. Neither Judge would have lent his name if there was

any. So much for Mr. L.P. Singh's concern about casting "aspersions" on people of repute. To say that the volume "purports to be" Gajendragadkar's memoirs is to insult both the judges.

(b) The four pages I referred to (pp. 184-87) record closeness of relationship between the CJI and the PM. This was the core of my criticism of both. The CJI felt free to advise the PM about the Russians before he left for Tashkent. He writes (p. 185) that instead of dealing with the papers concerning his "friend" TTK, he gave them to a brother judge, Justice Wanchoo, and conveyed his views to the PM. But, he avers that Shastri told TTK that the opinion came from the CJI and apologised to the CJI for this while saying "The induction of your name has had its effect. . ." The account is detailed enough.

That this contradicts the correspondence is undoubtedly a very fair comment. What is grossly unfair is to impugn the authenticity of the memoirs, ignore their details, and suppress them from the readers, still to proceed to allege "some extraordinary factual errors" and pontifically criticise "sweeping" judgements. We have in Mr. L.P. Singh a physician whom, as the saying goes, sorely needs to cure himself.

A.G. Noorani, Bombay

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BOOK NEWS BOOK NEWS BOOK NEWS BOOK NEWS BOOK NEWS BOOK NEWS BOOK NEWS BOOK NEWS

■ CULTURE

Music and Drama: Tyagaraja and the Renewal of Tradition: Translations and Reflections

William J. Jackson

Tyagaraja (1767-1847) is the most celebrated of South Indian musician-saints. This book explores some of the growth processes, the transmission patterns and the cultural creativity involved in South Indian *bhakti* traditions, using examples of Tyagaraja's life story, songs and social significance as case studies.

Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 1994, pp. 304, Rs. 250.00

Drama and Ritual of Early Hinduism

Natalia Lidova

The relationship between drama and ritual in early Hindu culture are analysed in the context of yajna-dominated Vedism and puja-dominated Hinduism. The author traces the original links between the ritual tradition and the cult of Puja which probably emerged simultaneously with Buddhism and Jainism. The book proposes a new conception of the origin of Hindu culture.

Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 1994, pp. 141, Rs. 125.00

Meaning in Music

Rashmi Goswami

Through an analysis of the various elements of a *raga* the author attempts to

show how an emotive significance is inextricably bound up with a *raga* and how in a meaningful exposition of a *raga* the various elements of musical expression are combined organically to create a musical entity which is supremely edifying and as such has profound aesthetic and spiritual significance.

Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 1995, pp. 107, Rs. 100.00

Indian Music

B.C. Deva

This book introduces to lay readers the basic concepts of Indian music to aid a fuller appreciation. *Raga*, its melodic base is examined first with scales and figures employed where necessary. Chapters on tone and rhythm follow. The many forms of composition—*khayal*, *thumri*, *kritis*—are explained and the lives of the masters briefly touched upon. The author has covered Hindustani and Karnatic music. Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Wiley Eastern Ltd., 1995, pp. 170, Rs. 200.00

■ EDUCATION

Language in Education: Problems and Principles

Shivendra K. Verma

The crucial point made in all these papers is that language planning (language choice and language ordering in a multi-

lingual society) is central to educational planning which is central to national planning. The message for language planners and educationists is that they should take steps to produce methods of materials designed to help students from tribal, rural and other neglected sections of society.

TR Publications, 1995, pp. 139, Rs. 195.00

School and Society: An Area Study of Myslapore

This is a project undertaken by the students and teachers of class VIII, The School, Madras when the boundary between school and society dissolves, an enormous amount of learning is possible. Myslapore in Madras is an ancient settlement struggling to retain its ethos in a rapidly urbanizing milieu. For parents, teachers and schools this book offers an insight into interesting educational structures, experiences and possibilities. It is an approach to wider issues which arise from and go beyond area studies.

The School, Madras, Krishnamurti Foundation, India and Tara Publishing, Madras, 1995, pp. 41, price not stated.

Indian Education: Structure and Process

M.S. Gore

The present anthology is written over a period of twenty-five years in sociological perspective of Indian education. The book is divided into four parts—Educa-

tion and Society; Education and Social Goals, Structure and Process in Higher Education, and Sociology of Education. Rawat Publications, 1994, pp. 277, Rs. 275.00

Reconceptualising the Sciences and the Humanities: An Integral Approach

S.C. Malik

This book by an anthropologist looks at recent developments in the sciences and the humanities taking into account many disciplines. The implications of science in the new age are crucial for the growth and relevance of those disciplines which study the human phenomenon.

Manohar Publishers, 1995, pp. 314, Rs. 300.00

■ GENERAL

Indian Cooking Overseas: Traditional Cuisine Survives

Mona Melwani

A large number of the recipes in this book are old favourites combined to achieve a change in flavour. There are also recipes which came about because some Indian ingredients were not available and substitutes had to be found. Except for a few elaborate recipes all the dishes here are quick and easy to prepare.

Sterling Paperbacks, 1995, pp. 111, Rs. 65.00

The Enchanted Darkness

S.J. Lancelot Pereira
This book is one man's practical guide to exploring 'The Mystery' of the creator says the author. For busy people whose daily lives involve hectic activity and constant movement this will serve as a source-book of fresh insight and inspiration.
Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1995, pp. 309, Rs. 100.00

Exercising For A Healthy Heart

Paul Vodak
This book explains why it makes sense to exercise and the best way to go about it. There is enough scientific evidence to show that modest and regular physical activity, sustained throughout life, has the greatest impact on prevention of cardiovascular disease.
Orient Paperbacks, 1995, pp. 128, Rs. 65.00

Magic of the Talking Doll

K.S. Gode
This is the first English language book ever to be published in India on ventriloquism. Translated from Marathi it covers all aspects of ventriloquism right from its history to its actual presentation on the stage including cultivation of an artificial voice, lip control, care for the doll and delivery of dialogue.
Sterling Paperbacks, 1995, pp. 107, Rs. 50.00

The Career Guide: The Complete Manual On How to Choose Your Profession

Jayanti Ghose
This career guide not only offers a wide spectrum of career options but also provides valuable information on several related aspects of career planning. The careers are listed alphabetically along with useful information on premier institutions where they can be pursued. Also given are eligibility criteria, modes of entry, different personality traits to suit specific career options, job prospects, information about higher education and prospects in India and the USA.
UBS Publishers and Distributors, 1995, pp. 262, Rs. 100.00

■ GENDER STUDIES

Women and Seasonal Labour Migration

Edited by Loes Schenk-Sandbergen
This important volume deals with the gender-specific causes and consequences of seasonal rural labour migration, or 'survival' migration, in four Indian states—Orissa, Kerala, Gujarat and Maharashtra. It begins with an overview of migration studies and then presents three case studies which typify three crucial transformation processes related to different socio-economic, cultural and ecological conditions and livelihood systems: the forest, the sea, the land.
Sage Publications, 1995, pp. 345, Rs. 375.00

Single Women

Urmila Jethani
This book concentrates on the patterns of

economic and social adjustment of unmarried women and the role strains faced by them in varied interpersonal situations. It analyses the role of family, financial, physical and self constraints in remaining unmarried and identifies the type of women who remain single.
Rawat Publications, 1994, pp. 187, Rs. 250.00

Speaking for Ourselves: Women and Distance Education in India

Edited by Asha S. Kanwar and Neela Jagannathan
Distance education is generally seen as being specially suitable for women and there is data to prove that this mode is preferred more or less globally by women. The essays here are written by women on women and distance education in India and raise a wide range of crucial questions.
Manohar Books, 1995, pp. 247, Rs. 350.00

Accountability in Development Organizations in India

Poonam Smith-Sreen
This book goes beyond the traditional framework of understanding accountability in terms of financial accounting and constitutes a landmark in terms of conceptualizing accountability to members. The author has developed tools for assessing member-accountability based on case studies of four grassroots organisations involved in income generating activities for women in India.
Sage Publications, 1995, pp. 297, Rs. 295.00

■ INDOLOGY

The Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

Volume 1: Madhu Kanda, Volume 2: Muni Kanda
Commentary by Nitya Chaitanya Sati
The *Upanisads* capture the quintessence of Indian spiritual wisdom unfolding deepset, highly perceptive reflections on human existence and how it is related to the mysterious cosmos. This is one of the ten major *Upanisads*—a dialectical narration that unabashedly stands up to the rational scrutiny of the modern mind, it is directed towards both the individual aspirant and the philosophic thinker. This is to be a set of three volumes.
D.K. Printworld, 1994, 1995, pp. 656 and 657, Rs. 300.00

Revolution of the Mystics: On the Social Aspects of Virasaivism

J.P. Schouten
One of the most fascinating episodes in the religious history of Southern India is the rise of the Virasaiva movement. These heroic followers of Siva are characterized by a unique combination of intense devotion and social reformation. This study depicts the social view of the twelfth century reformers on the basis of their own texts. Later developments are also studied.
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1995, pp. 330, Rs. 250.00

Life and Thought of Sankaracarya

Govind Chandra Pande
Despite the existence of several legendary biographies of Sankara from medieval times, no critical historical biography has been available. This book is based on a critical study of all the available sources and attempts a historical re-construction of Sankara's life and work. It brings out the role of Sankara in the evolution of Indian culture and philosophy and to highlight the logical and spiritual, traditional and original components of his philosophical, religious and social ideas.
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1994, pp. 380, Rs. 250.00

Vaisnavism: Its Philosophy, Theology and Religious Discipline

S.M. Srinivasa Chari
Tracing the basic tenets of Vaisnavism to the hymns of Rgveda, the earliest religious literature of the world, the author has shown how an ancient cult has developed itself by successive stages into a well-formulated monotheistic system in the hands of Ramanuja and his followers.
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1994, pp. 383, Rs. 350.00

Buddhist Spirituality: Indian, Southeast Asian, Tibetan, Early Chinese

Edited by Takeuchi Yoshinori
The contents here include the message of Gautama Buddha, Indian Buddhist meditation, Abhidharma, theravada, monasticism and civilization, the sutras, mahayana philosophies, philosophical schools in China, the spirituality of Emptiness and Tantric Buddhism in China.
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1995, pp. 428, Rs. 190.00

The Laughing Swamis

Harry Aveling
From the late 60s onward with the sudden expansion of European awareness of Indian spirituality a vast horde of "foreign religious heads" have spread through India in incomprehensibly large numbers. Many thousands of those have taken to *sannyasa* with varying degrees of commitment. Who are these disciples? What were their backgrounds in their own societies? What did *sannyasa* mean to them? The book seeks to answer these and other questions with reference to the Australian disciples of Satyanand and Rajneesh.
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1994, pp. 221, Rs. 175.00

Diamond Days with Osho

Ma Prem Shunyo
Written by Prem Shunyo the only person apart from Osho's doctor, who has spent the last 15 years continually with him, this is the diary of the roller-coaster ride of Shunyo's inner and outer adventures which proved to be both life and sanity threatening yet profoundly rewarding. In her simple style she takes the reader through hair-raising adventures from prison, to attempted murder and finally

to the truth of Osho's death by thallium poisoning.
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1993, pp. 260, Rs. 225.00

The Indian Calendar

Robert Sewell and Sankara Balkrishna Dikshit
The practical difficulties in calculating dates mentioned in inscriptions or in the colophons to manuscripts are considerable. Among the books offering help to historians and editors alike the works of R. Sewell stand out as excellent introductions to this intricate subject. The present volume was first published in 1897.
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1995, pp. 169, Rs. 475.00

World Scriptures: A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts

Edited by Andrew Wilson
This is a topical journey through the sacred writings of the world's great religions. Comparing religious beliefs on similar themes demonstrates the existence of a vast sphere of spiritual common ground. This anthology is an extraordinary reference work representing a new holistic approach to understanding world religions. This is a project of the International Religious Foundation.
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1993, pp. 914, Rs. 775.00

Ganesh: Invocation and Commentary on Consciousness

Akhfer Ansen
The hymns and commentary on consciousness given here resonate with materials from the early Vedas and from later sacred Hindu literature, with one common thread, they all constellate around Ganesh.
Virgo Publications, 1995, pp. 227, rs. 300.00

Hindu Spirituality: Vedas Through Vedanta

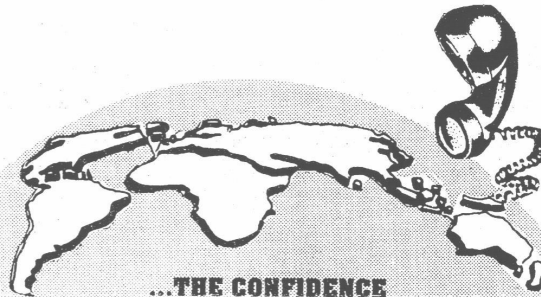
Edited by Krishna Sivaraman
The present volume is part of a series entitled *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest*. The volume gathers together and presents the richness of the spiritual heritage of the human race. It is designed to reflect the autonomy of the tradition in its historical development.
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