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Beyond Multiculturalism

Neera Chandhoke

WE ARE ALL MULTICULTURALISTS NOW

By Nathan Glazer

Harvard University Press, 1997, pp. 179, £ 13.50

MULTI-CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP: A LIBERAL THEORY OF MINORITY RIGHTS

By Will Kymlicka

Clarendon, Oxford, 1995, pp. 280, price not stated.

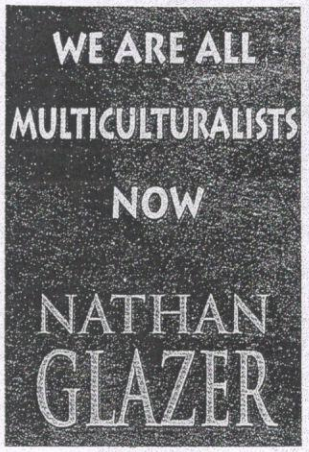
In the last years of the nineteen-eighties and the early years of the decade of the nineteen-nineties, the concept of the melting pot which was the specific contribution of the U.S. to debates on integration of culturally diverse groups, has come to be replaced by that of multiculturalism. The melting pot metaphor, it is now recognized, simply provided the wrong recipes for societies marked by culturally distinctive groups. Indeed, as these groups, for understandable reasons, resisted assimilation and integration into the dominant culture, we saw the eruption of what has come to be known as the *'ethnic explosion'*. Societies witnessed considerable instability and *angst*, as subordinated cultures sought to assert their particular identity and imprint it on the body politic. And thus the concept of multiculturalism acquired shape and form.

The concept carries important implications for the manner in which we think of regulating relationships between culturally diverse groups. For one, it is supremely subversive of the notions of assimilation and integration; it very rightly draws our attention to the fact that integration into a dominant culture devalues those identities which are called upon to assimilate. Secondly, multiculturalism tells us that each identity should be valued on its own terms, and that this can be done only when submerged identities are retrieved from the banishment and the marginalizations dominant cultures have subjected them to. They should be, in short, revalued. Thirdly, the concept of multiculturalism cultivates a positive approach towards group difference and group identities.

Multiculturalism, it is not surprising, has become the rallying call of various social groups and movements, all of which seek to challenge the cultural imperialism of dominant images. When we unmask these governing images—as various movements, particularly the women's movement attempt to do—we find that what is presented to us as the embodiment of normality and, therefore, as desirable, is usually the White Anglo-saxon heterosexual male. Logically then, all the other images which do not fit the bill, come to be typed as deviant. They are, therefore, downgraded. Multiculturalism as a gut reaction to this 'typing', attempts to legitimize several different ways of being: all of which are equally human, all of which are equally normal, and all of which need to be respected. Citizens should be respected not *despite*, but *because* of their cultural identity and particularity.

Multiculturalism, Glazer thinks, has created far more problems than earlier perspectives. It just clutters up the process of learning. It is obvious that the curriculum cannot give the same place to European history that it held in the 1940s. Indeed there is no course on European history as required course, it has been replaced by world and then global history...

"And so our high school students today will know almost nothing about the rise of the dynastic and absolute state in Europe, the war of the Spanish succession, the rise of Prussia and Russia, the unification of Italy and Germany, and a variety of other topics. I regret this because I like history.... But I can make no argument on principled educational grounds" (p. 36).



In the U.S., the concept has become the subject of raging cultural wars over school and university curricula. This is perhaps understandable, for curricula embody not only the state of the knowledge of a society, they concretize the biases and the prejudices of that society. We can perceive and unmask such biases when we decode the kinds of texts which are prescribed for the student—which texts are allotted the status of a canon, which are left out, and which are typed as inferior.

In the United States, however, the controversy over multicultural representations of history and literature has reached amazing proportions. One such war over school curricula in the state of New York is chronicled in *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*. Nathan Glazer, known as a proponent of assimilation and of the Great American dream in his earlier works, was right in the thick of one such a war, and the experience has left him a somewhat chastened man. It has led him to reflect on and question his own previous assumptions, the ability of law and the constitution to guide society in the desired direction, the problems of American society, and where his society has gone wrong. Glazer seems to many of us who had seen him as a rather conservative defender of the status quo in the U.S., a reformed man. But is he really so? Let us see.

In the early nineties, the New York State had sought to reform the curricula, and make it more sensitive to claims of the minorities to be represented in the codified knowledge of American society. The multiculturalists adopted the slogan 'teach the truth', critics of multiculturalism were appalled at the changes that were sought to be wrought in the educational syllabi. Expectedly the efforts to make the students aware of not only the contributions of, say, the indigenous people to the making of the political system, but also of other alternative ways of arranging social and political life, have overburdened them to an alarming degree. For instance, as a result of a concerted effort to bring Africa into the story, students have now to study Nubia and Kush as the sites of cultural innovation and creativity. But the story does not stop here. Historians committed to multiculturalism insist that students should not only be made aware of the other sides of history, but of alternative histories. Whereas the students formerly learnt about the history of Europe—and a jolly good thing this was, insists Glazer—today they have to learn the common elements of Native American societies, such as gender roles, family organization, religion and values. They have to further compare this diversity in languages, shelter, labour systems, political structures, and economic organization with other societies, and describe the general features of family organization, labour division, agriculture, manufacturing and trade of western African societies.

That the student is overburdened is an understatement. Glazer is concerned about this, but more importantly, he is concerned about the effects of the retrieval and the valorization of particular histories and the downgrading of the role of White Americans in the making of the history of the US. This, he considers, has serious consequences for the way social studies and literature are taught in the country. It also has serious consequences for the way the American nation is thought of. Is there one nation with interdependent cultures? Or are there distinct cultures with their own logic which inhabit the territory of the USA? How will a common history emerge from these various perspectives, and how will adolescent school children put together these multiple perspectives?" But what will this new emphasis on multiculturalism, on "recognition", do to our efforts to teach our children truth and the best way to reach it, to promote American unity, to encourage civic harmony? And how will it affect the ability of minority students to learn and achieve?" (p. 34). Do not the teaching of multiple perspectives on history marginalize the issue of class? Do women possess a distinct culture?

Multiculturalism, Glazer thinks, has created far more problems than earlier perspectives. It just clutters up the process of learning (the language is mine). It is obvious that the curriculum cannot give the same place to European history that it held in the 1940s. Indeed there is no course on European history

as required course, it has been replaced by world and then global history. "And so our high school students today will know almost nothing about the rise of the dynastic and absolute state in Europe, the war of the Spanish succession, the rise of Prussia and Russia, the unification of Italy and Germany, and a variety of other topics. I regret this because I like history. . . . But I can make no argument on principled educational grounds" (p. 36). Politics has overcome educational rigour.

Though Glazer recognizing the peremptory demands of politics, sensibly recommends that a middle path between the claims of African history and the claims of European history should be negotiated, he makes his own position (and biases) quite clear. "There is an important difference, however, between the two positions I reject. The multicultural or Afrocentric extreme is based in too large part on fantasy, whereas the Eurocentric extreme is based not on fantasy but on a commitment to subjects of study that have lost significance and meaning for our lives today" (p. 36).

The tone underlying this passage is rueful—these subjects have lost significance and meaning for our lives today—but there is also a grand dismissal of what he sees as the pretensions of Afrocentric history. He rejects what he perceives as the pretensions of this history clearly—"we should not base the social studies curriculum in the elementary and high schools on pure fantasies about the role of Africa and Blacks in world history, something equivalent perhaps to the Book of Mormons or the myths of the Black Muslims as elaborated by Elijah Muhammed" (p. 35).

Nevertheless, he hastens to add, a good part of the Eurocentric curriculum that is being rejected, is indeed crucially relevant to our world today. He, for instance, regrets that Afrocentrists make much of the view that Man's earliest ancestors emerged in Africa, that some 'un-language' first emerged in Africa. This to Glazer has little bearing on our world today. "Our world has been shaped, and is being shaped, by science and technology in the world of production, by distinctive instruments of finance in the world of economy, by power of the ideals of constitutionalism, democracy, and human rights in the world of politics. All of this first established itself in Europe and, owing to the European expansion between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries, spread throughout the world" (36–37).

Now we in the colonized world are perfectly aware that history as a discipline fashioned in Europe could not accept the history writing of the colonial world. Oral histories, histories fashioned on the basis of the geneology of a particular community, or court history, could not meet the standards set by the West. But these standards were after all set by others for us. If politics determines that other histories should be taught today, politics equally determined that these histories should not be taught in the first place. That other ways of writing history can be equally valid is still not understood by conservatives in the West. Other more sensitive historians have recognized that the pluralization of history recognizes the multiplicity of narratives, and different notions of time. But not Glazer. To dismiss the history of the formerly colonized as so much fantasy, and to think that just the history of science and technology as the only real and valid history, betrays not only an insensitivity to the plurality of history itself, but an insensitivity to the fact that the history of science and technology as the only valid history is itself a political construct. And so, history written in another mode is dismissed as just a deviant from a single universal norm.

To be fair to Glazer, I must admit that he understands the reasons for these shifts, and he correctly locates the problem. The problem simply is that American society has refused to let the Afro-Americans live with dignity. But at the same time there is a strain of nostalgia and regret that sweep the pages of *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*. There was a school pageant, writes Nathan Glazer, "often referred to in studies of Americanization, in a Dearborn school in which diverse immigrants, each dressed in a distinctive costume, entered a huge melting pot on the school stage and emerged on the other side all dressed alike. This was certainly the ambition of Americanization in the 1920s and '30s. Not only was the history and culture of immigrants ignored but their practices were commonly regarded as inferior, and derided by teachers" (p. 42).

And this was precisely the problem. It is no wonder that the Afro-Americans have politically mobilized to imprint history with their own identity. But Americans committed to the great dream of a colour blind society cannot see this as a legitimate effort to make a banished group visible. Glazer himself in his earlier works was guilty of this. He now confesses that in his obsession with integration, he himself had not correctly recognized the problem in his earlier works. He also concedes that those Americans who studied ethnicity in the 1960s, and who firmly believed that assimilation was what happened to ethnic and racial groups in America, just did not see the signs of continuing Black separation and difference. Differences, it was firmly believed by them, would pass and decline. The age of prejudice and discrimination in employment, in the use of public facilities, in education, and in government programmes. In 1965 the voting act gave everyone access to the ballot, and an immigration reform act eliminated all quotas. These were meant to overcome racial and ethnic limitations by the expansion of citizenship and rights. Scholars were confident that the remaining discriminations would be wiped out through both the invocation of constitutional provisions and the spirit of the polity. They would ensure that the polity moves towards a greater inclusiveness, and a more expansive notion of what it means to be an American citizen. Surely, for Glazer, the anti-discrimination laws should have performed the trick. His earlier works certainly reflected this optimism. Today he is forced to accept that these arguments were equally blind. For, as he accepts, even when Jefferson proclaimed that all men are equal, the Jews and the Catholics were discriminated against in law, the American Indians were outside the polity, and if there had been Hispanics and Asians around at that time, there would have been discrimination against them as well.

But this acceptance does not protect Glazer from confusion, he is confused, he is worried, he is unable to understand why people react the way they do. He had firmly believed that a common fund of values from which each community would in time draw its sustenance did exist, and that diversity would be transcended in the move to an inclusive citizenship. Therefore, he is puzzled when these ideas are dismissed as chauvinistic and racist.

And he still cannot quite understand why this should be so. I must confess that the author makes an honest attempt to understand why multiculturalism has arisen in the first place. It has largely to do with the fact that whereas European migrants assimilated, the situation of African Americans is different. These differences create different perspectives on our historic past, on our present, on the shape of our culture, he admits. This is a far cry from his earlier assertions that assimilation was the guide to a truly American society: assertions that made many of us look at him as an uncritical exponent of Americanization, an exponent who had little regard or respect for other cultures. Glazer is today more modest.

But Glazer remains Glazer, he recognizes that the divisiveness over school curricula is but a reflection of the Black White division that no one knows how to overcome, he admits that he would like to see the power of the integrating values of the 'common' stock as well as respect diversity, but he cannot quite see where the White Americans have gone wrong. And, therefore, he puts the blame on the Afro-Americans squarely.

Let us have respect for identity in our common culture, he says, but let us avoid fixing of lines of division on ethnic and racial basis, let us allow people the right to exist, let us agree that racial and ethnic affiliation should be as voluntary as religious affiliation "Hollinger's 'postethnic perspective' favours 'voluntary over involuntary affiliations' . . . resists the grounding of knowledge and moral values in blood and history . . . I agree . . . Hollinger's [list of preferences] is good enough for our common society. But his prescription does not take account of the African-American condition, where affiliation is hardly voluntary, where the community of descent defines an inescapable community of fate, where knowledge and moral values are indeed grounded in blood and history, one wonders how or when, it will be otherwise" (p. 160).

The paragraph gives us cause to ponder. Is Glazer really a chastened man? Or is he compromising reluctantly with a movement that refuses to go away? He recognizes the deep divisions which exist between the Whites and the Blacks, he recognizes that the Blacks have not been able to integrate in White society, but he does not ask himself as to whether white racism is to blame. He does not realize that in the case of the Afro-Americans, the community of descent does indeed define a community of fate: they are fated to be treated as outsiders in a society which their ancestors built for those who have appropriated their history. Surely, the

Kymlicka is a Canadian political philosopher, and he speaks from the vantage point of Canadian society whose problems—different languages, diverse ethnic groups, indigenous people—are roughly similar to ours in India. Thus his arguments are interesting, not only because they are rigorous and a model of clarity, but also because they simply possess relevance for our situation.

The ideology of multiculturalism we can say is incomplete, if it valorizes difference uncritically without subjecting the notion of difference to some amount of skepticism, or relating difference to broader normative considerations of inequality and social justice, or interrogating the relationship of the group to its members.

change in the larger reality which will help multiculturalism become just a passing phase as Glazer hopes, needs to be brought about by all sections of the people, particularly by the Whites who have defined and continue to define society on their own terms.

After having said, that let me hasten to remark that the fault is not entirely that of Glazer. Multiculturalism in the U.S. has come to be centred mainly around the educational curricula, and cultural wars have come to dominate the academy to an alarming extent. This has led to sharply polemic positions, and Glazer makes an honest attempt to balance competing points of view. His biases are, however, more than apparent. In the end, *We are all Multiculturalists Now* is a rueful obituary to days destined never to return.

To a large extent what we do with multiculturalism depends on what we meant by it. If by multiculturalism we mean merely the valorization of differences, the ideology itself can be legitimately perceived as limited. The celebration of difference is limited in two ways. One we have to ask what his valorization does in terms of securing social justice and equality. Surely visibility in school curricula is not the only issue at stake. The issue simply is that marginalized groups have been historically denied not only visibility, they have been denied social justice and equality. Their history is a history of deprivation, of humiliation, of sheer injustice. And it is not surprising that culturally marginalized groups are more often that not socially and economically marginalized as well. But it is equally possible that an affluent Afro-American continues to be treated with disrespect, continues to be stereotyped into perverse images. At the core of the multiculturalist agenda is both the demand for socio-economic justice and a demand for respect and recognition. The removal of material deprivation may not necessarily lead to the extension of respect, and recognition in the sense that the subject is worthy of respect. We have to pitch the attempt to secure justice for marginal groups at two levels, at the level of providing them with socio-economic justice, and at the level of treating them with dignity. The furore over school curricula is merely one manifestation of the deep anger of the deprived groups, legitimate anger which comes to the fore when these groups are denied justice.

Secondly, the celebration of difference *per se*, does not help us to identify and to resolve the tensions within the community. Communities are not homogenous entities, they consist of a variety of groups differently and unequally placed within the community—women for instance. If communities assert their right to be different, then by all the laws of logic and by the norms of political consistency, they should allow this right to their own members. But that multiculturalism carries precisely this connotation is difficult to accept. It may even slide into an uncritical endorsement of oppressive groups who seek protection from external discrimination, but which oppress their own members.

The ideology of multiculturalism we can say is incomplete, if it valorizes difference uncritically without subjecting the notion of difference to some amount of skepticism, or relating difference to broader normative considerations of inequality and social justice, or interrogating the relationship of the group to its members.

What troubles me at least is the realization that contemporary versions of multiculturalism are an intellectual descendent of pluralism which the U.S. has been famous for. But pluralism has been subjected to a great many assaults because it works on flawed premises. For one, it proceeds to outline its notions of difference without considering the fact that difference can be related to structural inequality, which constructs differences between groups. By valorizing difference *per se* it proceeds to see groups as equal but different. But groups are not equal even though they may be different. The result is to divorce difference from structural inequality between groups. Multiculturalism equally tends to place groups separately from each other, instead of recognizing that groups themselves may be unequal in relation to each other. It gives us in short an *additive* not a *relational* model of difference. What is more troubling is that multi-culturalism may even invoke the metaphor of the cultural marketplace, where each cultural group proceeds to do its own thing, and go its own way without any notion of interaction based upon subordination and subjugation of one to another.

I am also of the opinion that ideologies of multiculturalism just do not carry the same resonances which earlier ideas of protective discrimination or affirmative action did. Whereas these ideas indicated that certain groups were structurally disadvantaged, and that they needed special measures to protect them, multiculturalism invokes the idea of separate and different. This, at least it seems to me, is the form that multicultural wars have taken in the U.S.

But there are other dimensions to multiculturalism, and this will take us to the region of some sharp and polemical debates on the subject. These debates range across literary and cultural theory, feminism, sociology and anthropology, and political theory. I concentrate in this review essay on the debates in political theory, not only because the subject falls within my range of interest, but because the debates in political theory have posed relevant questions for political institutions and political practices. And this should be of interest to any theorist who is speaking from the vantage point of a plural society, as we have in India.

Multiculturalism has resulted from two sets of recognitions. The first realization is that a particular territorially bound political community, consists of a plurality of cultures, that these cultures may not necessarily overlap, and that there may be wide divergences between them. Since these communities which are constructed and shaped by specific histories, cultures and traditions may not have anything in common with each other, the vital question which confronts us is—how do they relate to each other? What are the resources we draw upon then, to regulate unfair to others? Is there a standpoint from outside all these cultures which will help us to find ways and means to deal with these problems?

Secondly—and this is a realization which has struck political theory with the full force of a sledge hammer—the citizenry of a state is not composed of abstract faceless subjects so beloved of Enlightenment political theory. It is composed of individuals who are constituted by their own culture and imbricated in their own traditions. It is impossible to treat the individual as merely an 'unencumbered' individual (the phrase is that of Michael Sandel) without reference to the forces which have shaped and moulded her personality and world views. Therefore, we needs must take into account not only individuals, but also their constitutive cultural communities in designing political institutions.

If this is so, then the paramount task of the state, i.e., to respect and protect the individual as citizen, has to be extended to respecting and protecting the community of which she is a member. A group cannot be allowed to decay through 'benevolent neglect' as Will Kymlicka puts it, because this will deprive and impoverish the individual member. Conversely, if the group of which this individual is a member is subjected to hateful stereotyping and perverse imagery, the individual will suffer. Cultures are important to its members, and to belittle or slight a culture will be to belittle and slight the individual member.

Therefore, it is important to respect a culture because this culture is important for the individual. As the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor argues in his *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, our social relations and our shared understanding and practices are fundamentally valuable to us because they constitute our identity. We achieve authentic fulfilment by being recognized and respected by others for what we are, and this entails recognition of culture within which were socialized. We are demeaned if our culture is demeaned.[1]

The crucial term—note—is recognition. This has emerged as a core concept in political theory, being used as a core concept by philosophers ranging from Charles Taylor in Canada to Axel Honneth in Germany. Joseph Raz in a similar vein argues that neither toleration nor individual rights against discrimination can meet the needs of those societies where several cultural communities wish to perpetuate themselves. Multiculturalism tells us that individual prosperity and freedom depend on full and unimpeded membership in flourishing cultural groups. Secondly, multiculturalism reiterates a belief in value pluralism, and in the validity of diverse values embodied in the practices of different societies.

But is multiculturalism an adequate concept to help us to negotiate these recognitions? Perhaps not. Multiculturalism, we need to recognize, is but a *prerequisite* for tackling other vital problems; the recognition that different cultures should be valued for themselves, is but a precondition for dealing with the vital problems of multicultural societies. The problem simply is: how do people and groups of different persuasions live together in one society and one polity? And more importantly, how do we deal with the fact that we do

1. Charles Taylor, Amy Gutman et al (1994) edited *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press)

not only have a plural society on our hands, but a society which is characterized by minorities and majorities? And does multiculturalism offer us any way of ensuring that cultures should not decay through benevolent neglect? The answer to these troubling questions has been given by Will Kymlicka who is one of the most discussed and celebrated theorist on minority rights.

Kymlicka was first introduced to the reading world through his *Liberalism, Community and Culture*. In this work, originally a doctoral dissertation, Kymlicka set out to negotiate the differences between the communitarians and the liberals. Liberal individualists subordinate the politics of the good to the politics of rights, communitarians subject the politics of rights to the politics of the good. Both the philosophical presuppositions as well as the political implications of both these schools differ considerably, and are in a manner of speaking incommensurable. But both the schools have their defenders, and in the process, political theory has become sharply polarized between these two perspectives. In the process, as one work comes to privilege John Rawls, and the other comes to privilege Michael Sandel, political theory has proceeded to go around in circles. Kymlicka has broken this never ending circle through shifting attention to two things. One, he points out, the political community is not coextensive with the cultural community as the communitarians assume; the political community consists of a number of cultural communities, some of which are minorities and which need special rights to maintain and reproduce themselves. Secondly, he shows brilliantly how the predominantly liberal notion of the choosing individual, requires as its precondition the availability of secure cultural contexts. The individual cannot choose unless she possesses access to a range of options, but the options available are not unlimited, they are always restricted by the culture which the individual is placed within. This is simply because culture teaches us to distinguish between the valuable and the non-valubale, it helps us to evaluate, it helps us to be thoughtful reflective beings. If this culture is allowed to die out through benevolent neglect, an individual is not in a position to choose. Her options are negated and neutralized. Kymlicka thus introduces us to the fact that if liberalism has to fulfil its own preconditions, it has to safeguard the existence of minority culture. He also tells us that communitarianism in order to fulfill its own presuppositions has to be sensitive to minority cultures which may have a different world view. He focusses upon minority cultures, because they are in most danger of being outvoted and outmanouvred by majorities. The scene was set in his first book for the argument for the work under review—*Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*.

Kymlicka is a Canadian political philosopher, and he speaks from the vantage point of Canadian society whose problems—different languages, diverse ethnic groups, indigenous people—are roughly similar to ours in India. Thus his arguments are interesting, not only because they are rigorous and a model of clarity, but also because they simply possess relevance for our situation. It is with a sense of empathy, therefore, that I approach his work.

"Most organized political communities throughout recorded history", writes Kymlicka "have been multi-ethnic. . . yet most western political theorists have operated with an idealized model of the polis in which fellow citizens share a common descent, language, and culture" (p. 2). This assumption has had unintended consequences, for to achieve the ideal of a homogenous polity, governments have pursued a variety of policies regarding cultural minorities. These range from genocide to marginalization of minorities, to assimilation. Traditional human rights give no answer to this problem. "The right to free speech does not tell us what an appropriate language policy is; the right to vote does not tell us how political boundaries should be drawn, or how powers should be distributed between levels of government; the right to mobility does not tell us what an appropriate immigration and naturalization policy is. These questions have been left to the usual process of majoritarian decision-making within each state. The result, I will argue, has been to render cultural majorities vulnerable to significant injustice at the hands of the majority, and to exacerbate ethnocultural conflict" (p. 5). To offset this lacunae Kymlicka suggests that we supplement theories of human rights with theories of minority rights. There is little hope that stability will be ensured, or that basic human rights will be respected, unless we resolve the problems of minority rights.

A comprehensive theory of justice will require that both universal rights as well as minority rights are granted and implemented. Having said that Kymlicka hastens to clarify that in order to prevent misuse of minority rights by belligerent minorities and nationalists, it is important to explain how these rights coexist with human rights and how they are limited by principles of individual liberty, democracy and social justice.

Now many theorists—Iris Marion Young among them—have concentrated on collective rights. But Kymlicka goes further in a helpful direction. He distinguishes between self-government rights which involve a delegation of powers on a territorial basis, polyethnic rights which require financial and legal support for the practices of cultural minorities, and special representation rights which guarantee seats for minorities within national legislatures. These three forms of groups differentiated rights are described as different forms of collective rights, and this has implications for the content and the form of the right itself. The rights asserted by an immigrant community will be sharply different from the kinds of rights asserted by the indigenous people.

Much of the work explores the tension between collective rights and individual rights. Here the author makes a vital distinction. Liberals believe that collective rights will infringe individual rights of the members within the collectivity. But this may not be so. There are two kinds of collective rights, suggests Kymlicka: internal restrictions can lead to a group limiting the ability of its own members, external protections refer to the need to protect groups placed in an unequal relationship between groups. There is no necessary relation between internal restrictions and external protection. A group can restrict the rights of its members without demanding external protection, and a group can demand protection against other groups and yet not restrict the rights of its own members.

Kymlicka then continues with the theme which he had initiated in his earlier work, i.e., that the choosing individual needs access to secure cultural contexts. Coming to the justification of group differentiated rights, he distinguishes between equality based justifications, history based justifications, and the justification which appeals to the value of cultural diversity. Finally he shows that group differentiated rights are perfectly compatible with a shared political culture. Integration requires that minority groups be granted respect. He concludes by arguing that the hope most liberals had in the assimilationist project was misplaced.

This in sum is the argument advanced by Kymlicka for minority rights. He justifies the argument in two ways: he appeals to the underlying principles of democracy, equality and justice, and shows how minority rights are needed to fulfill the assumptions themselves. And he resurrects a tradition within liberal theory and political practices which have found a room for minority rights. He does so with elegance, rigour and a style which is persuasive because it is so lucid.

I am personally an admirer of Kymlicka's work, since I think it is persuasive both on theoretical as well as on practical grounds. He has influenced many a perspective including mine, on how to negotiate the minority question in a multi-religious society like India. But nevertheless, there are two issues upon which I wish to take issue with him.

One issue is related to how we should treat illiberal groups. Whereas he states in a number of places that minorities themselves should be subjected to the principles of liberalism—autonomy and justice—when he comes to the crunch he argues differently. Consider what he has to say: "I believe that the most defensible liberal theory is based on the value of autonomy, and that any form of group differentiated rights that restricts the civil rights of group members is therefore inconsistent with liberal principles of freedom and equality. The millet system or the Pueblo theocracy, are therefore seriously deficient from a liberal point of view" (p. 165). So far so good. But then

White Mutiny: *British Military Culture in India, 1825–1875*
Peter Stanley

Stanley's reconstruction of the "culture" of his officers and men—their careers, relationships, expectations, living conditions—is fascinating. He really gets inside the messes and barracks, in a way few historians have done.

A pioneering piece of social history; the kind which so many social historians would like to write. There are any number of historians of 19th century Britain who would be greatly helped in their own work by studying Stanley's section on recruitment and on popular protest within the ranks.

The British East India Company's Indian empire was held by a diverse combination of Indian and European troops. The Company's 'native' armies have been extensively investigated; its European regiments, however, have been largely overlooked.

***White Mutiny* demonstrates that the military and social history of British India must be considered in tandem if British India's military history in the turbulent years around 1857 is to be fully understood.**

Hurst & Co., August 1997, £16.95

he goes on to add, "But that does not mean that liberals can impose their principles on groups that do not share them". A third party, he is careful to state, does not have the authority to compel respect for liberal principles. Relations between groups should be based, he suggests, not on force, but on peaceful negotiations. We have to search for some basis for agreement, through for example, either exemptions from the bill of rights or judicial review. "In cases where the national minority is illiberal, this means that the majority will be unable to prevent the violation of individual rights within the minority community. Liberals in the majority group have to learn to live with this, just as they must live with liberal laws in other countries." Liberal reformers, he suggests have the right to speak out against such injustices, and lend their support to any efforts insiders within the group may make to liberalize their culture. They can offer incentives, or push for the development of international mechanisms for protecting human rights (pp. 168–169).

This is a familiar problem for us in India as a debates around the uniform civil code have demonstrated. Liberal democrats are anxious to protect the rights of the members of any group as well as guard them against any unwarranted interference or regulation by the spokespeople of their own community. At the same time, they are anxious not to be seen as chauvinist spokesperson for their own community values of toleration, or as downgrading the cultures of other groups. But I think Kymlicka, for understandable reasons, skirts the issue. Perhaps he is anxious to counter the charge made by his critics, that protection of minority cultures is itself a liberal standpoint, and imposes liberal assumptions on other groups which may not subscribe to liberalism at all.

Let me make this explicit. When we have a political society which is composed of groups whose world views are incommensurable, we have a problem. The problem simply is the following: how do we chart out norms for the regulation of inter-group relations. If we chart out norms—howsoever desirable they may be—which are specific to one group, and impose them on others, this can be seen as just that: an imposition. But if we stand outside all groups and chart out such norms which are equally alien to all groups, this may be an impossible task. We can hardly 'speak from nowhere' as Thomas Nagel puts it. This is the main problem which confronts theorists of multi-cultural societies today. Kymlicka's solution is the obvious, we apply norms which are internal to liberal theory to think of negotiating relations between groups, because this is the most desirable and most palpably moral. But then, unlike Kymlicka, I suggest that if we grant protections to minority groups within the larger society, by the same moral assumption, this principle should apply to members within the minority community itself.

The second issue I wish to take him on is on the relationship between internal restrictions and external protections. I submit that one follows from the other. If a group wishes to be re-cognized as a bearer of rights, it has to construct itself as coherent and as cohesive. It, therefore, cannot let its own members defy its dictates. A group in the process of demanding external protection *will* willy nilly oppress its own members. Thus there is a close link between external protections and internal restrictions, as again any attempt to alter the uniform civil code has shown us.

Liberal democrats have to tread very carefully in this matter, and matters are not helped by the sharp air of confrontation which inevitably surrounds any such attempt. But there are no tradeoffs in normative political theory. We have to protect minorities against the kinds of attacks being mounted by the Hindutva brigade, but not at the expense of individual dignity. The value of collective identity which multiculturalism promotes, has to be in congruence with the dignity of each and every individual. The first is a prerequisite for the second, but the second is equally a prerequisite for the first. We have to now work out how this can be done without falling into the scylla of uncritically endorsing communitarian identities, and the charbydis of the unencumbered individual.

Finally, what do we make of multiculturalism? I submit that unless we work beyond the current fashionable notions of multiculturalism, we will end up in a time warp where groups lived in a back to back relationship to each other. People have to live in and with their own groups, and other groups have to respect this desire and facilitate it, but groups have to live with each other in an increasingly interdependent world, and learn how to live together in a shared project of civility and justice. For this, vulnerable groups have to be protected, but they have to reciprocate. This is essential if we wish to build a society where people do not humiliate each other, and where institutions promote the dignity of the individual and of her constitutive group.

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Boundaries of Kin Groups

Radhika Chopra

WOMEN AND KINSHIP: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER IN SOUTH AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

By Leela Dube

Vistaar Publications, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 224, Rs. 275.00.

The agenda of the book *Women and Kinship* centers around some basic issues regarding the organization and structure of households and families, the formation of kin groups through accretions of members, and following crucially from the issue of membership, the rights that each individual member has in the shared resources of the kin group. These questions have always been of concern within kinship studies since it's inception as an anthropological field. The process by which individuals are "counted" as members of kin groups and the immense variation that the processes of acquiring membership entails has been one of the central concerns of kinship studies.

The issue of membership and through that the formation of kin groups are particularly relevant, because, as Nur Yalman evocatively described in his seminal work on caste in Malabar and among the Sinhalese (1963), the kinship group as an enclosed body is "opened" at various points (specifically through the entry or exit of women as wives or out-marrying daughters) and women are the "apertures" that open and remake the boundaries of the body of the kin group. The movement of women threaten the boundaries of the socially defined kin group making it imperative for the group as a whole to close it's "apertures" and protect it's boundaries against intrusions of culturally imagined impurities. The work of kinship seems literally an effort at securing boundaries, and monitoring apertures as well as those who create them—the women. The fact that this is a continuous exercise, and the work of kinship never complete has particular resonances both for kinship as a domain of negotiated activity and for society at large.

Dube's work seeks to develop on the material and ideological aspects of kinship; but she also seeks to expand the concern of kinship itself not merely to include gender as a dimension (along with other elements like, for example, property or ritual) but also to map the ways in which "kinship systems are an important context within which gender relations are located" (p. 1) because gender has been "largely neglected. . . because it is thought irrelevant or because it is viewed as an immutable given" (ibid.). She seeks to understand the location of gender within kinship through a comparative exercise, looking at the way in which different structures of kinship (bilateral, patrilateral or matrilateral as one set of dimensions) reconfigure the way that gender comes into play. The exercise in comparisons is taken further to include differences of culture within a fairly wide-ranging geographical area. The scope of the book's agenda is, in fact, laid out in it's subtitle.

The need to explicitly place gender on the agenda of kinship studies is a necessary exercise even though kinship as a field has always needed to look at questions that are "gendered".

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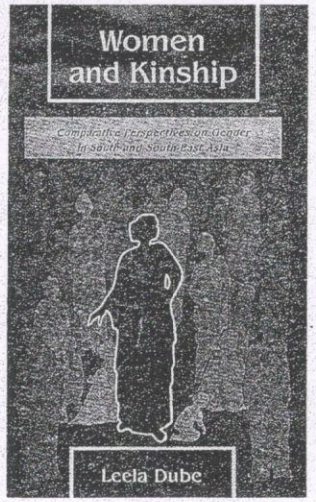
Unfortunately, early ethnographers who looked at kinship systems were unaware of gendered ways of looking or gendered ways of being; but interestingly, subsequent analysts have excavated their predecessors' texts (for example, Stratheren (1972) and Weiner (1976) relooked at Malinowski's ethnography; Dube has attempted something similar through comparing cross-cultural ethnographies) both to critique the latter's blindness to gender but also to show how the ethnographies themselves are replete with ideas and concepts of gender. In a sense gender has been both highly present and severely suppressed in kinship (as indeed in many other fields of anthropological concern).

Since the late seventies, and certainly by the early eighties, there have been many excellent studies where the relations between gender and kinship are explicitly addressed by feminist anthropologists like Yanagisako and Collier (1987) to name just two among a host of others whose work has redefined the way that kinship is analysed; so the terms of Dube's exploration are not particularly original. Nor can one take her assertion that gender still remains an absent category in kinship studies particularly seriously, given the enormous range of extremely stimulating work that has emerged over the last twenty years focussing directly on gender as critical to understanding kinship.

However, even if the particular questions that Dube seeks to address



are already part of feminist anthropology, it is nevertheless important to look at the way she has proceeded to develop the questions in the various chapters organized thematically on family organization, group membership, inheritance and resources distribution, residence or marriage. The cross-cultural comparisons are used to elaborate the different themes; for example, questions of female sexuality and it's management are examined with reference to material from Indonesia, the Phillipines, Thailand, and compared with instances from different regional groups in India—the Khasis of Meghalaya, the Nayars of central Kerala, and the Jats of Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and western U.P. Personally I was deeply interested to find out chapters entitled "Bodily processes and limitations on women" and the other on "Women and living spaces".

However, I have to confess to a deep disappointment. Perhaps Dube has been almost too ambitious and the geographical scope hinders rather than enables a proper analysis of vital themes like the body and sexuality or space and gender, among others. One of the advantages of an anthropological method is the ability to slip deeper and deeper into cultural imaginations, lifting the layers to reveal the negotiated nature of a gendered world. Dube, as one of the well-known and long established Indian anthropologists of kinship and gender studies is strangely inattentive to her anthropological advantage. Instead, the different issues are laid out like randomly occurring instances that find little to say to each other by way of providing an understanding either of how they are located within their specific cultures or in the way they create a possibility of a dialogue with one another (even if that dialogue is in and through the anthropologist's mind).

Space does not permit me to elaborate my disappointment at great length, so I will confine myself to examining one or two of the themes and chapters in detail. In her chapter on bodily processes, in the space of two pages, Dube analyses menstruation thus:

"... the rituals of the first menstruation in village Miyapur in Bangladesh ... are minimal and private. The event is regarded as auspicious. . . A married woman briefs the girl about the danger of her polluted condition . . . the pollution of the first menstruation is especially severe and demands great caution. . ." (p. 71).

Further down the page, Dube says, ". . . we may also take note of Pirzada women near Delhi studied by Jeffery (1978) who are forbidden during the period of pollution to carry on those activities that connect them with their husbands' means of livelihood: they are forbidden to sew curtains for the saint's tomb or prepare sweets for the pilgrims. . ." (ibid).

A brief two paragraphs later we have the Malays among whom ". . . menarche is not a ritual occasion and is not marked by any celebration or rejoicing. . ." (p. 72). There is no mention in the preceding examples of either "celebration" or "rejoicing" but despite the lack, we accept the spirit of the argument that the appearance of the first blood of menstruation is not a significant event. So also it seems in Java ". . . the onset of puberty is not marked as a distinct stage." (ibid). Among the Tagalog or the Thai ". . . these bodily processes do not seem to be regarded as strong sources of pollution. . ." (ibid).

That about sums up the first menstruation in South and South East Asia. Before moving on to other bodily processes and fluids emitted in childbirth and parturition, it is important to ask "why?" Why does the body become such a strong marker of cultural taboo? Why is the female body particularly marked out for attention? Is the male body excluded altogether from ritual or cultural attention? Why is the body fluid—blood—signified in such a marked way that it seems to carry the weight of symbolic horror but also clearly has the power to transform things with which it comes in contact (the curtains sewn for saints, the food cooked, and most of all, the body of the woman herself). For any social scientist, it is clearly not enough to state that something occurs; it is equally obligatory to understand and explain why the event occurs in that particular form within a certain context, or indeed why it occurs at all.

The explanation provided by Dube is brief. "The view of the first menstruation as a turning point, deserving of rejoicing as well as the placing of restrictions, seems to be related to the presence of bilateral affiliation, and a woman's role in biological reproduction puts on them the onus of boundary maintenance. In caste societies there is thus a special concern for the purity of women. . . (pp. 73–74) ". . . (because) patriliny and caste combine to create a perception of menstrual blood that is particularly threatening. . . (even though) in many Indian languages menstruation is likened to the process of flowering or blossoming. . ." (p. 75). It is not only the contradiction between the symbolism of "blossoming" and the "threatening" nature of menstrual blood that remain unexplored through the course of the book; a whole set of other questions remain tantalizingly unanswered, even such central questions of how membership and hence rights in kin groups and their resources is created (or restricted) by the appearance of certain body fluids. The disability, and differential sets of rights within kin groups created by the cultural interpretation of the body remain sadly unresolved.

In the end Dube's own claim that she has not dealt with the range of issues like ". . . a laundry list. . ." (p. 152) is debatable.

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Writing from the Margin*

Shashi Deshpande

Margins belonged to notebooks in school. To be kept immaculate. Nothing to be written in them, except, perhaps, the date. Or numbers, like, for example, 'question no. 1'. Then on to college where your work was not monitored, so that you could write anything in the margin if you wanted to. Yet, somehow, the space seemed still sacrosanct. As a writer, I thought I had successfully dispensed with margins, for I wrote on large sheets from end to end, sometimes straight across, sometimes diagonally. No room for margins. And then the word 'margin' came back into my life, no longer belonging to the paper I wrote on, but to me, as a writer. This knowledge came to me not suddenly, not all at once, but gradually, seeping into me, because of something that kept happening repeatedly. Let me begin on that very personal note.

English writing by Indians has in the past few years been attracting a great deal of attention—a post-Rushdie phenomenon, carried forward by Vikram Seth's and, very recently, Arundhati Roy's global success. These have a stellar role in every article or overview of English writing, with a number of other names being mentioned as also-rans. My name, if it figures in the list at all, goes as 'among the women writers', invariably a kind of footnote. I have therefore had to ask myself—putting aside the question of the quality of my writing—why, after nearly three decades of writing, 7 novels, nearly 100 short stories, 3 national awards and students all over the world working on me, it is possible to be so dismissive of my work. Of all the explanations, the one that fits best is this: that more than other writer's, my work has always been regarded and labelled as 'women's writing'.

I first got a glimpse of this when I went to the editor of the Sunday section of a national newspaper with a story of mine. The editor after reading it told me, 'why don't you give this to a women's magazine?'. That, in fact, was what I had already been doing with my stories until then. This was the first time I had hoped to find a place elsewhere; but, it seemed, it was not to be. I don't remember what my feelings were when I came back home. Disappointed, certainly, disheartened maybe—temporarily; but certainly I must have been very angry, for this incident came back to me years later and found its place in *That Long Silence*. And Jaya, to whom it happens in the novel, is seething with anger. It surprises me now that I had to wait for this moment to wake up to the belief that women's experiences are of interest only to women, that only women want to read about other women. Once I did, it naturally followed that I realised that my own marginalisation as a writer only reflected the marginalisation of women, that the two are tangled together in a kind of vicious circle.

In the meantime I continued to write stories which were published, of course, in women's magazines. It was one short story 'The Intrusion' that was the turning point in my career. V.S. Naipaul, in his *Enigma of Arrival*, mentioning a moment early in his writing career, says, 'all at once, material, tone of voice and writing skill had locked together and began to develop together.' This is exactly what happened to me with 'The Intrusion'. The consciousness of one's own voice is a very important development for a writer; until then, most writers are groping, feeling their way, imitating other writers. After 'The Intrusion', this would not happen to me. The stories I wrote then, and the novels that followed, were all centered round women and had a distinctive woman's voice. It marked me out very definitely as a 'woman writer', which meant a woman who wrote about women.

That Long Silence, my third novel, put the seal on this. This novel, more than anything else that I had written until then, was about the world of women, almost claustrophobically so. In fact, after I'd written it, I was almost despairingly certain that no one would want to publish this monologue. But this novel was important for me, for in a way I, using Naipaul's words again, 'defined myself through my work' in it. Through the articulation of a lifetime's experiences, thoughts and introspection, through the lives of the women I had created, I had done something so that I could never see myself or my writing in the same way again. I never did. I no longer struggled against writing about women—something I had done earlier, thinking that by doing so I was putting myself out of the mainstream and into the margin. In fact I realised that my writing was rooted in my consciousness of what it was to be a woman in the society I lived in. If I was to be a marginalised writer—well, so be it! I was resigned.

By this time the world around me was changing too. Feminism had crept into the country, not through theories and books, but through actual women's problems, the attempts of some women to confront them and make them a public, not a domestic issue. The rape of a young girl by two policemen, the burning of brides, the attempt to make a sati of a young woman, the courage of a Muslim woman who asked for maintenance from a divorced husband—these became public issues. Feminism became a political word and political correctness ruled out derogatory remarks—at least in public—against women or their work. It seemed there was finally a tiny space on the public platform available to women. And it was on this space that a woman's work could now be seen; it could become a feminist work, as *That Long Silence* was now regarded.

My next novel, *The Binding Vine*, however, made it clear how cosmetic these changes were. A national magazine, writing on some forthcoming novels, included this among them. While all the others had their themes and plots set out, *The Binding Vine* was called a novel 'about a middle class Indian woman'. This was a novel about rape, about marital rape, about the stifling and the silencing of a poet who was a woman, about the dilemmas that feminism confronts women with. But it seemed it was allowed to be no more than a novel about a middle class Indian woman.

Even today, at the end of the 20th century, the word 'woman' still carries a pejorative connotation, it is still loaded with the weight of insignificance. And therefore, the honest articulation of a painful, joyous, or meaningful experience by a woman becomes just a woman's experience. Therefore, stories and novels that transform experiences into excellent art never get beyond being women's novels or stories.

Yes, I did say this was going to be personal; but, let me make it clear that this is not an entirely personal grouching. I am not the only one to feel this way; women writers all over the country share this sense of anger that I feel. Women's writing has become a category which is separated from the rest of literature, and women writers are always spoken of in the context of other women writers, never writers in general, their writing in the context of women's writing, never literature in general. I have always wondered why, if we are to divide literature on the grounds of gender, we don't have two categories—men's writing and women's writing. But no, it is writing and women's writing. This division is objectionable; even more pernicious is the presumption that the second category is somehow less significant.

Some time back, the editor of a literary supplement of a newspaper sent me a cutting of an interview with Rushdie in which he had regretted the lack of a significant woman writer in India. Would you like to reply, she asked me? I thought I would. And then, when I began to write, I had to think, 'What does Rushdie consider significant?' Looking at the list of writers he considered important, I knew these were the things that mattered in his opinion: rootlessness, the idea of belonging or being alien, Nehru's India and secularism, the disintegration of that idea, India as a nation, etc. Now I know that in India there are today a great number of women, (and men too) who are both powerful and good writers, but none who wrote in exactly the way Rushdie wanted them to. Obviously, therefore, they were not significant. Compiling a list of the names of writers in the different languages, women who had proved themselves to their readers, it occured to me that there was something wrong with the vision that dismissed them as of no significance.

Certain conclusions are, however, inescapable. Even today, at the end of the 20th century, the word 'woman' still carries a pejorative connotation, it is still loaded with the weight of insignificance. And therefore, the honest articulation of a painful, joyous, or meaningful experience by a woman becomes just a woman's experience. Therefore, stories and novels that transform experiences into excellent art never get beyond being women's novels or stories. It is not Rushdie alone, the

* This is the text of a lecture delivered at Rutgers University, U.S.A., in October 1997.

idea is deeply rooted in India and the derogatory terms coined for women's writing—domestic literature or kitchen literature (though why 'kitchen', the most important place in a home, should be a word of scorn is beyond me!)—make it clear how women's writing is looked at. Marginal, inferior, insignificant. Rarely, as it should be really seen, as different. A difference that matters.

Some years back, an interviewing scholar asked me a question: 'The self realisation of your women characters occurs from within what might be called the domestic sphere. Do you feel satisfied that you were able to render the women's new consciousness within that sphere alone? Would you not want to depict them out there?'

Out where for God's sake? In an office? Over a computer? (I've read a reviewer speak sneeringly of women authors who have women brooding over life while they roll out the chapatties—as if this occupation nullified the thinking, the seriousness of the problems.) The inference, however, is obvious. 'In here' is minor while the one 'out there' matters. Everything connected with the home and family is domestic and hence trivial. (Notice how even violence within the family is called domestic violence and therefore takes on the tinge of something private, something tame.) They come into the category of small things. In fact everything connected with women gets downsized. Look at all those songs from Hindi movies—always the best reference point I think, for general attitudes in our country—where the woman sings of her *'chotasa sansar'*, her *'chotisi asha'* etc. Whereas, the way I see it is that women writers are opening virgin territories, pushing back frontiers, letting the light into hitherto dark, ignored areas.

I sometimes wonder whether feminism has taken us out of the margin—if it has done that—only to deposit us into a ghetto. When I see women's writing being reviewed by women, read by women, studied by women in women's studies departments, sometimes published by women, it alarms me. This is a deeply frustrating experience for a writer, it denies us the place and dignity of being a writer who is speaking of human concerns, it diminishes the human value of our work.

Recently I heard a man on the street being asked, as part of a TV programme, his views about Prakash Jha's then just-released movie 'Mrutyudand'. 'It's okay,' he said with a great deal of condescension. 'It's a ladies' subject, ladies will like it.' Yes, indeed, only ladies will like it. I've often had men coming with a copy of my books to be signed, saying—'it's for my wife'. Of course, how can a man read a book meant for 'ladies'? Would it not reflect on his manhood to have anything to do with ladies' subjects? Is there, as a critic once asked me, a tone-deafness among men so that they cannot hear what you are saying? Or, is it safer to dismiss it as a 'ladies subject' and therefore secure yourself against any feeling of discomfort?

When I read Margaret Drabble's statement that in a tradition that had Jane Austen, George Eliot and the Brontes, it was not possible for women to be considered marginal, I deeply envied her that. Yet I knew this too, that no literary tradition could save us from being marginalised in India, because the literary tradition itself would exclude women. This is because of the very deeply ingrained belief, still very much practised, that women have their separate place. Sometimes we are told that it is a special place, nevertheless the fact remains that it is different. No number of women ministers, prime ministers or professional women can change this fact. Such women do not open the door to other women, they just enter the world of men and become honorary men themselves. The door is still firmly shut against the rest. The rest of us will continue to be in the *zenana*, the ladies compartment, the ladies' seats or whatever is allowed to us.

There has been a kind of change in recent years. As a result of women's writing being linked to an 'ism', feminism, it has gained enough respectability to be elevated to the status of protest writing. But it hasn't helped much. For one thing, like dalit writing, it still remains outside the mainstream. I see another danger in this, that a writer is tied down to a feminist agenda. Your writing, when you are a woman, is judged by feminist criteria. Do you adhere to the feminist ideology? But I, who am a feminist in my personal life, find it hard to see any human being living out her or his life according to any ideology. A character, like any human being, is full of confusion and contradictions. Which, according to the critic, is not acceptable. In my story "Death of a Child", for example, I was questioned about the last line, which, said this critic, vitiates the whole story. If she had the courage to abort her child, why should she have regrets? why do your women stay within their marriages? Why do they not walk out? Why do they compromise?— are some of the questions asked. The bottom line is: are you a feminist? If you are, why aren't your women feminists? For God's sake, I'm a novelist. When I write a novel, read it as a novel, not as a feminist novel.

I don't want a tiny space on the platform, reserved for me and labelled feminist. As a human being, I claim my right to the entire platform, to choose my place on it. In fact my concept of feminism is that it gives me this right. I see this as a Catch 22 situation: if you are a feminist writer, you are taken somewhat seriously. But, as a feminist, there's no way you can be part of the mainstream.

I sometimes wonder whether feminism has taken us out of the margin—if it has done that—only to deposit us into a ghetto. When I see women's writing being reviewed by women, read by women, studied by women in women's studies departments, sometimes published by women, it alarms me. This is a deeply frustrating experience for a writer, it denies us the place and dignity of being a writer who is speaking of human concerns, it diminishes the human value of our work. And it is no corrective to the disease, which is the continuing prevalence of male values. Once, when I spoke of this frustration, I was asked, 'Are you not being ungrateful to feminism which has given you space on the platform?' But that is exactly the point. I don't want a tiny space on the platform, reserved for me and labelled feminist. As a human being, I claim my right to the entire platform, to choose my place on it. In fact my concept of feminism is that it gives me this right. I see this as a Catch 22 situation: if you are a feminist writer, you are taken somewhat seriously. But, as a feminist, there's no way you can be part of the mainstream.

No, I'm wrong. Actually, there are some ways of joining the mainstream. Success is one factor that ensures entry into that world. A writer friend and I found that while most of us are invariably called women writers, Arundhati Roy never has that label attached to her. Age can also get you out of the ghetto. Older women seem sometimes to slide into the club, generally as the token member. Involvement with caste and class issues, active profession of an 'ism' (apart from feminism) confers mainstream status as well. A writer like Ashapurna Devi, I am told, continued to be regarded as a woman writer, one who wrote 'only domestic literature', while Mahashveta Devi's catapulting into the major writers league has perhaps been more possible because of her activism and her awareness of the class struggle. To bring political and economic issues in your writing, to have Leftist leanings, also elevates your writing 'above' mere women's writing. Committed writing certainly seems to be an anointing factor, but the commitment has to go beyond and above women. To write mainly about women is to lay yourself open to the charge of 'triviality'.

As far as I am concerned, it became clear to me through the years that the accusation of triviality was something I just had to ignore. It was through what was considered trivial that I had to approach the reality of women's lives; and the reality is never trivial. In fact, I had to reject these words 'trivial' 'significant' etc., themselves, I had to find my own definitions, my own valuation. Which reminds me of a story told to me by a young friend about an anthology of women poets. On reading which, a (male) critic asked a question as a point, he thought, of valid criticism: 'Why is it that so few of the relationships between men and women spoken of here are joyous? Why are they so negative?' To which the young woman's response was: don't you think this question should be asked by men of themselves? Exactly. It's all how you look at it, from where you look at it. Where I stand is always the centre to me; it's the others who are in the margin. How can I see myself as marginal? I do not believe in margins anyway, except in notebooks.

Shashi Deshpande is a writer.

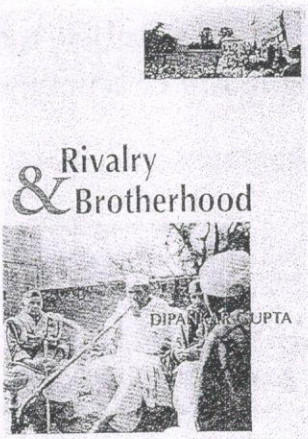
Jat Farmers and Their Politics

Surinder S. Jodhka

RIVALRY AND BROTHERHOOD: POLITICS IN THE LIFE OF FARMERS IN NORTHERN INDIA

By Dipankar Gupta

Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997, pp. 128+xii, Rs. 450.00



POLITICS IN THE LIFE OF FARMERS IN NORTHERN INDIA

The future historians of India will remember the decade of the 1980s for many things. Apart from various other developments and shifts that the contemporary Indian society experienced during the decade, it was in the eighties that the "new social movements", as they came to be known, emerged in India. The rise of a powerful farmers' movement in the regions that had experienced the green revolution during the previous decade was one such "new" kind of a social movement. The farmers' movements of the eighties were "new" because unlike the "old" agrarian mobilizations, they did not raise the issues that had been the preoccupation of the peasants everywhere, i.e. the "land question". The surplus producing cultivators, or the farmers, as they are known in the field of agrarian studies, were mobilizing themselves around purely economic demands, such as asking for remunerative prices for the farm surplus that they sold to the urban traders and subsidized rates for agricultural inputs that they bought from the urban markets.

Interestingly, despite there being a considerable degree of variation in the manner in which farmers organized themselves in different parts of the country, their core demands were more or less the same... The main contention of the farmers' organizations during this period was that the agricultural sector was being given unfavourable terms of trade vis-a-vis the industry. This, they argued, was because of an in-built "urban bias" in the developmental policies of the Indian state.

The main contention of the farmers' organizations during this period was that the agricultural sector was being given unfavourable terms of trade vis-a-vis the industry. This, they argued, was because of an in-built "urban bias" in the developmental policies of the Indian state.

Though Gupta is right, when he says in the preface of the book that agrarian studies are no more a fashion in Indian academe, the farmers' movements during the eighties did attract a considerable amount of attention from the social sciences. However, the focus in much of the literature had so far either been on the questions of establishing the validity of the claim made by the farmers that the terms of trade offered to agricultural sector were actually unfavourable or else had largely been centred around conventional sociological questions, such as, understanding the social/class base of the movement of examining its ideology.

Gupta's study of Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) in U.P. has a slightly different focus. This perhaps is also because his empirical context is that of western U.P., while much of the existing literature on the farmers' movements have emerged from the Maharashtrian experience. Given the specificity of the western U.P. situation, Gupta perhaps does not need to get preoccupied with the issue that had all along been the main concerns in the case of Maharashtra. The famous slogan "Bharat versus India" around which Sharad Joshi, leader of the Maharashtra farmers, worked out an ideology for the movement, claiming that they represented the interest of the entire rural populace vis-a-vis the city, had very little appeal in the region where Gupta did his field-work. The discourse of caste being so central to western U.P., even the leaders of the movement did not feel the need to put their demands in such "populist" language. The self-image of a "rustic Jat" is very different from that of a Maratha farmer. Not that the Jats of western U.P. necessarily lacked those cultural resources that their counterparts in Maharashtra had, but such was their open contempt for the non-cultivator landless dalits that they would perhaps have felt insulted even to identify with the "ex-untouchables" in the village.

What then explains the emergence of "new" agrarian activism in this region? As has been argued by many others before him, Gupta locates the context of the rise of rural unionism in the changes that the rural society of India has undergone during the recent past, specifically with regard to the nature of relations that different groups of people had with the land. As a consequence, the social equations among different groups have changed. Also the relation of different groups in the countryside with the state and the city has experienced a qualitative shift.

Gupta offers a rich descriptive ethnographic account of the manner in which the Bharatiya Kisan Union carried out its activities with a specific focus on the personality of its leader Mahender Singh Tikait. He also constructs a history of the movement with sociological explanations for it having been reduced to a Jat organization though initially it had its followers even among the Gujjars and the Muslim cultivators. Unlike a conventional Indian sociologist, Gupta does not approach the rural society of western U.P. in a framework of hierarchical system. Though he works all along with the category of caste, he treats them as "communities", who despite having notions of superiority and inferiority in relation to each other, are not bound in a closed structure of hierarchy and are seen to be having a kind of autonomous politic. Even while talking about the "ex-untouchables", he deals with them as separate groups, each with its own features and each having a specific kind of relationship with the local economy.

However, the main thrust of Gupta's interest in studying the B.K.U. seems to lie elsewhere. Much of the discussion in various chapters revolves around certain theoretical questions. Though some of these are very specific issues that emerge directly from the study, there are other issues that have very general significance. His concern goes beyond the disciplinary boundaries of the social sciences. For example, almost throughout the book he constantly attacks the popular notion about the farmers and their politics among the urban middle classes, who, according to Gupta never seem to understand the language of rural politics.

At a general theoretical level, Gupta accepts the conceptual and empirical distinction often made between the older category of the "peasants" and the "modern farmers". Peasants are those of the "peasants" and the "modern farmers". Peasants are those who produce mainly for their own consumption and work on the land with their family labour while the farmers are modern agriculturists, who often hire labour, employ machines and other green revolution techniques, and interact with the political institutions more intensely and knowledgeably than the peasants are understood to do (p. 25). However, he makes a qualification with regard to the cultivators of western U.P. According to Gupta, an average farmer in western U.P. is a small cultivator who, despite producing cash crops and interacting intensely both with the market and with modern political institutions continues to retain a "peasant outlook". The agriculturists here depend largely on family labour, though they occasionally hire labour at peak periods. At the same time they are progressive in terms of their farming techniques and have fully embraced the green revolution (p. 26). Thus, Gupta insists that it would be more useful to consider the two categories "in terms of their inter-contextuality". A farmer, 'typically speaking, is a person of economic rules, while the term 'peasant' connotes the culture and ambience in which the farmer lives. It is the peasant-farmer therefore that enters the market place, and it is the peasant-farmer again who is politically active in rural unions' (p. 26).

However, though this "theoretical synthesis" seems to help Gupta in raising many issues that would have otherwise been difficult to raise, it also leads to some confusions. Apart from taking away the historical value that

the conceptual distinction between the two categories offers, he seems to be suggesting an essentialist notion of a peasant culture which he himself is critical of. After all, why should the rusticity of the U.P. Jats be seen necessarily as a peasant outlook? Interestingly in the last chapter where he compares the Jats and the Maratha cultivators, he finds the two being very different from each other particularly in their cultural outlook and the way they organize their politics. On the positive side, by using the synthetic category of the "farmer-peasant" he is able to convincingly show the fallacies of some of the "old" notions about the peasant movements that conceptualized them as "pre-political" and "pre-ideological" in nature, or that they always required leadership from outside.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the study is Gupta's discussion on the uses of traditional institutions by the B.K.U. for something that is quite modern, i.e. unionism and pressure group politics. While on the one hand the revival of the traditional institution of khap helped in the mobilization process, on the other hand it also created problems for the leadership as well as for the organization. It was one of the factors that contributed to the alienation of the non-Jats from the B.K.U. fold. At another level, in a chapter on "Civil Society", he takes up the issue of "tradition" with scholars like Rajni Kothari and Ashis Nandy who project it as a viable alternative to the western modernity for building a civil society in India. Basing his contention on the B.K.U. experience, Gupta argues that one may exploit traditional loyalties as political resources in modern structures of power, but their usefulness in building a civil society is doubtful. For example, though Jats have a notion of equality, it is not an abstract value and is based on similarity of practices and lifestyles. They have unmitigated and open contempt for the "ex-untouchables". Similarly, their document on social reforms asks for promoting education of girls but only that kind of education which would make them good mothers.

Gupta's study is certainly a useful addition to the existing literature on contemporary rural India and on the changing equations between the city and the countryside.

***Surinder S. Jodhka** has been teaching in the Department of Sociology at the University of Hyderabad for the last six years. He is currently working in the area of 'Social Identities' as well as on a project on 'Constructions of the Indian Village'. His earlier publications have been on aspects of agrarian change in north-west India.*

Pakistan, India, And Bangladesh—A Legacy of Wholeness

Ashish Gupta

JINNAH, PAKISTAN AND ISLAMIC IDENTITY

By Akbar S. Ahmed

Routledge, 1997, pp. 274, £40.00 (Hb), £12.99 (Pb)

The spectacle of Benazir Bhutto attending the August 15 London launch of Akbar Ahmed's new book was like a lens converging fifty years of the history of India and Pakistan into a burning point. But the tortured pages did not burst into flames. Instead, there was just a lot of smoke. It rose from the multitude of celebrations, not only in London, but in New York, Philadelphia, Ottawa, New Delhi, Paris, and in other far-flung cities. The celebrations inspire nostalgia and rhetoric, but the smoke obscures the truth.

Fifty years after 1947, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the destinies of India and Pakistan are inextricably joined together. Now the future of Bangladesh has also been woven into theirs. That is why, as a Canadian of Indian origin involved as an academic in the sutdy of the Asian subcontinent, and as a publisher engaged in the dissemination of the culture of that region, I should have been delighted by *The New Yorker's* coverage of India in its June 23, 1997 issue. Instead, I was profoundly disappointed. It was not Rushdie's predicatable camaradeire with rising or shining stars of the Indian literary scene that upset me. Nor was it Amitav Ghosh's moving but very partial account of the 'other' fight for independence that left me uncomfortable. It was the casual superficiality, the cliches and stereotypes, and most importantly, the inadvertent but cold-blooded butchery of the historic wholeness of the Indian subcontinent—the total marginalization of Pakistan and Bangladesh—that I found unbearable.

The fact that *The New Yorker* was billed as a "fiction issue" seemed no excuse for parading the standard line-up of beggars, charlatans, greedy medical graduates, defecators on the riverbank, etc. All this was very amusing, but it was also old hat, and rather insensitive and insulting. It is sad that *The New Yorker* failed to transcend this one-dimensional collection of the subcontinent's literature. Its happy, feel good attitude was perhaps more commercially viable than a more introspective one. Pity, all we were left with are new versions of Rikki Tikki Tavi and the Indian rope trick.

The reason why there are suddenly so many Indian novelists is hardly a declaration of independence. It is a manifestation of self-analysis, a sort of therapy for survival in a Darwinian global village where market forces determine the status of creative outputs. What gets published remains a function of neo-colonial instincts (or, simply put, the publisher's gut-feel reinforced by marketing projections), and who gets published is a verdict, not on artistic integrity, but on how well one's sensibilities have been sharpened by colonial benchmarks of education and perception.

All this provided me with a depressing background against which Akbar Ahmed's *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity* sounded a wake-up call that was at once powerful and fresh. Subtitled *The Search for Saladin*, Ahmed's book is an undisguised tribute to the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Ahmed's meticulous collection of fact, revelations, and inference makes it impossible to forget that, aside from the millions of Muslims in Pakistan and Bangladesh, India itself is home to the fourth largest Muslim population in the world. Ahmed argues persuasively and passionately against the marginalization of Muslims—happening in India through a rising tide of Hindu nationalism, and by endemic political corruption and economic mismanagement in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

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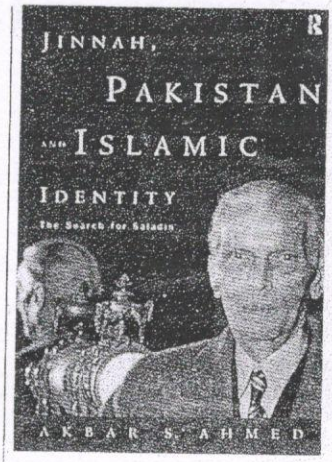

Every nation must have its myths and legends. They are essential for a historical understanding of 'how things happened', essential for the primal need to know who we are. Other nations may laugh at these myths as unreal and fantastic, but the people whose forebears feature in these sagas often believe implicitly in the details, to the point of invoking the texts and critical junctures in their life, birth, marriage, death, and other occasions in between.

In the euphoria of an act of celebration it is not uncommon to lose sight of what precisely it is that is being celebrated. The fiftieth anniversary of India's independence is one such occasion. But it is also the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of Pakistan. If independence and nationhood mean an end to an epoch of subservience under imperialism, then India and Pakistan both won a great triumph in 1947, and we have every reason to once again celebrate their triumph fifty years later. But if independence and nationhood means a chance for individuals to "grow" as they would wish to, to chart their destinies through the nagging chaos of everyday life, then it is doubtful whether we have too much to celebrate. Fifty years after 1947, the vast majority of India's populaton remains mired in ignorance and poverty. At the same

time, the wealthy and the privileged feel under great pressure to distance and isolate themselves from the marginalized masses destined to live forever in the "margins" of independence. The shadow of the luminaries who have won, and rejoice in, independence often obscures the image of those who lag behind, who will perhaps never live to enjoy the fruits of independence.

On August 15, 1947, I was a seven-year old, full of excitement and awe, in a seething mass of thousands waving tri-colour flags and shouting 'Jai Hind' at the top of our voices. The rally of which I was a part was held in a vast space called Gandhi Maidan in the heart of Patna, close to which there once flourished the ancient city of Pataliputra, capital of the kingdom of Magadha. There was a real sense of history in the air. I remember my father and my uncle both university professors drawing analogies with the glorious days of Magadha and the Emperor Ashok in terms of what lay ahead for the country. It was on this field that I was privileged to catch sight of Mahatma Gandhi a few months before his assassination, and about six years later, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

On that day of August 15, 1947, I was too elated and too young to be concerned about the distant fires and cries of mobs I had seen and heard from the rooftop of our house in Bankipore only weeks, perhaps nights, before. These were the communal riots, and Bihar had its fair share of this horror. As I grew older and we routinely celebrated other "fifteenth Augusts," I was filled with a profound sadness as it dawned upon me that the joyous celebration of August 15 masked an enormous human tragedy, the Hindu-Muslim riots that tore apart Punjab, Bengal, Bihar and many other regions that lay in between. This simple ambivalence about a great historic event has turned increasingly complex over the years. I am often tempted to ask myself whether the event often described as "a struggle of epic proportions," or "a triumph of the forces of non-violence" was truly one or the other. No doubt there were elements of a vast, unequal struggle between the most powerful imperialist power of the twentieth century and segments of one of the most impoverished nations of the period. No doubt there were heroic personalities who led the struggle for India's independence. But I realize that a mere span of fifty years hardly allows one that perspective of historical understanding which would allow India's independence to be seen as a truly epic event.

And yet, every nation must have its myths and legends. They are essential for a historical understanding of 'how things happened', essential for the primal need to know who we are. Other nations may laugh at these myths as unreal and fantastic, but the people whose forebears feature in these sagas often believe implicitly in the details, to the point of invoking the texts and critical junctures in their life, birth, marriage, death, and other occasions in between.

Two of India's great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are ritualized monuments to greatness and heroism. Ironically, the events out of which both these epics arose are about tragedy, about what happened when *dharmic* rules were violated. Petty family disagreements in the *Mahabharata* turned into a bloodbath of vast and unprecedented proportions. The *Ramayana*, on the other hand, deals with usurpation and fidelity. The tragedy that ushered Indian independence contains many of the elements of our two great epics. And always, after a bloodbath, after someone's victory, there always follows a painful period of reconstruction and reconciliation. Nehru was right when he declared in a radio broadcast on the eve of independence: "The burden of foreign domination is done away with, but freedom brings its own. . . burdens. . ."

Jinnah did not always want a separate nation of Pakistan. But the point at which he decided to demand a new nation was the moment from which began the process of his demonization.

If there is a single symbol of the romance of the last days of the Raj that Akbar Ahmed systematically destroys, it is the powerful image of the dashing Lord Mountbatten of Burma, the last British Viceroy in India, and the first Governor General of independent India. Not only does Ahmed hold Mountbatten responsible for allowing personal relationships that Mountbatten and his wife Edwina had with Nehru to override his sense of fairness and justice in the partition of India, he also blames Mountbatten for his harsh and negative feelings about Jinnah.

According to Ahmed, the media continues to this day to "favour" India and has done so from the time "stars" like Nehru and Mountbatten seized the popular imagination in the 1940s and later.

The duality perceived in Jinnah on the one hand and Gandhi and Nehru on the other often spills over into the popular perception of Gandhi and Nehru. There persists a naive belief held by many that at the dawn of India's independence there were two contending visions of the nation's growth and development. One was espoused by Gandhi; the other, by Nehru. The truth seems to be that both were extremely complex visions, often ridden with contradictions, and gradually evolving and changing over time. To me, it also seems true that the two visions were not very different from each other.

It seems simplistic to suggest that, had Gandhi's vision prevailed over Nehru's, India would have developed as an ideally democratic political entity consisting largely of small, dynamic, self-sustaining and self-determining village communities, their affairs managed by 'panchayats.' Not the rancorous, disunited, linguistically fragmented and hostile groups that we find today. Among many statements made by Gandhi with respect to politics and the economy, what he said at the 1931 Round Table Conference is especially significant:

> I am afraid that for years to come India would be engaged in passing legislation in order to raise the downtrodden, and the fallen, from the mire into which they have been sunk by the capitalists, by the landlords, by the so-called higher classes, and then. . . by the British rulers.

Gandhi's subsequent economic views are believed to be embodied in what is known as the "Dantwala draft," the outcome of a long discussion Professor Dantwala and other socialists had with Gandhi regarding his views on economic trusteeship. One of the most interesting points in this document was that "under state-regulated trusteeship an individual will not be free to hold or use wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interests of society." Another interesting point: "Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed."

Nehru's views on the political structure of India were generally more sophisticated than Gandhi's. For instance, Nehru would never have endorsed Gandhi's proposal that once the Congress party had served its political purpose of attaining independence, it should dissolve itself as a state-oriented body and reconstitute itself as the *Lok Sevak Sangh*, an organization to serve as the servant of the people. But there are many instances where Nehru's thoughts echo Gandhi's views. During a speech at a seminar on "Social Welfare in a Developing Economy" (New Delhi, September 22, 1955), Nehru said:

> The whole object of development of a country is social welfare in its wider sense and not merely in the sense of aiding the physically handicapped and the weaklings in a society. In a society where even healthy people have no opportunity to get on with the bare necessities of life, the first object of the state is Social welfare. What is all our planning for?

Elsewhere in the same speech, Nehru said:

> The fundamental problem in India is not Delhi or Calcutta or Bombay, but the villages of India, and something has to be done to raise the level of life in the villages. . .

Again:

> What is the place of small industries? We have big plans and all that. I am all in favour of machinery. I like the feel of machinery, the look of it, but more and more, I have felt that from the point of view of balanced development, we have to lay greater stress on many small industries in our villages, make them slightly urbanized, lessen the gap between them and the urban areas and increase the facilities available to the people who live there, instead of concentrating on the towns and cities and drawing out people from the villages. . .

Jinnah has left neither his memoirs nor his vision of Pakistan's political and economic development for he died very shortly after the creation of Pakistan. But despite how simplistic Nehru's views (or for that matter, Gandhi's) appear to us today, the success of the Soviet approach in the 1950s (with its overwhelming emphasis on heavy industries) caused them to be very appealing when first uttered by such charismatic leaders of the developing world as Nehru, Nkrumah, Nasser, and Sukarno.

There are wild claims today about the economic resurgence of India. The statistics come so thick, and contradict each other so frequently, and clash with reality so often, that it is difficult to know whom to believe. Only about

four years ago, I remember a former Canadian Prime Minister telling a meeting that the emerging middle classes of India possess a purchasing capacity greater than that of the Canadian population. Complementing such market predictions, one can read in the latest *BMW Magazine* (1/1997):

> India, which covers an area of 3.3 million square kilometres and has a population of around 800 million, is regarded as one of Asia's key future markets. . . As BMW Chairman, Bernd Pischetsrieder, announced in the Indian capital New Delhi in September 1996, BM is planning to set up a CKD plant (car assembly based on supplied parts) on the subcontinent in collaboration with the local Hero group. . . Production is anticipated to start at around 2000 cars per year. . .

BMW is but among a host of multinationals like General Motors, Mercedes Benz, Pepsi, Coca Cola, even Wrigley's who are rushing to set up plants in India.

Fifty years after independence, is this the vision of progress that Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah had in mind? As for Pakistan, from an economically hobbled start, it has never stopped playing 'catch-up' behind India. Today, it is struggling to keep up with a ballooning national debt. The economy of Bangladesh is also in shambles, and subject to increasing dependence on imports from India.

Jinnah at one point had over two hundred hand-crafted suits in his wardrobe. He seemed to cultivate an Errol Flynn type of image. Nehru for one also did not shrink from pomp and luxury, nor did his daughter and grandsons. There is an interesting letter written by Indira Gandhi to Nehru in 1947, shortly after she and her husband, Feroze Gandhi, had moved to a house in Lucknow. "It's such a nuisance not having a phone," she complained to Nehru shortly after moving in. "What a peculiar deadness there is in our provincial towns. And what makes the atmosphere sickening is the corruption and the slackness, the smugness of some and the malice of others. Life here has nothing to offer... middle-class young men. It is not surprising that the superficial trappings of fascism attract them in their tens of thousands. The R.S.S. (Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh) are gaining strength rapidly. They have been holding very impressive rallies in Allahabad, Cawnpore, Lucknow—except for very minor details following the German model. . . Are we inviting the same fate to our country? The Congress organisation has already been engulfed—most Congressmen approve of these tendencies. So do government servants." Only a few weeks later, one of those young Hindu fascists, Nathuram Godse, assassinated Gandhi in New Delhi.

It is regrettable that neither Nehru, nor Indira Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi, ever fully appreciated that the economically disadvantaged in the late twentieth century appear increasingly to have found a refuge in religious bigotry. It gives them power. Not power that you pull out of a wallet, but power that comes from the spirit, however crushed and mutilated it may be. And that is a power not to be trifled with! The rulers of Pakistan and Bangladesh have not learnt this truth as well.

Those who *can* are running away from all three countries. Abraham Verghese's essay, "Cowpath to America" (*New Yorker*, June 23 and 30, 1997) focuses on Indian doctors but not on Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Is it desperation, greed, rootlessness, or a loss of idealism that is driving Indians (including talented writers), Pakistanis and Bangladeshis—often the country's most valuable resources away from their homeland?

The westernization of the East is a process of cultural change that neither Jinnah nor Nehru appeared too keen to resist. The continuing rumours about Jinnah's love for ham sandwiches and whisky derive from and sustain such rumours. Only Gandhi remains steadfast in his uncompromising values. In Gandhi's *Autobiography*, he writes about a brief infatuation with English culture, as he calls it, in a section entitled "Playing the English Gentleman":

> Meanwhile my friend had not ceased to worry about me. His love for me led him to think that, if I persisted in my objections to meat eating, I should not only develop a weak constitution, but should remain a duffer, because I should never feel at home in English society. When he came to know that I had begun to interest myself in books on vegetarianism, he was afraid lest these studies should muddle my head; that I should fritter my life away in experiments, forgetting my own work, and become a crank.

This friend made one last effort to reform Gandhi. He invited Gandhi to go to the theatre, and to dinner at the Holborn Restaurant before that. Gandhi writes:

> The first course was soup. I wondered what it might be made of, but dared not ask the friend about it. I therefore summoned the waiter. My friend saw the movement and sternly asked across the table what was the matter. With considerable hesitation I told him that I wanted to enquire if the soup was a vegetable soup. 'You are too clumsy for decent society,' he passionately exclaimed. 'If you cannot behave yourself, you had better go. Feed in some other restaurant and wait for me outside.' This delighted me. Out I went. There was a vegetarian restaurant close by, but it was closed. So I went without food that night.

We learn that Gandhi briefly turned to dancing lessons, French and elocution. He even invested three pounds in a violin and something more in fees for music lessons. Before long, he wrote to be excused from further elocution lessons, bade goodbye to dancing, and went personally to the violin teacher with a request to dispose of the violin for any price it would fetch. In Gandhi's own words: ". . . I told her how I had discovered that I was pursuing a false ideal."

Steeped as we are in the contemporary culture of sex and violence, we may find it bizarre that, later in his life, Gandhi was drawn to act more boldly upon his faith in a *brahmacharya* that included (for him) physical contact with women. It is also true that such contact involved him in difficulties—because of the chastity expected of a Mahatma by others, but also because of Gandhi's distrust of ordinary sexual excitement, in himself and in other people.

If there is a single symbol of the romance of the last days of the Raj that Akbar Ahmed systematically destroys, it is the powerful image of the dashing Lord Mountbatten of Burma, the last British Viceroy in India, and the first Governor General of independent India. Not only does Ahmed hold Mountbatten responsible for allowing personal relationships that Mountbatten and his wife Edwina had with Nehru to override his sense of fairness and justice in the partition of India, he also blames Mountbatten for his harsh and negative feelings about Jinnah "vain, megalomaniacal, an evil genius, a lunatic, a psychotic case and a bastard" which obscured the fact that Jinnah represented the authentic aspirations of millions of Muslims. Ahmed argues that there could have been a more orderly, a more dignified, withdrawal, a more lasting relationship between India and Pakistan if there had been a less impetuous, emotional and partisan Viceroy in Delhi than Lord Mountbatten.

More dangerously for Ahmed, he cites a considerable body of evidence suggesting a very intimate relationship between Edwina Mountbatten and Nehru. In his recent biography of Nehru, Stanley Wolpert likens the relationship to adolescent love. Ahmed goes much further, reiterating Wolpert's suggestion of Nehru's homosexuality and Mountbatten's own homosexuality to add a more complex dimension to the relationship between the three. Unfortunately, Ahmed must rely on the oral testimony of S.S. Pirzada, former Foreign Minister of Pakistan, who had apparently received three or four intercepted letters between Edwina and Nehru, and had passed them on to Jinnah. Jinnah refused to act on the letters and gained no political advantage. Why have historians blacked out the affair between Nehru and Edwina Mountbatten, asks Ahmed? Philip Ziegler, H.V. Hodson, Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, Alan Campbell-Johnson—none of these standard writers delves into this most sensitive and important matter. It cannot be that these observers were blind, for they picked up every wart, every quirk, every foible of the main actors.

Contrast this with the easy acceptance—on the part of a significant section of the Indian subcontinent—of the contemporary protocols of sexuality and materialism which the western world itself considers hallmarks of its own. I am not proposing for a moment that South Asian TV viewers be deprived of the pleasures of watching "The Bold and the Beautiful" and "Santa Barbara." But I suspect there is something rotten in the affairs of the state when I am told of an event which occurred recently in a middle-class Bengali wedding in Calcutta. In the course of the wedding, there is a ritual during which the wooden platform on which the bride sits is lifted by others (usually young men) who then walk round the bridegroom in a circle with the bride on the wooden "*pirhi*". When the time came for this event, no young men could be found to lift the bride. The men were all dead drunk in an adjoining room where liquor had been

Cultural change appears unstoppable in this day and age, except by dictatorial decree. But must we run like lemmings along a path which earlier, and more frequent, travellers are having second thoughts about? Sociologists tell us that every new social construct contains the germs of the past.

made freely available to the young men. I am told that this is not an isolated incident. The face of India that many of us knew is changing slowly, but surely. Values are changing. Respect for chastity, sobriety, moderation are fast becoming synonymous with stodginess, ignorance, and a repudiation of modernity.

Some of the moral elements in Ahmed's book will undoubtedly provoke the ire of academics and scholars. But Ahmed goes well beyond academic research. Relying heavily on the work of others, he pulls off a remarkable synthesis that is at once plausible, fascinating, and rich in detail. History after all has often been a process of 'fabricating' facts so that historical understanding could be made to match political realities. Ahmed's book contains a photograph of Lord Mountbatten, Nehru and Edwina standing at the entrance to the Viceroy's palace in New Delhi. I have seen the same photograph in a clearly celebratory book of photographs—*India, a Celebration of Independence, 1947–1997*. (Aperture Foundation)—and was mildly amused. But Ahmed deconstructs the photograph and replaces romance and nostalgia with something more disturbing.

Consider the way in which historical details about what happened, or could have happened, came out of *puranic* texts. All those anecdotes embodied in legend may have served gradually to broaden the base of power by which groups of families could create a mosaic of domination over the Indo-Gangetic plain of India. There may well be some virtue in propagating a myth of Independence if it serves some larger political necessity—that of keeping a country together, perhaps. Besides, the vast majority of India's population has an almost insatiable appetite for tales of heroic deeds by larger-than-life beings, long-dead legendary figures, forebears, sages, or gods. When you have an event which helps shape the destiny of about a billion human beings—fifty years down the road—perhaps we are justified in calling it monumental.

"To study Jinnah is to open the wounds of history," writes Ahmed. Fifty years after the formation of Pakistan it is still not too late to probe this festering wound to determine if it has grown into an irreversible cancer affecting not only the fabric of Pakistani society, but the entire Indian subcontinent and the lives of nearly a quarter of the world's population.

Cultural change appears unstoppable in this day and age, except by dictatorial decree. But must we run like lemmings along a path which earlier, and more frequent, travellers are having second thoughts about? Sociologists tell us that every new social construct contains the germs of the past. But what if the past becomes unrecognizable, and the present only causes us distress? Fifty years after Pakistan's creation and India's independence the distress of the vast majority on the subcontinent is all too palpable. These are the millions who have slipped through the cracks of development, who have been wandering aimlessly in the margins of two independent nations for the past fifty years. Meanwhile, a handful of others crisscross the *Cowpaths*, not only to America, but Canada, Australia, England, and anywhere else accessible to money.

Tragically for Muslims, following the abortive uprisings against the British, in which both Hindus and Muslims took part, at one stroke the Muslims lost their kingdom, their Mughal empire, their emperor, their language, their culture, their capital city of Delhi and their sense of self. Pakistanis would never forgive Jinnah for one thing: his mortality. Had he not died, he could have saved the nation. There would have been no Martial Law in the 1950s, no splitting away of East Pakistan in 1971, and no General Zia in the 1980s. The rapidly deteriorating plight of Muslims may drive some to the bosom of criminality. This might become an ironic wish-fulfilment from the perspective of Hindus, large numbers among whom continue to view Muslims as unclean and unworthy.

The 'legend' of Jinnah may still work magic among Muslims. Myths and legends are given the special status of myths and legends essentially because they are dynamic, because they work as catalysts in shaping identity—individual identity, national identity. Side by side with Jinnah, one may express a hope that the legend of Gandhi may also become a vital force. A force that will give rise to not one Mahatma, but a billion Mahatmas, "noble spirits" without which a once glorious civilization will become a sterile Macdonald-like franchise of other industrialized nations.

It seems too fanciful to call ourselves members of the 'global village' and then imagine that the plague ranging in one corner of the village will forever be confined to that corner. The cancer of poverty, corruption, confusion and rootlessness that afflicts the Indian subcontinent appears to rage with equal ferocity as a cancer of the spirit in the 'developed' nations of the world. There is no escape. The *Cowpath to America* leads eventually to a gilded hell.

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Religious Activism and the State

Ashok Vohra

QUESTIONING THE SECULAR STATE: THE WORLDWIDE RESURGENCE OF RELIGION IN POLITICS

Edited by David Westerlund

Hurst & Company, London, 1996, pp. xii+428, £14.95

In *Hind Swaraj*, Mahatma Gandhi talking about religion wrote that "Humbug there undoubtedly is about all religions, where there is light, there is also shadow. I am prepared to maintain that humbug in wordly matters are far worse than the humbugs in religion." And for resolving the conflicts in the society, caused by the practitioners of different religions he does not advocate secularism but advises everyone to "try to understand the case of his own religion (*dharmanu swaroopa*) and adhere to it" and also "not allow false teachers to dictate to him". By doing so he feels "there will be no room left for quarrelling." But those who deal with matters of the state find to their chagrin that while dealing with religion/religious groups, avoiding inter- as well as intra-religious conflicts is not so simple. That probably was one reason why the ruling elites of multi-religious and pluralistic states supported and favoured secularism as a state policy to avoid religious conflicts and promote national integration.

Secularism as a state policy presupposes that there is a formal separation between religion and the state. On this view, religion at the most is seen as a societal resource. But it has been a world-wide experience that separate regional and religious interests are subordinated to national interests, and they are not able to influence state policy as long as the industry and infrastructure in the nation are not developed; agriculture is not modernized and educational and communication system is not extended.

Secularism as a state policy presupposes that there is a formal separation between religion and the state. On this view, religion at the most is seen as a societal resource. But it has been a world-wide experience that separate regional and religious interests are subordinated to national interests, and they are not able to influence state policy as long as the industry and infrastructure in the nation are not developed; agriculture is not modernized and educational and communication system is not extended. Development in these fields, combined with the fact that certain religions like Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Islam are quite comprehensive, and tend to cover all aspects of life including politics, leads to religious activism. The emergence of religious activism demonstrates the continued potential of religion in shaping the identity, policies and ideology of the state.

Today, the world over politically oriented revivalist religious groups are consciously challenging the secular policy models, and are rejecting the secular ideals. They do not accept the ideal of secularism and western democracy as it weakens the religious basis of society and undermines divinity. They support the confessional policy model in which a certain religious tradition or community is politically established with more or less intimate interaction between religion and politics. One of the major issues before the

state policy makers today is: "Should the state be secular or religious?" The essays in this book in order to seek an answer to this question do not just contemplate in vacuum but make an indepth case study of revival of zealots the world over. They are well researched and documented case studies of various religious movements and organizations in different parts of the world. These groups and movements are often referred to as 'fundamentalist' because each one of them consciously rejects secularism in all its connotations. Their followers challenge the apolitical view of religion and champion the strengthening of the active role of religion in the affairs of the state. They support vehemently participation of religious heads of the dominant religion in the affairs of the state and advocate revival of traditional values in the society. They consider secularism to be devilish because it ignores the holistic nature of religion and separates religion from politics and other concerns of society. They wish the legislation to be in accordance with the laid down rules of the scriptures even if it is a retrograde step from the vantage point of a modernist. Putting these diverse movements under the rubric of 'fundamentalism' and putting the label of 'fundamentalist' on the individuals or groups raises some issues—"Does this label in any way increase our understanding of the religious and political phenomena that these groups represent?", "Does not the use of the term 'fundamentalist' as a cross-religious concept create problems?"

The essays in this volume study the origin, growth, underlying principles, aims and objectives of these revivalist religious movements in America, Latin America, and the countries of Europe, Africa and Asia. The essays by Simon Coleman and Mattias Gardell study anti-Catholic, anti-Muslim and pro-conservative Protestant missionary initiatives in America which have considerably influenced what may be called 'American civil religion' as well as the movements like Nation of Islam which lie outside the realm of 'civil religion' and have raised a demand for the creation of a separate state for the Black people. A detailed study of 'traditionalist' and 'accommodationist' Odawa Indians, by Melissa A. Pflug, which is symptomatic of other Indian movements, has shown that as a result of continued dominance and suppression, the notion of time becomes perceived as disrupted in the eyes of the oppressed, which leads to religious revival movements. Virginia Garrard-Burnett has studied the history of religious movements in Guatemala, 'the most religious' country in Latin America and concludes that "the end of religious monopoly (of institutional Catholic Church) has offered new variations in religious adaptation, and new opportunities for socio-religious innovation". So much so that the Church itself is forced to open "its own hegemonic borders to include interests and concerns that once lay beyond its periphery". Thomas Parland taking the example of the post Soviet Union and demise of Marxist-Leninist ideology developments has shown that in Russia "orthodox Christianity in association with Russian neo-nationalism has appeared as the most important political alternative to a western liberal democratic democracy." He warns us that as a result of these developments the orthodox nationalists will see a chance to transform the Church into another centre of political activity outside the Russian parliament." Time alone can tell how far he is right.

The essays on Africa by Leif Stenberg, Muhammad Mahmoud, Roman Loimier, Paul Gifford and Frieder Ludwig deal primarily with 'the Muslim threat', according to which "Islam is comprehended as the foundation for every action in all fields of society, individual or collective." They study the ideology propounded by the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) in Algeria, al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun movement in Sudan, Islamists movement in Senegal, Bakwata—the main representative body of Muslims in Tanzania to show the increasing demand of the fundamentalists to correct or change the political system, introduce Islamic law and courts and launch Islamic development plans within each individual society. Whether the 'final Islamic solution' advocated by these foundationalist groups shall be able to bear the brunt of the harsh economic realities and survive in the future also is only a matter of speculation as of now.

Sven Cederroth, Susan Rose and Asta Olesen in their respective essays study the Islamic movements in Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Afghanistan respectively to show that unlike in Africa the problem of ethnicity and religious minorities is an important factor for varying policies on religion in the Asian region. Whereas in Malaysia and Indonesia there is a 'mixed' form of Islam which is influenced by several other religions, in Afghanistan the Islamists believe in a puritanical sharia and politically decisive role of the ulama. Rose shows that though the fundamentalists in Philippines were initially inspired by the US evangelists, they are now forging their own positions which is quite critical of the United States.

Bruce Matthews and Mikael Gravers in their papers examine the Sinhalese Buddhist activism in Sri Lanka and study the role of Buddhism in the politics of Burma respectively to show the important role religion plays in the global process of formation of identities and consequent strategies. Eva Hellman in her paper explicates the concept of 'dynamic Hinduism' as propounded by Vishwa Hindu Parishad and explores the "ideas behind this movement which systematically strives to arouse a Hindu identity". Ishtiaq Ahmed in his paper after surveying the history of the Sikhs, shows how the fundamentalists' demand for a separate Khalistan is the result of the propaganda that all religious traditions should be subordinated to dynamic Hinduism to which every Indian should subscribe. "The onus of such a negative development" according to him "lies largely with various elites that compete with one another for power and influence in the polity". This, I believe is universally true. The essays in this volume are an eye opener for such elite.

Today, the world over politically oriented revivalist religious groups are consciously challenging the secular policy models, and are rejecting the secular ideals. They do not accept the ideal of secularism and western democracy as it weakens the religious basis of society and undermines divinity. They support the confessional policy model in which a certain religious tradition or community is politically established with more or less intimate interaction between religion and politics.

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Decelerating The 'Demographic Momentum'

K.K. Misra

ENDING THE EXPLOSION: POPULATION POLICIES AND ETHICS FOR A HUMANE FUTURE

By William G. Hollingsworth

Seven Locks Press, California, 1996, pp. 254, price not mentioned.

When there exists a vast and growing literature on demography, which covers almost all the variegated aspects of the population problem in its empirical minutae and hairsplitting, normative controversies, one can easily question William G. Hollingsworth's enterprise in writing another treatise on the same subject. However, a skeptical reader, who starts perusing the book with initial misgivings, is soon impressed by the author's jargonless style, his ability to deal with complex issues with amazing felicity and the wisdom contained in his short, straightforward critique and affirmations.

At the outset Hollingsworth discusses two scenarios of population growth: 1) Under "the Business as Usual Scenario" human population in the year 2100 will be somewhere between 12 and 17 billion people, and could be headed much higher; 2) Under "the Serious Strategy Scenario," i.e., if national governments support a variety of efforts (enumerated by the author in different sections of the book) that include adequately funded family planning programs, better economic and educational opportunities for women, and direct incentives for smaller families, population growth can be limited to somewhere between 8 and 10 billion people. You cannot reduce this figure to less than 8 billion. Why? The answer is "demographic momentum" which affects most underdeveloped countries.

India will more than double its population by 2100 if it reaches the replacement rate in 2010 while delay will result in proportionate increase in population growth.

So the author insists that direct means—family planning and population education be followed.

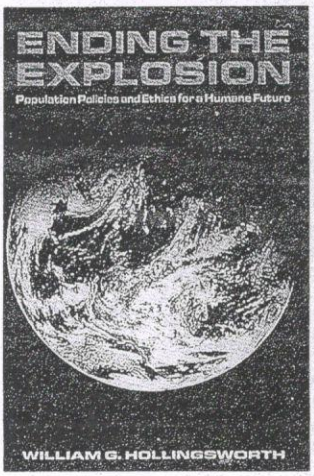
Part I of *Ending the Explosion* deals with an ethical appraisal of the present population crisis. It discusses first the implications of the *Business as Usual Scenario* for the developing crisis and offers a brief critique of the above along with an alternative scenario based upon the author's prescriptions for resolving the crisis. He asks ten rhetorical questions about emaciated children, massive food shortages, lack of health care, destruction of rain forests and also cool dry forests, deaths of millions of endangered species, fuel crisis and pollution, ethnic, racial and religious hatred, massive unemployment, famines, genocide, and war etc. but wants us to believe in a simplistic fashion that unrestrained population growth is the single cause of all such ills. For Hollingsworth, phenomena like capitalist greed, imperialist exploitation, Nazi genocide of Jews, or racist mass killings of native American peoples do not exist. Maybe if Indian tribes were more numerous or Jews a larger minority, they would have survived these historical tragedies better. Africa and South Asia survived imperialist onslaughts precisely because they were over-populated. China is the second largest economy today partly because of its status as a country with the largest population in the world, apart from other reasons (IMF ranking on purchasing power parity basis).

An interesting feature of Part I is a three-round "senate" debate, a fictional chamber, which offers the flavour of Platonic dialogues in the *Republic*. In this simulated senate, Senator Sense and her friends, Senators Sane, Sombre and Straight, argue in favour of Hollingsworth's case for population planning, while Senators Superlove, Sunny, Strict, Similar and Share oppose them. Though, like the author I would certainly vote for Senator-Sense, I believe that the dismissal and ridicule of her opponents is reminiscent of the dismissal of Thrasymachus by Socrates—somewhat hasty and injudicious.

Religious ideology of Superlove may find its fulfillment in Mother Teresa or in a kind of fundamentalism and can be interpreted in different ways. If Superlove is listened to in America, but not in France or even in Italy, then the reasons for it should be found in historical, political and socio-economic asymmetry. Senator Similar and Senator Share stand for equality and distributive justice respectively and these ideas are not in conflict with Hollingsworth's strategy of population control—ethically or otherwise—if not actually helpful. Senator Sense argues her case effectively against Senators Slaphappy and Strangescience. However, Senator See is unjustly treated when she is abruptly dismissed for her remark that racism of the whites is an impediment in global planning for population control.

Part II deals with what the author describes as an ethical enterprise of crisis resolution. The crisis of overpopulation cannot be resolved on the basis of individual couples acting in their discretion. Nor can we rely now on the slogan that "development is the best contraceptive." Both individualism and industrialization are categorized by the author as fanciful strategies which cannot resolve the crisis at this juncture of population explosion. Though industrialization and its resultant influence greatly reduced fertilty rates in Europe and North America, general economic development and wealth do not constitute a necessary condition for major reductions in fertility now. Syria, with per capita incomes which are three times that of India has a fertility of six children per woman and Saudi Arabia with a per capita income of $ 8000 (25 times that of India) averages a 5.5 children fertility rate. This is in stark contrast to the Indian states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu which have at present reached replacement rates of 1.8 and 2.2 respectively despite their low per capita incomes.

The problem of population control is urgent because the longer high fertility nations delay in reaching the replacement rate, the more their projected populations will exceed those of the replacement-rate-by-1990 scenario. For India and Bangladesh, the assumed year when replacement rate will be reached is 2010, for the Philippines and Tanzania, it is 2020 and 2035 respectively. By 2100, Pakistan will more than triple its population from 130 million in 1990 to 400 million if it reaches replacement rate in 2030. However, if this is delayed upto 2050, then Pakistan's population



may rise upto 600 million in 2110. India will more than double its population by 2100 if it reaches the replacement rate in 2010 while delay will result in proportionate increase in population growth.

So the author insists that direct means—family planning and population education be followed. In the Peruvian Amazon, a Shispilo Indian woman with seven living children asks for *tootimarau* (medicine to keep from getting pregnant) and men want an operation to "fix" men (vasectomy), but the doctor in Pucallpa is many days away by canoe. So these intelligent Indians will never get what they so urgently seek. Hence, the components of the programme should include 1) availability of highly reliable contraceptive options at affordable cost, 2) propagation of basic facts about birth control, 3) education about family health care and 4) full association of women at all levels of policy making.

Family planning in the developing countries currently costs $ 5 to 6 billion which averages about $ 12.5 per user per year. Perhaps $3.5 to 4 billion of this annual cost is paid for by the developing country governments for programmes in their own countries—the largest expenditures being incurred by two great nations, China and India. Hollingsworth feels this ought to be raised to $14.5 billion serving 800 million users by 2010 (about $18 per case per year). Of this increase $ 7 billion should come from affluent nations. Would $ 2.5 billion be too much or too little for the US? Are US congressmen listening—"people with big hearts" but reluctant to pay their share of UN contributions!

Good programmes can affect fertility even in adverse conditions. An example is Bangladesh with mass pov-

erty, low status for women, high illiteracy rates, high dependency on families (sons) for economic security, high infant mortality, etc. Yet, between 1970 and 1989 contraceptive use increased from 3% to 30% and fertility decreased from 7 children to 5 per woman. Surely family services are best delivered with reproductive and general health care. Population education should be provided by skillful use of the media, a music video in Nigeria, a hit television soap opera in Mexico, etc.—dissemination of adequate demographic education is indispensable.

Apart from the two direct means discussed above, there are some indirect means also, though less efficacious, for reducing fertility rates: A prime example given by the author is to increase efforts to end high infant and child mortality rates. Other examples include raising the age of marriage, encouraging breastfeeding, prohibiting child labour, empowering women through equal educational opportunities, employment, credit, access to health care, reform of marriage and inheritance laws, addressing the issues of gender violence, etc. Though most progress on the gender front will occur too late to help achieve a timely end to the population explosion all economic and political steps for removing gender discrimination must be taken without delay.

At this stage, we may pause to look at what the author has to say about demographic theories. To begin with, we find theories about the costs and benefits of having children in different settings: in traditional societies children were needed as cheap labour, as support in their parent's old age, and as means of physical security and political power. In modern society, thanks to their expensive upkeep and education and socialized security benefits, children have become an economic liability instead of an economic necessity. We get macro-economic studies and micro-economic analysis of the rising costs and the diminishing benefits of children. Some demographers talk of biological and social factors such as mortality, marital practices and cultural values. Then we encounter The Fertility Revolution: A Supply-demand Analysis of Richard Easterlin and Eileen Crimmons which relates the "supply of" and the parental "demand for" children to the economic and psychological costs of fertility regulation.

John Caldwell's theory of "intergenerational wealth flows" contrasts traditional economic morality and systems with modern economic morality and systems. Idea-focused theories like those of Cleland and Wilson focus on a psychological shift "*from, inter alia*, fatalism to a sense of control of destiny, from passivity to the pursuit of achievement, from a religious, tradition-bound and parochial view of the world to a more secular, rational and cosmopolitan one." Ronald Freedman in *Theories of Fertility Decline: A Reappraisal*" says that "administrative, communication and transportation systems capable of reaching the village masses, either with the ideas of the outside world or with the minimal services and goods which make new ideas and aspirations credible" are indispensable for the success of any viable fertility decline programme. However, Cleland and Wilson in *Demand Theories* humbly confess that "neither the historical nor the contemporary data will permit a definitive appraisal of any single theory." One might ask, then, what is the use of this journey across the "theoretical wonderland!"

All theories may have an element of truth, but Hollingsworth is shouting for action, here and now. In a small island, any road in any direction may lead a traveller to the sea, but the condition is that he must move, not stay still at the same place. The road to reach the demographer's paradise of zero population growth is proved with antinatalist direct incentives and disincentives.

All theories may have an element of truth, but Hollingsworth is shouting for action, here and now. In a small island, any road in any direction may lead a traveller to the sea, but the condition is that he must move, not stay still at the same place. The road to reach the demographer's paradise of zero population growth is proved with antinatalist direct incentives and disincentives (individual or community based). China has followed this route of antinatalist incentives with considerable success during the last two decades although Hollingsworth may not like the coercive element in the Chinese population strategy. He maintains, however, a deafening strategic silence about China except at one place where he condemns its policy of coercive sterilization and induced abortions.

Incentives recommended by Hollingsworth relate to schooling and job opportunities. He defends them as freedom's unexpected ally. Used along with family planning services, population education and a judicious mix of indirect measures such as gender justice, these non-coercive direct incentives are the citizen's only hope of freedom from absolute reproductive coercion, pronatalist social and economic pressures, risks to human health from potential economic and political tyrannies, and finally, for the human spirit to live in harmony with the earth's diversity of life.

Lastly, the author suggests a Global Bargain between developed and developing nations. The duties of the former include (1) "reindustrialization," i.e., reduction of their levels of ecological-environmental harm-doing and their over-use of critically scarce resources, (2) demographic non-hypocrisy i.e., rich nations should honestly pursue the goal of "zero-growth," (3) providing much more aid for human development in sectors, of health, education, family planning, job creation and small farm and small business empowerment including that of women. The responsibilities of developing nations to honour their part of the bargain include striving diligently for ecologically sound, humanistic, ethical, social, economic and demographic development.

The implementation of Hollingsworth's programme, according to his own estimate will require an additional expenditure of $9.5 billion annually out of which $ 2.5 billion may come from the U.S. and the rest from other affluent nations. I believe that this expectation is unrealistic. Secondly, it is a sledge-hammer approach, which insists that direct means and direct incentives are the key for ending population explosion. Indirect means, the author feels, look attractive but have no real place and relevance in his population planning strategy. Poverty alleviation does not find even a casual mention although the contrasting experiences of Kerala and Uttar Pradesh show that this along with distributive justice have a crucial role in demographic planning. The author shows a well-meaning though somewhat naive and unsophisticated understanding of social dynamics, political realities and international relations. For Hollings-worth, classes, elites, power politics, capitalism etc., do not exist—only governments, the United Nations and the "American people with big hearts" eager to distribute contraceptives to hungry people all over the world. Let these miserable creatures enjoy some safe sex even if God denies them their daily bread.

K.K. Misra taught in Delhi University and has authored several books on International Politics, Political Theory and Indian Politics.

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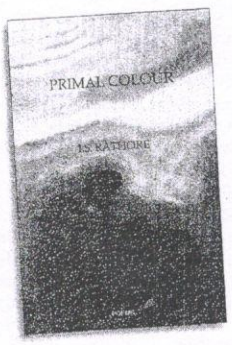

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TECHNOBRAT: CULTURE IN A CYBERNETIC CLASSROOM

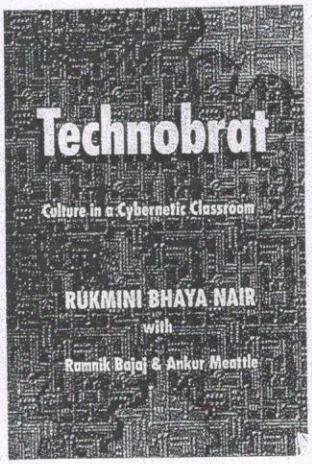
By Rukmini Bhaya Nair

Harper Collins Publishers, India, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 313, Rs. 395.00

Very few will dispute that the burning ambition in the breast of every middle class parent in India is to have his son in an Indian Institute of Technology. That they prefer their daughters to study medicine, psychology or English literature simply as a prelude to get them married off is a very different story. This fierce aspiration is transmitted to the male child even when he is in the mother's womb and from the day of his birth until he appears for the JEE-IIT examination in his sixteenth or seventeenth year, the boy is put through a form of *Tapasya* that includes determined indoctrination, lots of expenditure in providing tutorial lessons from Brilliant, Agarwals, etc., and a tough regimen of study denying him in the process many of the pleasures that teenagers hanker after. Only a miniscule percentage of the total aspirants achieve this *nirvana* status—a mere 2000 out of nearly 100,000 who begin the quest. It is an impressive spectacle to see the suppressed-pleasure-mingled-with-pride and anxiety of the parents—invariably in their forties—arguing with the bored professors in charge of the counselling sessions on the admission day, about the merits of particular engineering subjects and/or the different IITs. The sort of question one gets are: "Which do you think my boy should take. Chemical Engineering at Delhi or Civil Engineering at Bombay?" or "What are the prospects of getting aid in US for Naval Architecture at Madras?" etc. It cannot but be noticed that far too often the educated mothers take the lead in such probings at these sessions with the muttering husband and the dutiful well-dressed-for-the-occasion youngster keeping the rear. *Ramayana* is in the deepest psyches of Indians—at any rate the IITians—because one of them a few years ago was heard to remark: "Sir, please pardon my pride. We are all like Sri Ramachandramurthy". When the interlocutor persisted, the IITian confessed: "We sacrificed many of our happy years to come to this Institute just to satisfy our parents' wishes irrespective of what we thought"!

Like the *Maths* of old, the IITs were made self-contained without any interference from outside but with all their material requirements well taken care of. All that the inmates of these monasteries had to do was to be committed to advanced teaching and research eventually leading to the strengthening of the economic health of the country. There was another difference between the noisy old engineering colleges and the demurely quiet IITs. Unlike the former which was only producing "technicians", the latter was supposed to give birth to what Socrates advocated a millennia ago, carpenters who will also be philosophers.

What makes the IIT so special? And what is this carefully selected elite often self defined as "cream of the cream" like?—are frequently posed questions. The IITs may be, as the notice in the wrapper of this impressively produced book says, "the acme of Nehruvian achievement", but the original dream was the British Raj's through the less well known Sarkar Committee's interim report which suggested the establishment of such technological institutes to meet the expected demand for higher technical personnel in the post war Indian quest for industrial progress. Even at the time of their actual establishment, India had a few old engineering colleges like the more than century old Guindy Engineering College at Madras, Roorkee Engineering College, Poona



and Bengal Engineering Colleges with impressive record of turning out engineers, but the founding fathers thought a very different model should be adopted for these new establishments. They had to be "centres of excellence" as the 1986 Report of the Review Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr Hiten Bhaya said "like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology" but fashioning "programmes relevant to meet the anticipated requirements of the country". The model chosen for this can be properly termed "monastic" because it was decided to scatter the five IITs in the various corners of the country just like Jagatguru Adi Shankaracharya's decision to locate his four Peethams in the four extremities of the Bharatavarsha. Like the *Maths* of old, the IITs were made self-contained without any interference from outside but with all their material requirements well taken care of. All that the inmates of these monasteries had to do was to be committed to advanced teaching and research eventually leading to the strengthening of the economic health of the country. There was another difference between the noisy old engineering colleges and the demurely quiet IITs. Unlike the former which was only producing "technicians", the latter was supposed to give birth to what Socrates advocated a millennia ago, carpenters who will also be philosophers. To this end, a department of Humanities and Social Sciences was made part of the IITs by the Act of Parliament presumably to give the future engineers a broad educational background.

Looking back at the IITs since their inception, it must be said that they have been functioning in an orderly manner and are "almost Shangri-las" to use the phrase of a distinguished educationist. How would one rate its achievements? If he reads the self congratulatory paragraphs from the annual reports of the Directors delivered during the annual convocations or from the various Review Committee Reports, nothing will seem better. Take a statement from the 1986 Review Committee Report: "programme of B.Tech. . . meets the needs of the industry. . . Experts from abroad have favourably commented on the analytical capabilities of the IIT graduates. . . the reputation of IITs at home and abroad appears to be well-established". But if a careful check was made of the contribution to the development of engineering skills of the country as a whole, the record may not match all the hype generated by these modern temples of learning. Leaving aside those who migrate to greener pastures elsewhere, even within India, the IIT graduates swiftly move away from their engineering studies to management, marketing or software development. While a good deal of first rate research has come out of IITs within India and from IITians abroad, none of them seem to have scaled the Everest. The fact that India gave its highest honour to an Indian educated technologist, Dr. Abdul Kalam who was trained not in an IIT but in the not so fashionable Madras Institute of Technology tells its own tale about the achievements of the IITs.

Notwithstanding the enormous presence of the IIT in the consciousness of the urban Indian middle class, very little is known about it or understood. Very few have penetrated into the Shangri-la to comprehend it and even fewer are those who have tried to fathom the attitudes, interests, inhibitions, and ambitions of those who make up the IIT. Of the four distinct groups of people in the IITs, namely the Faculty, GATE sourced research and masters candidates, JEE produced B.Tech. students and the rest, it is the third category that is most unique and unfortunately no social scientist has put them under their microscope. Rukmini Bhaya Nair has made a valiant attempt to tell us something about the innermost thoughts of these B.Tech. candidates whom she calls *Tvashtri* and *Ribhu* (after a Rigvedic God and his pupils) and/or Technobrat. She is uniquely qualified to undertake this task because of her position as an Associate Professor at the capital city IIT, and what is more had the opportunity to teach a course ideally suited to make the students bare their souls. To have a father who reported on the progress of the IIT system, siblings who were *Tvashtris* and an uncle who was the founding *Peethatipathi* of the Madras IIT cannot but be of great help to our chronicler. Though not a professional social an-

thropologist, she quickly gets into the stride, and tells the reader clearly what to expect in the very second page: "This book is record of my attempts to learn about the culture of the contemporary tribes of *Tvashtris* and *Ribhus* in India". Casual encounters with these modern day *Tvashtris* certainly will lead potential readers to approach this book with much eager anticipation. One hears so often of their exploits (such as cracking the record of GRE-GMAT scores), on their becoming modesty (e.g. the nonchalant claim: "Only those who can't enter the IITs for their B.Techs. enter as faculty") that there is an inordinate curiosity to know more about these giants in whose hands the economic destiny of the country was placed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

There is the dead serious reader concerned about things going on in India, and he would look for a clinical and scientific analysis of the IIT problem, its role in our society and other educational issues. The author makes sure that this book is not for them: "Those who expect well-honed 'solutions' to problems from Technobrats are—let me be honest—almost certain to be disappointed." No. Rukmini writes for a very different audience, that is those with "a taste for oddities, for eavesdropping, for arguments and for *adda*." (What is *adda*, I wonder!) The sort of reader who likes books with plenty of sapidity such as *My Life in the CIA, Three years in an Andaman Prison, or Among the Cannibals of New Guinea* where an author has lived with the subjects about whom he/she is writing, will immensely enjoy this volume. The conclusions do not matter but the descriptions and interactions must give sufficient 'kick' to provide a kind of amusing entertainment.

The story begins when the author was entrusted with teaching an optional course on Technology and Culture intended to impart some knowledge on "historical and contemporary ideas of the nature of technology" to the technobrats studying at the IIT, Delhi. She found at once that she is dealing with a group of individuals whose qualities "include a ruthless competitiveness, emotional attrition, a focussed but extremely narrow vision of social goals, relentlessly instrumentalist attitudes and an annoying complacency—the complacency of already 'having arrived' at nineteen." They also believed in the mantras of modernism, namely, progress, certainty, universals. Rukmini decided to charge like a postmodernist cat into this dovecote of modernist pigeons. She made them read Gandhi, Ashish Nandy, Claude Alvares, Michael Adas, Tagore, etc., made them comment on paintings and poetry, asked them awkward questions about commodity fetishism and technological choices, made them write essays, argued with them and in general made life one hell for them. The students seem to have responded in a non-negative sort of way the Tvashtris usually do. Their strategy is that if you can't beat the system, co-opt yourself. With their goal of success clearly marked by their parents and etched in the deepest recesses of their psyche, no one would think of rebelling. If that is what the teacher wants, dish it to him/her. The stakes are high and nothing should undermine the CGPA score.

Rukmini has described this interesting semester-long encounter in an engaging way. We learn of her students, we learn of her struggles to penetrate their determined ways, we learn of her successes and failures all in considerable detail. We get a classification of her students, their likes and dislikes. Her students come out as intelligent, eager and serious—somewhat too serious to have any sense of humour. Not that it is unusual. Many years ago a tongue-in-cheek question was asked in a humanities course asking the students to compare the famous annual donkey fair held at Mehsana in Gujarat (detailed description provided) with the bride-groom market of IIT B.Techs. Not one of the 160 students thought anything unusual about the question, and went about seriously answering it using the full panoply of micro-economic theory. Also was discovered the extent of their self-esteem when they 'priced' themselves in the dowry stakes with an odd concession which read like this "the dowry may be a little less if the girl were pretty like Poonam Dhillon or Amrita Singh"!

It is not easy to be a teacher of humanities in the IITs. The majority of engineering professors normally hesitate to allow sufficient space even for pure sciences and mathematics, let alone tolerate the humanities and social scientists poaching valuable credits to inform students on "subjective", "vague", "fuzzy" and often subversive political stuff. Students too find humanities option very different from the engineering courses where one can comprehend the problems and derive clear cut answers. To survive with her humour intact in such a hostile atmosphere is itself an achievement. But to have thrown some light on the way she has struggled to plant successfully a few discordant seeds in the minds of students who feel they know everything and have a technical solution to every problem in the earth, is an even greater achievement.

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What's Sakuntala to Him Or He To Sakuntala

Girish Karnad

THE OXFORD ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THEATRE

Edited by John Russell Brown

Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 582, £25.00

I shall adapt Jean-Luc Godard's famous dictum that a work has to have a beginning, a middle and an end but not necessarily in that order and start with what was to be the second half of my review as originally written. The reasons for this procedure I shall come to later.

The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre is a magnificently produced book. John Russell Brown, the editor, is both an academic and a practising theatre person. He is Professor of Theatre at Michigan. His production of Brian Friel's *Faith Healer* successfully toured India several years ago and recently he directed *King Lear* for the National School of Drama, New Delhi. He is at home in all aspects of theatre and drama and this knowledge and confidence show in the way his *Illustrated History* is planned and executed.

As he emphasizes right at the outset, this is a history, and not a reference book. A reference book is expected to provide nuggests of information which need to be fitted by the person consulting the volume in the larger context of his or her knowledge of the subject. A history sets its own terms: in most of the essays in this volume history takes the form of a straightforward narrative, chronologically arranged. The book too starts with the Greeks, goes on to talk of theatre in Rome and Christian Europe, branches out into the various regional Renaissance theatres, then brings the various strands together again in a history of 'European and Western' theatres in the eighteenth century and proceeds to the present day. And as a history of that theatre, it does its job most satisfactorily. The contributors are well-known in their fields of study and bring to their essays a lucidity and engaging charm which can only come with authority and scholarship.

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Uniformity of theatrical approaches has not been insisted upon, each contributor dealing with the aspect of theatre that interests him, and bringing to it a theoretical orientation that is his own.

You thus get a double-edged insight into the development of the western theatre. You see how within each culture (English, Spanish, Italian. . .) theatre took its own particular shape.

On the other hand it is instructive as well as amusing to see how these cultures responded to each other, sometimes borrowing and then developing an idea in unexpected directions, but more often misunderstanding and misrepresenting a neighbourly traditions to feed some chauvinistic fancy. Louise George Clubb begins her essay, 'Italian Renaissance Theatre' with 'Our [assumption] that is disappearing to no one's regret. . . is the denial of creative vitality to Italian theatre because it produced no Shakespeare'.

Professor Oliver Taplin opens the book with his magesterial essay on the Greek theatre. Having consumed any

number of theories on the ritual origins of the Greek drama (á la Nietze), I found his beginning starlingly direct and illuminating. 'It would be neat to be able to claim (as many have) that the origins of Greek theatre were derived from some primitive or primeval rite'. But the sober truth is that, if they were, then we know nothing at all about the rite or the process: Greek drama owes its existence to the peculiar political conditions as well as to the inter-Greek competitions for cultural prestige. 'Rivalry for influence and attention was fundamental to ancient Greek civilization—for good and for evil—both between city-states and within them'.

The differences in the approaches of contributors may be illustrated by taking two essays, 'Modern Theatre (1890–1920)' and 'Theatre After the Two World Wars'. The former is by Martin Esslin, the title of whose book, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, provided the favourite buzz-word to critical parlance on theatre in the '60s. Although there were radical political upheavals around the turn of the century and although Esslin does touch upon them, he sees the developments in the theatre of this period as essentially internally generated. It is the writers, directors, actors and scenic designers of the period that animate the landscape: it is their individual genius that guides the directions which his history takes.

The next essay, written by Michael Innes (whose *Avant-Garde Theatre* (1892–1992) has virtually become a standard textbook) underlines the integration of theatre with the political events of the time. Innes sees this approach as inevitable when dealing with a time-span containing the two World Wars. But his uncovering of the connections is both delicate and stimulating. 'In a sense, drama becomes a continuation of war by other means during the inter-war years', he points out, 'with the slogan "Theatre is a Weapon" being coined in 1920'. 'There seems to be an equation between the degree of war damage a country had suffered, and theatrical experiment'. Battered Germany produced Expressionism, Russia a Meyerhold. 'By contrast in England, where national pride and social complacency were . . . confirmed by the war. . . *Chu Chin Chow*. . . a fantastical extravaganza combining the traditional romance of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* with central exoticism. . . broke box-office records in its continuous run from 1916 to 1921'. The drastic curbing of freedom of expression under communist dictatorships gagged writers but made the director 'a primary source' of theatrical experiment, *presentations being harder to censor than dialogue!* (italics mine). But what makes this book an absolute delight is its illustrations. Almost every other page has a sketch or photograph or painting (often more than one) or an extract from a play, all carefully chosen and appositely placed, illuminating the text from different angles.

The illustration I loved most is a caricature drawn by Honoré Daumier, the great French satirist in 1853. It is titled *Amor and his Mother* and shows a wretched child, all dressed up with a bow and wings, having his nose violently blown by his mother, just before stepping on stage to play Cupid in a fairy extravaganza. It is a devastating comment on that august subject, the relationship of theatre to life.

Now let me turn to my initial beginning.

'Theatre' is a word that immediately demands an adjective to make any sense of it at all since it is shaped by the language, music, religion, gestures, political events, in fact, any factor that defines its audience and therefore can take an unrecognizably different shape when even one of the coordinates is altered. Therefore confronted with the title, *Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, one is compelled to ask, 'which theatre?' The blurb on the back cover, anticipating such a query, instantly provides an answer: This, we are told, is 'The unrivalled history of World Theatre'.

Excited, you open the book. It has 582 pages. The theatres of India, Japan and other Asian countries, are together allotted 51.

One is quite used to the mindset exemplified by the famous BBC series, *Civilizations*, in which nothing East of Suez qualified for inclusion. But the editor here offers a reasonable explanation. 'This is a theatre history from the standpoint of British, European and English-speaking cultures, a limitation that must *falsify* the account at some point of time' (italics mine).

For a start this falsifies the larger claim made by the blurb itself. But blurb-writers are famously inclined to exaggerations and not a little indifferent to the ethical problems raised by their bombast.

But one also notices that the South Asian, East Asian and South-East Asian theatres are clubbed together under the rubric 'Oriental Theatres.' The use of this adjective in the post-Edward Said era suggests that many other kinds of falsifications may already be at work between the covers of this book.

The essay on 'South Asian Theatres' (by which is meant only Indian Theatre) is by Professor Farley Richmond, a Professor in the Department of Theatre Arts at Stony Brook.

Professor Richmond has written extensively on Indian theatre. Guides, encyclopaedias, companions to world theatre which need to have a corner devoted to Indian theatre seem to find an obliging contributor in him. He has also co-authored a book, *Indian Theatre*.

Insofar as Richmond has to cover the whole history of Indian theatre from Bharata to Tapas Sen within eighteen pages, one's heart goes out to him. But not for long. Barely into the third paragraph of his essay, the reader is brought up short by the statement that in the myth about the origin of Drama in the opening chapter of the *Natyasastra*, the demons hinder Bharata's actors 'from rehearsing'. Rehearsing? The *Natyasastra* is explicit that it was a performance that was disturbed (*evam prayoge prārabhdhe)* . Has Richmond discovered some new material or theory that justifies his interpretations? Or is it another example of carelessness? (I say 'another' because Richmond is prone to nod. In his *Indian Theatre*, 'bharatanatyam' was spelt 'bhārata nātyam' throughout. Interestingly, Richmond's version of the myth in *Indian Theatre* quite correctly states, 'But when the show got underway, the demons took offence. . .')

I am not quibbling about a minor detail. The disruption by the demons is at the heart of the myth and, I should like to argue, of essence to the entire concept of drama in the *Natyasastra*. Here is the most ancient, most revered text talking about what was the very first performance of a play in history (in the history of the Universe, in fact). The performance was the result of a collaboration between Brahma, the source of the universe and the other gods along with the best of men, all working on a combination of elements extracted from the four Vedas. The result should have been a resounding success, unmatched again in time.

Instead, the *Natyasastra* honestly admits that the show was a disaster. A section of the audience (the demons) took umbrage and the event ended in violence and bloodshed.

There is an implicit statement here about the nature of drama which scholars have simply refused to look at; possibly, it embarrasses them. The point being made is that drama is potentially a socially disruptive event. Before it can be made to yield 'pleasure', all the parties need to go through disciplined training—that surely is the point of Brahma's lecture after the event. What I am trying to point out is that in recounting this myth, rehearsal cannot be substituted for 'performance' so casually, there is a lot at stake here.

Richmond could at least have brushed up on his Indian history. 'Vaisnavism', we are told, 'emerged in the fifteenth century.' In South India, it emerged a good eight centuries earlier. 'Sanskrit theatre became inactive after the tenth century AD owing to the political and social unrest in north India, with the invasion of Mohammed of Gazni and successive waves of peoples from the Middle East'. Actually not just Sanskrit drama but writing in Sanskrit itself began to decline long before Gazni's's arrival on the scene. The rising tide of *bhakti* insisted on expressing itself through the mother-tongues of people and bitterly opposed—even mocked—the pan-Indic Brahmanic hegemony of Sanskrit. It is arguable that Sanskrit drama owes its decline to the resurgence of theatre activity in the regional languages, etc.

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But the main problem with Richmond's essay is his total lack of interest in his subject. Facts are marshalled dutifully but mechanically, with not the slightest effort at enlivening them. He is bored and the boredom refuses to remain concealed, given the passion for and involvement with the theatres of their choice which the other contributors in this book display.

So we come to the last chapter. In his 'Introduction', John Russell Brown says: "As the story approaches the present day, a world-wide focus becomes increasingly necessary and it is fully established in a final chapter that starts in the year 1970,' the year in which, according to him, national boundaries began to collapse. Apart from decolonization, followed by the crumbling of the Soviet Empire, 'modern technology was bringing everyone into an instant view.'

The final chapter 'Theatre since 1970',

written by the editor himself, gives us a bird's eye view of the contemporary theatre landscape. Changes in the fortunes of the commercial stage are detailed: we are taken on a quick but informative tour of the work being done by the innovators: Robert Wilson, Peter Brook, Cantor, Tadashi Suzuki, Eugenio Barba. How then does India fit into this matrix?

The last photograph in the book shows a scene from Ratan Thiyam's *Chakravyuha*. The caption accompanying it, while drawing attention to the 'emphatic lighting, glamorous costumes and sophisticated use of stage space,' labels the production 'Westernized traditional theatre'. Evidently, the global illumination by modern technology notwithstanding, Oriental theatre can use that technology only at the risk of becoming 'Westernized'.

The photograph appears on the same page as 'a description of a Jatra company called the Orissa Opera. The company seems no different from hundreds of such companies which toured the hinterlands of Maharashtra, South India, Gujarat, Orissa and Bengal, until the mid-forties when the 'talkies' and the post-war inflation destroyed them. Many survive even today. Nearly twenty such companies (called Natak Mandals) continue to be active in North Karnataka.

The correct place for discussing this kind of theatre was surely the chapter on the history of Indian theatre. Instead, this theatre, whose stage is 'like a garishly decorated boxing-ring' and which operates 'away from modern publicity and all but the simplest technology' is the only theatre institution or event from India dealt with at any length in the essay, 'Theatre since 1970'! Presumably, for Professor Brown, this is genuine, unwesternized, modern, innovative Indian theatre!

Let me now explain why I have presented this review in this mixed up fashion. When I first saw the book, I naturally turned to the section on Indian theatre. My review inevitably re-enacted the process of my encounter with the text.

But many readers of book reviews, I am told, rarely go beyond the first few paragraphs. If so, I do not wish to put any one off this book. Despite its orientalism and rather sad section on Indian theatre, it has many fascinating things to show and tell. The price will doubtless confine it, atleast in India, to shelves of public libraries. It deserves to be much borrowed and widely read.

Girish Karnad is a playwright and film maker.

Worshipping The Mother Goddess

V.R. Mani

SAPTAMATRKA WORSHIP AND SCULPTURES: AN ICONOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF CONFLICTS AND RESOLUTIONS IN THE STORIED BRAHMANICAL ICONS

By Shivaji K. Panikkar

D.K. Printworld, New Delhi, pp. 189+plates 196, Rs. 1500.00

There has been a boom of literature on art history and iconography in recent years largely because of archaeological explorations and surveys by a plurality of agencies and studies of collections in different museums. Besides the Archaeological Survey of the Government of India, Departments of Archaeology of several state governments and a number of universities and research institutes have participated in this work of survey and explorations which has resulted in bringing to light an enormous amount of hitherto unknown pieces of art and specimens of iconographic uniqueness. Liberal funding by government-aided organizations has led to studies on these material and several publications have been brought out. Admittedly much new light has been shed but it is also true that much of this new literature adds only peripherally to our knowledge and many are sadly disappointing. To borrow a word from the discipline of literary criticism there is no dearth of pulp in the tons of books on art and iconography published in recent years. Viewed in this context the book under notice here is both good and informative; good because the work done by earlier writers on the subject consulted and systematized by the author is good and informative because the author has tried to incorporate an inquiry in understanding the politico-social and economic implications underlying the formation of myths and the iconography of the various goddesses. While what is good is also certainly informative, what is informative may be good only for those who subscribe to the author's interpretation. For the present reviewer the informative part is also good.

The cult of the Saptamatrkas which was widely popular in early and early medieval India was one of the manifold ramifications of the worship of the Mother Goddesses. These Matrkas are Brahmani, Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaisnavi, Indri, Varahi and Chamunda and though represented as goddesses, their identity and attributes are essentially derived from the respective male deities. They are the female *saktis* of the male gods and together, they embody syncretism between various principal sectarian Brahmanical cults and other theophanies.

The author deals with the subject under seven broad heads or chapters. In the first chapter he provides an account of the worship of the female in India in the period of the Indus Valley Civilization and that of the Vedas. Referring to the attempts at tracing prototypes of the Saptamatrakas in the period of the Indus Valley Civilization he rightly cautions against over reading on some interpretations suggesting the prevalence of the cult of the Saptamatrkas at such an early period. In the second chapter, the sculptural tradition of the Kushana Matrka is described as the stage of assimilation of a number of concepts related to Matrkas in different texts. Here a noteworthy finding of the author is that while literary evidences imply significant conflicts and resolution between Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical ideologies the sculptural evidence reveals a clearly resolved Brahmanical status of this tradition in the Kushana period. In conformity with earlier scholars who have examined this aspect of the study the author stresses that at the end of the Kushana and during the Gupta periods the worship reached a formative stage. In the third chapter he attempts to provide a picture of the Saptamatrka worship, drawing largely from the literary and inscriptional sources. The next three chapters—the fourth, fifth and sixth—deal with the iconography of the Saptamatrkas. The author's account of the sculptures belonging to the period from the fourth to the mid-sixth century leads him to the conclusion that there emerged a phase of Saptamatrka iconography showing two distinct typologies, in Central India, the Gangetic plains, Western India and Deccan. The author notices that sculptures from these places indicate early stages of experimentation with basic features of Matrka iconography, namely the maternal and the warrior aspects. This is followed by a detailed discussion of a number of notable sculptures from Samalji, Mandor, Aihole, Kotesvar, Pachar, Bhubhaneswar, Ellora, Alampur, Kanchipuram etc. The diffusionary trail of the cult in south India is discussed in detail. In the concluding chapter the author deals with the meanings of the icons within the general framework of the historical continuum of ancient India, contextualising and grounding the former within the politico-social and economic dialectics.

Even a perusal of the book reveals that the author while systematizing existing knowledge of the subject has attempted to lay stress on some of the areas hitherto touched upon only inadequately. In a learned critique of previous researches the author shows how earlier scholars have betrayed a tendency to ignore the historical significance of Kushana Matrka sculptures. Some of the interesting topics on which considerable light is shed are Therianthropic Matrkas, Skanda and Balagraha tradition, the heptad traditions and Saptamatrka and the iconology of the goddesses. Quoting R.S. Sharma approvingly the author points out that the problem of the origin of tantrism can be looked at from the angle of "acculturation of the principal areas through land grants to monks and brahmanas, the aboriginal background of the tantric mother goddesses, the antiquity and the distribution of the pithas, the association of the Sabaras, Matangas etc. with different Tantras, the dates and provenance of

the tantric texts, and finally the survivals of tantrism." This has led him to conclude that the condition of religion he portrays originated in the outer, tribal circle and not in Central India.

The text of the book is well supplemented by carefully chosen illustrations which are excellently produced. There is a corpus of 196 illustrations each one of which is relevant to drive home a point or to confirm an inference or stress an emphasis. The regional and chronological variations in the worship of the Matrkas and the abundant iconographic types, so assiduously stressed in the text is brought out by the illustrations in a telling manner.

The bibliography given at the end is comprehensive but not exhaustive. The present reviewer himself had worked on the Saptamatrkas in the sixties but could get the book published only in 1995 with the title *Saptamatrkas in Indian Religion and Art*. This book, one of the latest on the subject and with several topics overlapping with the book under review is not included in the bibliography. The reviewer's book published two years before the publication of the book under review attempts to make a historical enquiry into the origin of the seven goddesses both as a collective entity and as individual divinities, different stages in the evolution and development of their worship, regional ramifications in their cult, typological variations in their iconography, Agamic injunctions and the nature of esoteric and tantrik practices associated with them. The extent of overlapping between the two books is too obvious. Admittedly the scope of the book under review is wider with an accent on socio-cultural history and is among the important contributions to art history and iconography in recent times.

V.R. Mani was Curator for Art and Archaeology in the Government Museum, Madras and subsequently Research Officer in the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), New Delhi and Joint Director, Union Public Service Commission, New Delhi. The research papers presented by him in different seminars, symposia and conferences and articles published in various journals deal with such diverse aspects of Indology as art, architecture, iconography, sculpture, epigraphy, numismatics and historical geography. The works published by him include The Cult of Weapons: The Iconography of the Ayudhapurushas (1985), Sons of Siva: Studies in The Religious Cults of Ganesa and Karttikeya (1991), and Saptamatrkas in Indian Religion and Art *(1995). At present he is a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellow Working on 'Gopura in Indian Architecture'.*

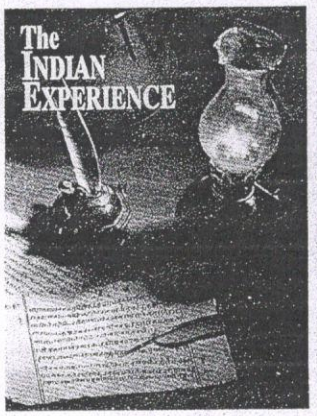
Come Fly With Me

Laila Tyabji

THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE

Edited by Nalini Menon

Swagat and Media Trans Asia India Ltd. for Indian Airlines, 1997, pp. 183, Rs. 1,800.00



Airlines have to do a lot more than just fly planes. They must feed their passengers (both the Veg and Non-Veg variety), show them movies, soothe and stimulate them with music and hot or cold cologne towels—on occasion even deliver unexpected babies.

These days, apart from being pilot, restaurant, entertainer, nanny and midwife, every airline of repute is also a publisher. The in-flight magazine: glossy, full of pretty pictures and evocative prose, striking a careful balance between triviality and erudition, is a staple of modern travel. How many people read the magazine or would miss its absence is debatable. Does it generate income from its myriad, colour ads, or lose it as part of Public Relations? In India, *Swagat*, the Indian Airlines magazine, has its life complicated by having to do its number in two languages; half the magazine in Hindi, the other half in English. Doubtless, some M.P. will soon agitate for *Swagat* editions in regional languages.

A familiar catch phrase is that one picture is worth a thousand words. I don't always agree, but when words and visual images compete together in one space, it is usually the pictures that win. Sadly, the same goes for *The Indian Experience*, except in P.N. Haksar's thoughtful, thought-provoking Foreword. Rather unfairly to those who follow him, it is the very best piece, even without any illustrations.

India's anniversary of 50 years of Independence has provoked all sorts of reactions. For Indian Airlines it resulted in not just a celebratory bumper issue of *Swagat* (to which I contributed!) but a book. *The Indian Experience* is like its subject, India: large, colourful, multifaceted; great to look at but rather difficult to get to grips with. Full of conflicting, amazing images, ideas and theories. Not just a coffee table book, (though it would look well on one) it is not exactly a reference book either. Written by eminent, international scholars of the likes of Professor Bipin Chandra, S. Dillon Ripley, B.N. Goswamy and Kapila Vatsyayan, its chapters on Indian history, flora, fauna, music, monuments, culture and cuisine, are informed but rather lack-lustre; not quite tourist brochure prose but not (the presence of Dr. Anantha Murthy notwithstanding) Sahitya Akademi prize-winning stuff either. There is a strong whiff of deja vu and mothballs. Some of the great names seem to have reached into their back drawers and pulled out something old and familiar! Presumably they are too grand to have been subjected to Nalini Menon's editorial blue pencil. The results are a little uneven. You have the late Pupul Jayakar's flowing, rather florid periods followed by Dillon Ripley talking about the "distributional reduction to relictual geographic ranges" and telling the (in my case bemused) reader that "no centres of regional endimism are discernible"!

One danger of trying to encompass a couple of thousand years of a subcontinent in three or four thousand words, is of becoming a dense catalogue of names and information. This does not make for compulsive reading. Sheila Dhar's overview of Hindustani music manages to be both enlightening and entertaining, but Mrinal Pande's chapter on Indian women, *A History of Doing*, despite the wonderful title, is encyclopedically turgid. Sally Holkar solves this by making her lively piece on food a very personal tour of recipes, cooks and stories. She may miss out some dishes and ingredients but she captures the flavour of India.

As always, modern India comes off second best, despite a sparkling, panasonic zoom around Indian Cinema by Chidananda Dasgupta. The splendours of the past are easier to read (and write) about than the present chaotic, schizophrenic mixture of space age and slums, Miss Universe contests and bride-burning. Happy peasants on camel back make more picturesque subjects than urban cyclists masked against pollution of fumes. Politics and religion have been thought too controversial to deal with, and contemporary Indian art and theatre are also given a miss, perhaps for the same reason! A piece on the contemporary Indian market place, conveying the wonderful eclectic mixture of fashion ramp and elephant mela, Santushti and Surajkund, Pepsi and *paan*, kitsch and class, might have been both colourful and fun—than the rather routine trot around our 5,000 year old craft and textile traditions.

Rene Lecler's tourist's eye view of India is the ecstatic "Come Fly With Me" the ultimate experience of a self confessed, rather uncritical "red faced westerner," while Razia Grover does her best for contemporary Indian architecture. Nevertheless, any traveller tangling with Indian bureaucracy at Customs and Immigration at Indira Gandhi Airport, or driving through the suburban badlands around Sahar, might well marvel at what happened to the tolerance of Ashoka and Akbar, the inspiration of Fatehpur Sikri, Jaisalmer and Hampi. Akhilesh Mittal, in his introductory paragraph on historic monuments, suggests that passion is the font of all creativity. Perhaps present-day India *does* lack passion of that creative sort.

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and visual images compete together in one space, it is usually the pictures that win. Sadly, the same goes for *The Indian Experience*, except in P.N. Haksar's thoughtful, thought provoking Foreword. Rather unfairly to those who follow him, it is the very best piece, even without any illustrations. Not only is Dr. Haksar conversant with the prose and poetry of at least half a dozen cultures, he writes beautifully himself, and he has beautiful, significant things to say. They linger in the mind long after one has flipped through the rest of the contents and feasted on all the pictures. I presume, though, he had tongue well in cheek when he wrote of "the graciousness and warmth of Indian Airlines cabin crew"! Some of the photographs in the chapter on "People" might teach those sullen air hostesses a lesson in how to smile.

So what of the pictures? It is a relief that the cover of *The Indian Experience* does not have the usual cliché, bejeweled Rajasthani belle, *matka* on head, on her way to the village well. Instead, the evocative and beautiful still life of ancient manuscripts, oil lamp, ink well and plumed pen, suggests the serious content of the book inside—as well as *Swagat*'s attempt to do something different. It is by Aditya Arya, who, with B.P.S. Walia, shares most of the book's photo credits. Their pictures are a varied and pleasing though rather predictable collection. It is a paradox that though India is so incredibly diverse, it also lends itself to stereotype images. Difficult to bring out a book on India which *doesn't* have the Taj Mahal, elephants, snake charmers and a Rajput with curving moustaches. Equally difficult to make these excitingly different. The reproduction is good, but not outstanding—rather overdoing the brilliance of the yellows, oranges, reds and sky blues. Catering perhaps to Indian tastes rather than the actual Indian experience!

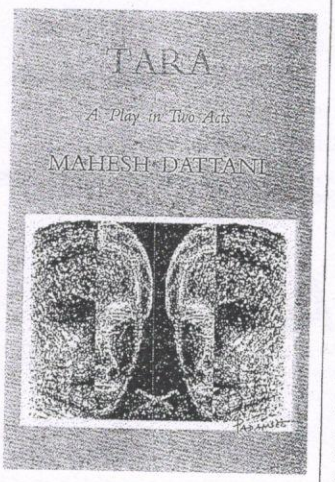
Whom is this book intended for? Potential foreign tourists, serious scholars, the casual Indian reader, those looking for a travel guide or a wedding present, or simply Indian Airlines top brass in search of a promotional P.R. gesture? It is never quite clear. It is certainly far too large and unwieldy and expensive (at 1,800 rupees) for a handbook. Attractive, well intentioned, well presented though it is, it falls between so many stools that one suspects it may just land by default on that ubiquitous coffee table.

I wish it happy journeys, a safe landing and many, many readers.

Laila Tyabji is Chairperson of DASTKAR a society for crafts and craftspersons in New Delhi.

Essentially a Comic Muse

Kusum Haider



TARA

By Mahesh Dattani

Ravi Dayal Publisher, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 61, Rs. 60.00

FINAL SOLUTIONS

By Mahesh Dattani

Manas, 1994, pp. 404, Rs. 175.00

Indian writing in English is so lively that scarcely a year goes past without the discovery of yet another dazzling new talent. Led by Salman Rushdie, Indian authors have laid claim to high awards and prizes all over the world. They have a global reach and acceptance, and the dynamism of the present suggests unlimited possibilities for the future.

However, while the novelists have been so conspicuously successful, India's English language playwrights are yet to emerge in anything like the same strength. Indian plays in English of any quality are few and far between. Not that there is no demand, even hunger for such theatre: numerous stage-struck groups keep up the quest, sometimes striking it rich, more often making do with rather unsatisfactory material. In the composite art of theatre, the playwright must depend on the actors, director, stage, audience and all the paraphernalia of a theatrical production. Only seldom does it all come together, and uncommon perseverance is required of all involved in the enterprise. So all the more reason to welcome Mahesh Dattani's work. In this rather mixed setting, he stands out. His is a serious and inquiring theatre.

Each play is something of a theatrical *tour de force* from within which the characters don't always emerge fully. They often have crackling lines of dialogue but there is little ballast to them. It is not character that drives the action; rather, a series of hints and revelations lead us into secrets that the protagonists would prefer to conceal. By the end, they stand exposed, their defences stripped away.

The publications under review here show that Dattani has built a substantial oeuvre which can today be viewed and weighed. The plays have been performed successfully all over the country. It is good that 'Manas' has collected four of the plays in a single compilation. It is also noteworthy that the famously selective Ravi Dayal should have chosen to bring out *Tara* in a hardcover edition. The plays will become more widely known, to be enjoyed and, more important to be performed.

The texts as we have them here are meant for the stage and much is lost by treating them as literary efforts to be read in the study. At best, we can try to pick out some of the main characteristics of the author's method. These tend to be repeated, with variations, from work to work. For one, the design of the set comes in for the author's special attention as something integral to the action. Dattani takes great pains in his stage directions to explain the stage layout and clearly expects those who perform his plays to follow him in detail. The stage is carefully segmented into different areas which are associated with one or more character, or the same character at different points of time, or a narrator addressing the audience directly, to name a few of the many variants. Lighting is similarly ordered with great care. Through such meticulous arrangement, a typical Dattani play presents its theme in a multiple narrative, shifting back and forth across time, highlighting now this person now that, building dramatic tension through a technique reminiscent of cinema as it cuts rapidly from one scene to another. At times this method can appear somewhat contrived, but at its best, as in *Tara*, it generates genuine excitement and builds up to a powerful climax. Dattani's method contains numerous echoes from the works of several modern and contemporary playwrights. What is borrowed is thoroughly absorbed, while setting the author within a longer theatrical tradition.

In these plays the way the plot unfolds tends to follow a particular pattern. As often as not, matters proceed by the introduction of a stranger into a seemingly ordinary family setting. This catalyses a series of events. The presence of the stranger stirs up many uneasy sentiments hidden behind apparent normality. Veils obscuring the past are lifted, culminating in the exposure of an ugly family secret whose deep infection is not to be cleansed. Once the action begins to flow, the interest of the audience is sustained and strengthened as a number of lesser revelations lead us to the final theatrical coup. Looking back, with cooler judgement, one may find something occasionally stagey or forced in the process, but there is no denying the energy and drive. The audience will be held by the drama.

Each play is something of a theatrical *tour de force* from within which the characters don't always emerge fully. They often have crackling lines of dialogue but there is little ballast to them. It is not character that drives the action; rather, a series of hints and revelations lead us into secrets that the protagonists would prefer to conceal. By the end, they stand exposed, their defences stripped away. But the drama turns on the exposing, not on what is revealed. The human core is not what it is about; the situational drama is what holds the attention.

Dattani's characters speak the homogenised, 'convent'-learned language of the Indian middle classes, limited in range and nuance. There are linguistically more ambitious moments when the playwright explores deeper emotions and his characters grapple with difficult, almost inexpressible realities. This is especially so in *Final Solutions*. The staple, however, is closer to the everyday diction of India's drawing rooms. This works well enough most of the time. The dialogue is assured and easy flowing. There is a great deal of smart repartee, and verbally at least, Dattani's characters are quick on the uptake. But there is a problem at mo-

ments of heightened emotion. The language we so assiduously teach ourselves and our children is just not flexible enough for the purposes of the drama. Playwright and audience are united in this insufficiency. However, one can see the author extending the range of his language as the plays succeed each other and something more suitable to his theatrical preoccupations is being progressively fashioned.

Dattani's is a post-modern world, without heroes and heroics. Characters tend to be self-absorbed, locked into their own separate worlds, not much aware of what is going on around them. This is not a theatre of grand ideas, despite some gestures in that direction. So, in *Dance Like a Man*, Ratna endlessly schemes and plots to launch her daughter's career as a dancer, hardly able even to register that the girl's fiance is being introduced to her for the first time. In *Tara* the isolation of the protagonists is even more marked, for they are separated Siamese twins with only one leg apiece. In these plays, it is an exploration of such smaller worlds that we witness, vivid and complete in themselves.

A most arresting theme that recurs time and again in the plays is that of gender ambiguity. *Tara* looks at separated Siamese twins, a male and a female, in their hopes and anxieties and their shared vulnerability before a cruel world. The linking of boy and girl in one unit, only imperfectly separated from each other, poignantly blurs gender distinctions. In *Dance Like a Man* Jairaj's determination to dance Bharata Natyam separates him from the normal world almost as completely as the twins' deformity separates them. Even *Where There's a Will*, altogether lighter in tone, touches on this theme. In these plays, common assumptions about male and female roles get pushed about and turned around. Women emerge as stronger, more decisive characters than the men. It is a rich dramatic theme and gives Dattani much to work with. Another frequent feature is domestic tension and strife. Marital relationships in Dattani's plays tend to be arenas for endless, repetitive bickering. The partners know each other's vulnerabilities and are constantly blaming and accusing the other, and Dattani has a good ear for dialogue that takes them to the brink but yet shows their close links with each other.

Lest this suggest a grimness about the plays, it should be said that Dattani's is essentially a comic Muse. The tone of his plays is light, there is bright comedy within often sombre bounds. It is not a jokey, slapstick humour but a comedy arising from a wry look at human behaviour. Often a play starts off with a drawing room situation, brisk, amusing dialogue, the etching out of rather strange characters within a fast-moving narrative. Deeper and darker themes emerge, hidden truths come to light, reaching a climax in the revelation of a buried secret that wrenches matters through to an unexpected conclusion. Edgy comedy shades into a darker drama. In general, Dattani seems to be progressing away from sunnier, more amusing themes towards more difficult and challenging subjects. *Bravely Fought the Queen* is a particularly striking move in this direction. It is ambitious in range, dark in mood, far removed from the quick fire world of earlier plays. It is heavy with symbols, difficult to stage, handling issues such as sex, drink, gender stereotypes, homosexuality in a cascade of dramatic revelations. The plot creaks quite a bit and there is almost too much to absorb, but *Queen* represents a genuine expansion of Dattani's range. It shows that he is prepared to take risks and not remain content with the familiar.

Perhaps the most noted and most grandly presented of these plays is *Final Solutions* which was launched to acclaim by Bombay's Theatre Group. It addresses issues drawn from the 1992 riots in Bombay and is certainly a brave effort to look at matters we usually prefer to ignore, and to hold up a mirror to our biased, narrow, sometimes murderous selves. Yet in many ways this is the least satisfactory of this collection of plays. Here alone does Dattani move away from the dramatic conventions he observes elsewhere into a direct commentary on real events. It is a different kind of theatre, less subtle, more obviously 'dramatic'. It may be a challenging and worthy response to unconscionable events, but it could prove more ephemeral than the others as a creation for the theatre.

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Kusum Haider has for long years been associated with Indian theatre as actor and critic.

Birds of A Feather *Do* Flock Together

Chandra Chari

Whoever says the book is in danger of extinction is wide off the mark, to say the least. The many stimulating encounters which dotted the path of The *Book Review* in 1997 have highlighted this again and again: a Robert Silvers who has made *The New York Review* his life's commitment or an Edward Said, terminally ill himself, who gets beside himself in his excitement about books and ideas; the seductive voices of an Arundhati Roy, Yasmine Gunaratne or Gita Mehta making the printed word come alive in your mind's eye; or again, the hypnotic delivery of a Romila Thapar speaking about an old, old tome, Banabhatta's *Harshacharita*. And so it follows that so long as the magic of the printed word continues to entrance the mind, there will always be people who prefer to sell books rather than guns or tyres or steel, who prefer to make friends of book lovers rather than a fistful of silver.

If you do not believe, all one can say is visit a Ram Advani Bookseller in Lucknow or the lady of *Giggles*, Nalini Chettoor in Madras. Why Ram Advani Bookseller for a name? It is a long, long story which goes back to before Partition, to what is now on the other side of the border. "My maternal grandfather Jamit Rai, was a bookseller in the North-west Frontier—the Rawalpindi region—and then, round about the time of the Second World War, the family decided to open a bookshop in Lahore. I was a teacher at the Bishop Cotton School during the war years and felt that that was not my mission in life. I felt stifled and cramped. I didn't have the vision to see that India would become independent in 2-3 years' time. There was this racist feeling in the school. Evacuees from England had come and they would reluctantly say 'Good Morning Sir'. The authorities were strict disciplinarians but you can't go reporting that a boy did not look up while greeting you".

And so Ram Advani came to man the family's new book shop—J. Ray and Sons in Lahore. "But by the time we had established ourselves, Partition came and we lost every thing. We sold the bookshop for a song to Feroze Sons. By March 1947 the violence had begun in Lahore because Jinnah—the Muslim League—had started agitating to get rid of Sikander Hyatt's ministry. We felt there was going to be trouble. There was a small bookshop in Murree which was burnt down and the man who owned the bookshop in Peshawar—Man Singh—ran away to Srinagar where he opened another bookshop and was running it till about ten years ago. The man who looked after the shop in Rawalpindi (a Punjabi Hindu) was so frightened that he became a convert and called himself Iqbal."

So J. Ray and Sons moved to Shimla where it proved too small a business for uncle and nephew and so once again began a hunt for another place, another shop. "It was lucky for me that I came to Lucknow. The great D.P. Mukherjee, Professor N.K. Sinha, Dr. S.N. Dasgupta were all my teachers when I was reading in Lucknow University. And all of them including Mr. Chalapati Rau, the great editor of *National Herald*, helped me to start a bookshop. We used to import a lot of books then, and since we had lost everything in Lahore, I agreed to pay my uncle by clearing our debt with the British publishers."

It took all of four and half years for Ram Advani to call the bookshop his own by 1952. "I had a godfather then who was a bishop—Bishop George Sinker. He was in Nagpur and then became the Provost at the Cathedral of Birmingham. It was he who said that booksellers are known by their personality. He said in England, bookshops are not run impersonally, they are not called the Strand or Globe or Universal. He used to cite the examples of Mr. John Murray or Mr. Douglas Smith. So he suggested that I change my shop's name to Ram Advani Bookseller from J. Ray and Sons. My family protested, thought it was a silly idea. But I am glad I listened to Bishop Sinker."

Chatting in a warm, wooden floored cubicle above the bookshop, Ram Advani's mind harks back again and again to pre-Partition days, to Lahore and their bookshop. "We started the bookshop [in Lahore] in the month of December, No, November of 1945. Pandit Nehru's *The Discovery of India* and Bertrand Russell's *History of Philosophy* were out about that time. Signet Press in Calcutta were the publishers of *Discovery*. We used to get 500 copies at a time. It was priced at Rs. 10 then. By the end of the day 30–40 copies of

the book would be sold. *History of Philosophy* was for one guinea (about 20 or 30 rupees). People had made a lot of money during the war. A man walks in, you could see that he had never heard of Bertrand Russell. But that was the fashion to buy, it was the book of the day, like today it is Arun Shourie or Arundhati Roy."

Panditji's book sold inspite of the political violence and so on, one wondered. "I am talking of the pre-violence period. Lahore before 1946 was a very lovely, peaceful city. Our sales were tremendous. J. Ray's were stationers too, Sheffers and Parker used to be sold by us. The show room was a huge one, half of it was devoted to stationery which was imported from England and of very good quality."

Books too were mostly imported in those days. There were hardly any Indian publications worth the name. *The Discovery of India* was among the rare ones. There was Longman's, Macmillan, all British, and in India, what they did was to publish school books—it was not an area we went in for. I remember selling C.E.M. Joad's *Pieces of the Mind* (or something), at 3 shillings and six pence. There used to be a number of books on religious orders. Mind you, selling books in Lahore was different from Rawalpindi. There was more of the Army in Rawalpindi, and so a greater demand for fiction—P.G. Wodehouse, travelogues etc. But when we moved to Lahore we realized we had to be more serious. That is when my interest in the academic side started. Even Radhakrishnan's books were published by Allen and Co., Gurudev Tagore's were done by Macmillan, London."

When did Indian books start appearing? "It was in the late fifties that the change started. I would say the bottom mark was when Mrs. Gandhi devalued the rupee. Two things happened in the book trade—the influx of the American publisher in India and the slipping into the background of the British publishers. It was McLloyd from America who first came to India. Suddenly it was the American publisher who could get his books included in the curriculum. The British Council then woke up and to counter that started the ELBS scheme. The American publishers were not interested in general books. They were interested in bulk supply of textbooks at low prices to get them to the Universities. This is how the American trade grew, it was their marketing strategy, technique, they used to give away complimentary copies. I have never known the British ever doing it. The British publisher woke up but the Americans had got a foothold in the country by then because they were farsighted enough to see the potential."

"The British were quite content with what they had. There was one man H.M. Kamath who represented 31 British publishers, including Penguin, William Collins, Paul Ellick."Aside from marketing techniques what is of paramount importance is the building up of a relationship between the bookseller and the buyer. "It is a pity that booksellers don't seem to be aware that an environment has to be created. Secondly, their outlook has become too commercial. The relationship between a bookseller and buyer ought to be like that between a doctor and his patient. I always feel that if a person has taken the trouble to come looking for a book, it is my duty, my profession to try my best to get it for him, or at least guide him. But you *cannot* remain indifferent. The price should not matter either. If a book costs two rupees, we will not bother but if it is priced at Rs. 2000, we would go out of our way to get it. You have to build a personal relationship. The buyer then feels he can communicate with you, relate to you, talk to you."

Ram Advani is enthusiastically positive about people wanting to buy and read books. "It is completely off the mark to say that people don't want to buy books. Lucknow is a very good book centre, in no way inferior to any metropolitan town. The numbers may not be large but the core that is there is completely merged with the world of books."

A reminiscent smile spreads across his face, as if in quiet satisfaction that he has practised in life what he believes in. "Lola and 'Tiny' Chatterjee were posted in Shillong and wrote to me about Verrier Elwin. Elwin wanted to locate an article in the *Geographic* magazine in England. I helped him locate it. He was so impressed that till his death he kept sending multiple orders from NEFA. To serve that man was a great privilege."

"Sri Krishna Sinha used to fly to Delhi to meet Panditji. I was always asked to take books to the airport where he had to halt on his way from Patna. He used to buy an impressive number of books. Mr. L.P. Singh was his Secretary. He tried to persuade me to open a bookshop in Patna."

Buyer or no buyer, nobody can pull the wool over Ram Advani's eyes, for he also quipped, "Did Sinha get time to read all those books, I wondered"!

Back to the here and now, "my views on Indian publishing today? Mind you, I don't profess to be an authority. But Indian publishing has come to stay and is becoming a mature profession. Oxford University Press, Sage, Kali, Munshiram, Motilal Banarsidass—all of them are doing a marvellous job."

"There is no dearth of money for books but 90 per cent of it is misused due to the poor quality of librarians and the indifference of university teachers. Today a bookseller has to practically crawl, to link up with the lower staff in the administration to get the payments. The whole trade is going through a bad patch. The role of the wholesaler is not healthy either. Ultimately what we need is better organization."

From the courtly Ram Advani and his prosperous, well-kept bookshop in Lucknow to the bubbly, 'I'm With It' Nalini Chettoor in the 'Biggest Little Book Shop' in the Conemara Hotel at Madras might seem like two different worlds. But a minute into the conversation convinces you that they are indeed birds of the same feather. The only difference perhaps lies in the way they choose to display their books—Ram Advani in a neat, methodical manner and Nalini who literally seems to operate from inside a samadhi of books. An American tourist came in looking for *Jonathan Livingstone Seagull* and in pulling it out we had a whole stack come cascading down over our heads.

Giggles was set up 22 years ago, earlier than the Delhi *Giggles*. "I didn't think this shop would last. But it kept on going. I started with an outlay of Rs. 1000. Books were cheaper then if you remember. There was marvellous response from book buyers. I kept getting more and more books, though I do not touch medical, technical or engineering books unless someone wants a specific title. I think this shop owes everything to its customers. They adore this bookshop with its higgledly-piggledly ways. But one thing I have noticed—it is only the very affluent who ask for a discount! I don't normally work on discounts. I think they are a form of bribery.'

" I don't deal in language publishing. But anything about Tamil or South India in English I keep."

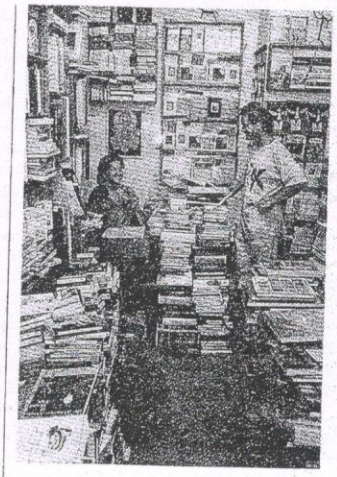
Nalini is nothing if not emphatic in her views on most things. "How do I cope? I am very discriminating. I think many of the books should not be published at all. I blame the publisher, not the authors. Fantastic reviews are written up by friends. I never read reviews. I prefer to make up my own mind. Such a lot of junk is produced. What is the use of having a Booksellers Association and a Publishers Association when they refuse to take care of the maladies in the trade—librarians who demand under the table, over the table—do you know most people who supply the libraries don't even have shops? Librarians hate to buy books from me because I stick to my 10 per cent discount to them."

Suddenly Nalini's mind darts to another iniquity of the publishing trade. "So much trash is being published in this 50th year of Independence. Couldn't OUP have published new editions of Nehru's *Autobiography, Discovery of India* or the publishers of Gandhi's works brought out fresh volumes? They are some of the books that should have been given a new look. Has a book of important photographs been brought out in India? It was left to a foreign publisher to do that."

No, Nalini is certainly not happy with Indian publishers. "They are not quality conscious". But in her attitude towards the business of selling books, she echoes Ram Advani. "I still get terribly excited when an author I admire walks in. I learn a lot about life from talking to my customers. I feel dismayed when I see these large impersonal bookshop where books are treated as commodities. Now they have computers. When you ask me if I have a book or not, I know immediately. But in those big bookshops, where you go through a computer, there may be three copies but the chaps will not find one."

For Nalini, it is not the first sale to a customer but the tenth which is exciting. "I want them to return again and again."

Interesting bits of information come tumbling out: "I have never been afraid



of picking up the so-called cerebral titles on psychology, anthropology," mentions *Economics, Peace and Laughter* by Galbraith. "I had promoted *100 Years of Solitude* long before Marquez won the Nobel Prize and people rang *me* up to congratulate me."

"I have always enjoyed an extremely personalized rleationship with customers. I promoted Roald Dahl". Signing by authors Nalini considers pretentious, a publicity stunt. "I would have loved to have had Vikram Seth. But there is no place here."

Nalini remembers with joy the occasion when V.S. Naipaul walked in and autographed quite a few books. He was then writing his last book. William Golding came. "He was a darling. He said he had heard so much about this bookshop. Jan Morris too. She was extremely interesting to talk to. The entire shelf was autographed by her."

Geoffrey Moorhouse, Nalini says, mentions *Giggles* in his *A Tour Around South India*. Michael Paling has two paragraphs on *Giggles* in his *Around the World in Eighty Days*. "I worship R.K. Narayan." Then, some perceptive comments on the *God of Small Things*: "I was immediately transported to my childhood. She has a gift of language. Believe it or not, I too cried. But sometimes Arundhati gets lost in that language and one feels you must wake her up and say, hey, please proceed."

The bottomline, as far as Nalini Chettoor is concerned, is that when people start a bookshop, they should not be too serious about it." They should take risks. Why don't people learn a little about books? I am not boasting, there are so many bookshops and yet I cannot carry on a conversation with any of the people there. It is such a pity."

The Book Review salutes the indomitable spirit of people like Ram Advani and Nalini Chettoor.

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Publisherspeak

Ramesh Jain

MANOHAR

Books are increasingly becoming more expensive; they are neither bought nor read any more; the electronic media is rapidly supplanting the printed word; with the opening up of the markets, publishing in India will become minimal; all the best Indian writers and their work are coming to India via the West—these and other similar concerns set us thinking as to whether the doomsday prophets were even marginally right in their surmise that publishers are soon to become an extinct breed. We posed a questionnaire to our publishers planning on carrying an article on their responses. The answers were varied and raised and answered several interesting issues pertaining to the book world convincing us that publishing is very much a robust industry. We will be carrying one/two of the publisher's responses in every issue of the fifty-first year of Independence.

We carry below the response of Ramesh Jain of Manohar Publishers and Distributors.

Q.: What motivated people into publishing and jobs related to publishing? Has there been a considerable change in reasons? These days we hear a lot about the money oriented younger generation. Why do you think young people go into publishing now? Is there money in the profession?

Ramesh Jain: It is difficult to talk about others. One can only speak about oneself. In 1962 my eldest brother Satya Prakash had started a small book company called Prabhu Book Service. It dealt in second hand, out of print and rare books and government publications. In 1964 when I completed my college education I joined him not being very certain how long I would last in the line. He is a great lover of books and had a very big personal library and encouraged me to read all kinds of books. Gradually I not only got interested in books but also in selling them. I continued with it till 1969 when we branched out on our own. While selling second hand and out of print publications I found foreign books always had better quality of paper, printing and binding. There were always discussions in the family about getting into publishing and we used to wonder whether we could produce better quality books than we were doing at present. After setting up Manohar Book Service in 1969 my first two years were devoted to organizing my company and soon after I started publishing and have over a period of time given up sale of out of print publications. I am now fully into publishing and sale of new books. I continue to look upon my brother as my guide and mentor.

I am afraid I do not see many young people taking to publishing as a profession. The younger lot that one sees is largely from the families already in the profession. Yes, they have had better education and in some cases professional background. Better organized. Yes, the profession provides reasonable returns.

Q.: Are there courses related to publishing in India? How good and how useful are these?

RJ: In India, at present there are mainly 3 institutions that provide courses in publishing: College of Vocational Studies, NBT and Sterling Publishers. There is need for constant updating of course content and methodology in view of changing technology and publishing scenario.

Q.: Marketing and advertising have become a very important factor in selling books these days. How was this done earlier? As a result of the new approach whole sets of new jobs have been created. Would you like to comment?

RJ: Earlier imported books were used as text books on most subjects and Indian publishers were mainly involved in language publishing. Not much was being spent on marketing and advertisement. What little was produced by way of promotional material was in black and white. Technological changes and professional inputs have brought about a sea change in marketing strategies and innovations in advertising which is much more aggressive and competitive now. Also more and more quality books on more and more subjects are being produced here. New jobs—as designers, copywriters, artists have become an integral part of the industry.

Q.: Earlier the editor was also the publisher. How important is the role of the editor in the publishing hierarchy?

RJ: In fact I would put it the other way round. Earlier the publisher was the editor also, in fact he was everything rolled into one. There were very few professional editors. Publishing houses were family run and had their specialisations. They would publish books they thought would sell. Things certainly have changed. Now many publishing houses have professional editors who are not necessarily from the owner's family. Also there are many professional freelance editors. Today one cannot think of publishing/producing a good book without the help of good editors. And these days reputed publishers are not editors in their own companies.

Q.: What were your goals when you entered the publishing industry? Have they changed over the years?

RJ: As I said earlier we wanted to produce good quality books. After we started publishing we have constantly tried to improve our quality over the years. We started out with publishing scholarly books in the field of social sciences and have continued with that line of publishing.

The goal remains unchanged, the publishing profile has undergone a change with more and more subjects gaining importance within our field of specialization. In our family concern we confined ourselves to books on social sciences. My own training was also in social sciences so I decided to specialize in the field. We had and still have a lot of individual scholars as our customers and many of them later became our authors. And this goes on.

Q.: What are the technological changes that have changed the character of publishing over the last 50 years in the western world? What about India? Have the profit margins increased?

RJ: Computer technology, laser/photo typesetting, faster and sophisticated machines have changed the publishing scenario in the West. The result is neater publications with much better quality of colour reproductions, production on a larger scale in shorter time.

The technological changes in publishing have brought about a tremendous change in the quality of Indian publishing. Though foreign publishers are still reluctant to buy Indian books/co-publish with Indian publishers for books originating in India still there is greater acceptability of our books in the foreign market. Our books match books produced outside India. Also many Indian publishers/printers are printing books for foreign publishers here. Profit margins continue to be reasonable.

Q.: Is there some old publishing practice which you would like to revive?

RJ: The older, more leisurely era had its advantages. People had time to lavish on the editing and production of their books. Since most people were multi-faceted and understood other aspects also there was a continuity in the process. Today it is the age of specialization and the editor does not understand production and the production manager selling. This leads to its own problems.

Q.: The relationship between authors and publishers—has it changed? Has it become more business like and less personal?

RJ: Earlier many authors did not write for money as we understand it today. The relations between publishers and authors were very informal and personal. And now you have professional publishers and professional authors. The relations have become certainly more professional but I guess in small organizations they continue to be informal and personal.

Q.: There is an increasing number of reviews appearing in newspapers and in India there are now three journals devoted only to book reviewing. How important are reviews in your opinion? What would be an ideal review? Then again we in our experience have found that

some publishers prefer to send a book to newspapers where the length of the review is determined by the space left over after the ads have been accommodated. Would you like to comment?

RJ: Increasing number of reviews in newspapers and emergence of three journals exclusively devoted to book reviewing are a welcome recognition of the role of book reviews. Book reviews are important for the author and publisher and also help to some extent in selling the books. The ideal review is one that is unbiased and objective and while being critical highlights both the plus and minus points of the work. We would like to send our books to a newspaper/journal which attaches importance to its Book Review page and is not unduly hamstrung by constraints of space.

Q.: What are the types of subject books that you are publishing now? Has there been a change over the last 50 years? Who would be your ideal author? Can you tell us something about your favourite authors/books?

RJ: We publish academic books in the filed of social sciences with focus on India in particular and South Asia in general. While our broad parameters continue to be the same, newer subjects have come up for example studies relating to gender, social fabric, ethnicity. Contours of economy, defence and strategic studies have gained importance. Another change is that a much wider range of sources like oral history, language sources etc. are being used. Also the studies are inter-disciplinary and much wider in scope. Gone are the days when history was limited to a chronology and description of wars, the size of the army, the number of horses or elephants used.

My experience in publishing is that most authors think that their's is the last word on the subject and are very sensitive to any criticism/suggestions for revision in their work. My ideal author is one who would be open to constructive criticism and is willing to listen to the other side.

It would not be fair on my part to single out favourite authors for obvious reasons. I must however acknowledge that it was Imtiaz Ahmed, one of our earliest Indian authors, who put us on the publishing landscape with his sound advice.

Q.: Books sell better because of the sophisticated get up. Is this true? Are any of your authors involved in the actual production process? Has production become more commercial over the years or has it always been so?

RJ: A better presentation/packaging always helps sell more, be it books or anything. Very few of our authors have ever been involved in the actual production process and most depend/trust us to do our best. Yes, the production of books has become more professional over the years. It was not always so.

Q.: Print runs never seem to go beyond 1000–1100 copies for books in India, what in your opinion is the reason?

RJ: Publishers of academic books in India particularly in the field of social sciences depend almost entirely on institutions to market their books. Therefore the print runs are limited. The libraries can buy fewer books with the amount of money that they have. Though there is a potential for a lot more copies but because of unethical practices that have crept in, not many libraries go in for good quality books. Also, the library budgets have not kept pace with the inflation and the consequent rise in the price of books. There are more publishers now and many more books are being published all competing for limited library funds. Grants to libraries are nobody's priority in our scheme of things.

Q.: What are your long term and short term goals? Do you have an international clientele? What percentage of your book do you export?

RJ: Our goal is to produce quality books and continue to publish quality scholarship.

We have a mixed authorship from countries all over the world and India and because of general acceptability of our quality we have international clientele for our books. We are a major source of scholarly books from India and export Indian books to many countries regularly. We export nearly 30 per cent of our own books.

Q.: Would you like to comment on Indian book fairs as compared to those overseas like Frankfurt Book Fair and London Book Fair?

RJ: In foreign book fairs the emphasis in on selling of rights, tie-ups and not on the sale of actual copies. The representation of American and larger British publishers in Indian books fairs is minimal so we rarely get to see the best of foreign publications in our fairs.

Linguistic Analysis and Problems

B.V. Nemade

LANGUAGE IN A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE: THE ARCHITECTURE OF A MARATHI SENTENCE

By Ashok R. Kelkar

Shubhada Saraswati Prakashan, 1997, Pune, pp. xxiv+656, Rs. 575.00 (US $ 20)

Academic studies written and published in the English language in India are rarely other than career advancement publications, and every time one reads such a book one finds yet another Indian gone West. The situation is not so discouraging in linguistic studies of Indian languages; however these studies, although written in English and made foolproof by phonetically transcribed materials, have failed to make much contribution to world linguistics in recent times for various reasons.

Ashok Kelkar's *Language in a Semiotic Perspective* at once refutes this impression on account of the originality of its approach and a genuine concern for readers who are not necessarily linguists by profession. It attempts to meet different needs of Indian linguistics and consciously relates modern linguistic analysis to our linguistic problems. It is natural therefore that the work is contemplated as an all-embracing presentation of semiotic perspective and the study of Marathi sentence formation in that perspective. Kelkar's contribution to the linguistic research in the country is well-known, and this work would prove to be a welcome addition to linguistics in general and south Asian linguistics in particular, besides being an authentic statement on several problems that face the students of modern linguistics—both formal and functional.

Not only is the work a full-length treatment of the formation of Marathi sentence, but presents a thoughtful synthesis of analytical methodologies both Ancient Indian and western, integrating the observations of several schools of linguistics. The voluminous work is replete with numerous scholarly 'asides', side-thoughts and abundant end-notes. Behind what appears to be digressions, some distant logic can always be discovered. Added to this are several observations richly scattered in most sections of the book—the outcome of his life-long commitment to linguistic sciences and allied disciplines. Topics he has contemplated, lectured on, written about and vigorously propagated in several debates increase the value of the diversified chapters. Kelkar's penchant for taxonomic presentation of a problem is frequently found in the pages of the book. Thoughts on the categories of grammar and script; philosophical, aesthetic and stylistic aspects of language; problems of translation and language teaching—all converge in the argument, making a pluralistic presentation occasionally at the cost of losing its focus on the main argument. The endnotes constitute a series of debates on numerous issues and controversies in the history of modern linguistics. I would venture to say that it is in these scattered notes that one finds the most enlightening aspect of Kelkar's observations. One often gets the impression that despite his fair conception of clarity of presentation, his sharp analytical mind is frequently under pressure of his vast scholarship. Whatever the result, the argument is enriching.

Not only is the work a full-length treatment of the formation of Marathi sentence, but presents a thoughtful synthesis of analytical methodologies both Ancient Indian and western integrating the observations of several schools of linguistics.

The twin titles of the book "Language in a Semiotic Perspective" and "The Architecture of a Marathi Sentence" reveal the two separate objectives of the book. Further, there are two chapters "The Philosophy of Language Analysis" and "Conceptions of Language and Language Use" that form an

The major reason why modern linguistics has remained unintegrated in our academic disciplines is the obfuscatory use of language in describing language; this is particularly the case in discussions on semiotics.

independent section of the book, yet they may not form an autonomous unit in themselves, however valuable they may be as separate articles. The series of tables of contents—the Abstract contents, Synoptic contents and Analytic contents may help to some extent tracing the devious relationships between the various parts of the book. These parallel divisions running across the entire subject-matter of the individual chapters seem to be rather artificially tabulated. Given all this courtesy to readers, the book would have made better impact as a collection of independent articles and lectures.

The most valuable part of the book is the treatment of the formation of Marathi sentence. Kelkar prefers to title it as "The Architecture of a (sic) Marathi Sentence". The model presented here would easily prove to be a formidable one for similar semiotic analysis of the sentence structure of other Indian languages, provided the multiform directions implicit in Kelkar's analysis are properly understood.

Kelkar's choice of the domain of Sentence is in itself a matter of great value. Very often this central area of language is side-tracked by linguists, especially those working on Indian languages, the micro-elements being their most favourite. The treatment of the Sentence is always passed on to the 'other' side of macro-elements, whereas text-linguists and stylisticians take the sentence for granted in their studies where broader categories other than the Sentence are preferred. Thus it is the poor grammarians, ill-quipped to analyse the sentence, alone are found boldly facing the neglected domain. The jugglery of transformative-generative grammar has barely touched the semiotics of Sentence in Indian languages. Students of Indian linguistics would naturally welcome Kelkar's diathetic and communicative structuralizations of Marathi sentence.

The core of the discussion on the Sentence is found in two chapters carried out in a skillfully designed theoretical framework, with numerous examples from Marathi presented in phonetic transcription and linear verbatim translation into English. Occasionally examples of English and Hindi sentences appear to drive home the analytical point. The various structural types, their combinations, patterns, and mutations alongside the promptly supplemented account of "complications" effected by grammatical operators, negatives, questions and correlations present a truly innovative approach to sentence semiotics. Since M.K. Damle's monumental *Shastriya Marathi Vyakaran* (1911) no other study of the Marathi sentence has been so enlightening as Kelkar's. The sentence in relation to phrase, its manifestation and interpretation and the various intonation patterns add to make the analytical model near perfect. As Kelkar states, "Understanding a language in its syntactic, semantic, pragmatic dimensions cannot overlook the essential unity of the sign process" (p. 404). This indeed is an ideal no linguist can afford to ignore. The task is particularly complex because several elements of the Marathi sentence have a strong Dravidian base and over centuries the admixture of Indo-Aryan, Persian and English elements has made the analysis a banana peal. It is for the same reason that the Marathi sentence and particularly the case categories have always defied the two traditional classes of analysers in Marathi—the Sanskritist and the Anglicist grammarians. The ambiguities of semiotic processes are the inbuilt components of any language behaviour; nevertheless they do deserve a framework of analysis.

A most refreshing side of Kelkar's book is that at every stage he steers clear of the prolixity that settles naturally in his theorization of the relationship between linguistic forms. He consciously avoids the terminological babel that has become the bane of modern linguistic analysis. The major reason why modern linguistics has remained unintegrated in our academic disciplines is the obfuscatory use of language in describing language; this is particularly the case in discussions on semiotics. Ashok R. Kelkar's attempt to analyse what is at once plausible and intelligible is indeed very characteristic of a linguist of his status, who wants to give a human face to linguistics. Hopefully therefore the several topics discussed in this book will be of interest to non-linguists, particularly to the students of philosophy, literature, and human sciences as well.

B.V. Nemade, Professor, Gurudev Tagore Chair of Comparative Literature, University of Mumbai, is a Marathi linguist, critic and novelist.

The Long and the Short of Literary History

Sukanta Chaudhuri

THE SHORT OXFORD HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

By Andrew Sanders

Oxford University Press, Oxford, Revised Edition, 1996, viii+718, price not stated.

To compile a history—any history—of literature is a daunting business. To treat evenly, exhaustively and accurately of several centuries of writing, minor as well as major works, calls for a feat of stamina and versatility. (How many of those works, I wondered as a student, had Messrs Legouis, Daiches, Baugh or Craig actually read?) If the task is carried out even moderately well, we must admire before we begin to assess.

To this admiration Andrew Sanders can lay valid claim. All in all, his *Short History* is full, sensible, handy and eminently readable. It shows a genuine involvement with texts and movements beyond the call of facts and dates. It 'reads' instead of merely 'citing', to quote the terms of Jonathan Arac's article in the recent collection of essays, *The Uses of Literary History*, edited by Marshall Brown (Duke University Press, 1995).

It is pertinent to recall this collection for it highlights the particular challenges of the literary historian at the present day. His pursuit is too basic, too beneficial, and frankly too lucrative to be abandoned; but it carries the stigma of mere chronicling or cataloguing, churning out undergraduate-fodder. Dogged by this fear of mediocrity, today's literary historian might abdicate some essential functions of his trade. Equally, he has to assume certain new roles that were not thrust upon his predecessors with the same force.

All literary histories have concerned themselves with what was once called 'background'. But the term is no longer used; its disappearance points to a closer linking of texts with the circumstances of composition and transmission: reception and patronage, race, class and gender, economic and artistic environment as well as the accustomed political and military events. Literary history passes into cultural history, and is increasingly seen as a branch of the latter. Again, texts cease to be firm markers on a literary map, set blocks of words with definite dates and almost as definite meanings, and become signs along the course of a fluid process.

The very implications of 'English Literature' have changed: the term has long ceased to mean the literature of England, and today covers a wider range of national productions than ever before. Yet this very enlargement of scope allows or even forces a delimiting in practical terms. American writing seldom appears in recent histories of 'English' literature, and Sanders omits virtually all account of the so-called 'New literatures in English': Indian, African, Caribbean, Australian, Canadian. He includes only a few expatriate writers settled in Britain: Rushdie, Mo, Ishiguro. In this respect, the *Short Oxford History* will fail many users turning to it for the full demands of modern English Literature curricula—and not only in the Third World.

Its other failings are less obvious, and as I said at the outset, must be seen against the very real virtues of the book. Sanders is good at depicting the cultural matrix of a body of literature. The prolegomena to his account of Modernist literature is particularly good, tracing the intricate cultural tissue of Post-Impressionism, music, Marxism of many hues, broadcasting and the cinema, alongside the bedrock realities of the First World War, economic uncertainties and the early days of the Labour Party. Less colourful but equally satisfying is the account of the eighteenth-century milieu, and in fact of eighteenth-century literature generally: well-balanced, well-arranged, weaving a lucid narrative of intellectual developments and public reception into the annals of the literature itself.

In smaller compass, the same virtues can be seen in the account of the Reformation Bible, relating theology, church history and stylistics; or the balanced, comprehensive treatment of the diverse literature and subliterature of the Civil War. The coverage of women's writing in all periods can serve as a model for such works: adequate, sensitive but not overdone. (Yet one regrets the omission of the Anglo-saxon *Waldhere*, a fragment of a romance pointing to a now lost genre where women featured more largely than in extant works. And *The Wife's Lament* becomes *The Wife's Complaint* without warning.)

In fact, the *Short Oxford History* is embedded with countless memorable mini-essays on periods, authors or particular titles. Sanders is adroit at tracing trends and affinities, or drawing out what we may fitly call the inscape of a literary career or movement. Transfor-

mations, correspondences, hidden motifs and alignments are drawn out by skilful analysis and unaccustomed pairings: Dickens with Carlyle, Macaulay with Thackeray and Trollope.

But these surprise pairings can become a trick of style, a tiresome *tour-de-force*. George Puttenham, on the strength of a single critical treatise that may not be his work, is chapter-mate with Philip Sidney and the latter's sister Mary and brother Robert. Coleridge is separated from Wordsworth and clubbed with Southey and Crabbe. The poet Clough is accommodated with Mill, Arnold and Ruskin, while Carlyle, as stated earlier, is moved up against Dickens. The twentieth century provides the strangest divorces and unions: Joyce, Woolf and Dorothy Richardson, all stream-of-consciousness novelists, in three separate sections; T.S. Eliot matched with Ronald Firbank and Edith Sitwell; Pound's career split among brief references at scattered intervals. The account of 'the Auden circle' tortuously interlaces the careers of Auden, Isherwood and Spender: only careful reading can disentangle the details.

Sanders might have been moved by the laudable purpose of contesting an ossified, untenable canon; but he cannot really break free from it, and in the process, he plays fast and loose with dates and sequences. He lumps together Cowper, Blake and Burns to perpetuate the hoary and dubious category of the 'Pre-Romantics'. He seems almost perversely consistent in inverting chronology, both as between authors and within the career of a single author. This is most confusing, not to say irritating, in the account of Jacobean drama and even Shakespeare. (*The Comedy of Errors* is treated after *King Lear*.)

Such habitual indirection can be exacerbated by curious period-divisions. The chapter on 'Late Victorian and Edwardian Literature' includes E.M. Forster; the next chapter, on 'Modernism and Its Alternatives', features Forster's coevals such as Joyce, Woolf and Lawrence. If Forster was regarded as imperfectly 'Modernist', surely his work could be put among the 'alternatives'. (It is interesting to find, from this very book, that Woolf herself grouped Forster, Joyce and Lawrence together as 'Georgians'). It is still more disconcerting to have the chapter on the Romantic Period begin with an account of the rational and sceptical Edward Gibbon, the previous chapter on the eighteenth century having stopped abruptly at 1780.

Sanders tends to proceed genre by genre, trend by trend, or simply down his own subtle trails of mental affinity. This has the unfortunate result of chopping up the careers of major authors into disjunct instalments, giving no sense of total development or integrity. The loss is obvious if one compares the accounts of those authors who are left intact: Donne, Milton, Dickens.

In other words, Sanders's mental map of literature often seems drawn to a rather curious projection. More fundamentally, the accounts of works, authors and movements is often so analytical as to eschew what must, by any reckoning, be the most basic function of a history of literature: to lay out the primary facts (dates, titles, summaries) in a systematic way with little or no assumption of earlier knowledge in the reader. Too many of Sanders's accounts assume that the reader will already know the plots and issues: why Faustus barters his soul, who are the primary targets of Pope's *Dunciad* (first Theobald, later Cibber), how Gulliver puts out the fire in Lilliput (by urinating on it). But such an informed reader will not need any *Short History*.

Sanders even omits to mention facts, dates and titles vital by any account. If a well-known work cannot be worked into his discussion of a writer, he simply leaves it out. The *Short Oxford History* does not list the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles; Chaucer's *House of Fame*; Ben Johnson's *Every Man out of His Humour* or his late comedies; Blake's *Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem*; Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind'; Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*; Yeats's *Last Poems*; and several major novels by Woolf. (A few of these works receive passing mention in other contexts.) It gives no account of Johnson's *Comedy of Humours*; of the autobiographical writings of James Boswell; or even the collaboration between Wordsworth and Coleridge in *The Lyrical Ballads*, and Wordsworth's great project to which *The Prelude* was meant as a prelude. The chapters on modern literature are totally silent about C.P. Snow, the Powys brothers and Thom Gunn, and make only the briefest tangential reference to Somerset Maugham.

It is always possible to differ on the relative space granted to various authors and works: does *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* require all of three pages, or Edward Thomas and Geoffrey Hill two each? The sole major text of an author—*Wuthering Heights*, for instance—gets much more space than comparable works from a more prolific pen: Dickens's novels jostle each other for a few lines each. It seems churlish to cavil about such imbalances. But we may lament the very short shrift given to, say, Johnson's *Dictionary*, or the fact that Caxton's achievement as a printer finds only cursory out-of-turn mention.

By this stage, the reviewer might well feel that he is cavilling. But a history of literature must serve a humble, pedestrian, even nit-picking function before it does anything else: it must be pedagogic rather than philosophic, factual rather than speculative, earth-bound rather than heaven-soaring. Sander's shortcomings in these respects need pointing out. Yet one must end by reiterating the value of what he has achieved.

Sukanta Chaudhuri is Professor of English at Jadavpur University, Calcutta.

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Inner Life Of A Courtesan

Ramachandra Sharma

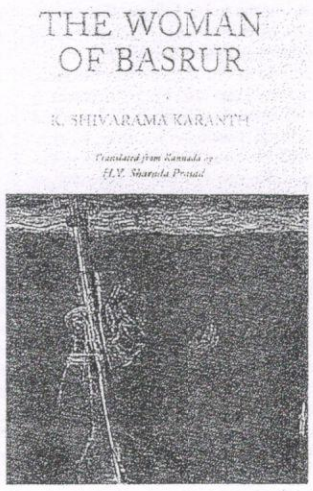
THE WOMAN OF BASRUR (*MAI MANAGALA SULIYALLI*)

By Shivarama Karanth. Translated from the Kannada by H.Y. Sharada Prasad.

Ravi Dayal Publisher, 1997, pp. 150, Rs. 140.00

Shivarama Karanth, who was born in 1902, died in December, 1997. In his death, Indian literature lost a colossus whose achievements both in the literary field and outside were astounding. A sentient witness to the happenings of the twentieth century, he was its conscience. There was no field of human activity which did not interest him and no genre of literature which he left untouched. Made in the mould of writers like Pablo Neruda and Jean Paul Sartre, Karanth put Man at the centre of his concerns and creativity. Leaving the coming generations a world that is a little better than the world we inherited was a passion with him and it drove him into an amazing variety of activities. Intolerant of hypocrisy in any form, he was fearless in his attack of religious and political leaders whose practices were at variance with what they preached.

Coming under Gandhi's influence when he was still an adolescent, he gave up studies and plunged into the freedom movement. He travelled extensively among the villages in South Canara goading them to participate in it. Disagreeing with some of Gandhi's ideas—particularly those on Brahmacharya—he moved away from it. He turned to the areas of social work and education, wanting to improve the quality of life among the people he had come to know during his travels. His disgust with the educational practices of the day made him decide to open a school of his own and experiment with new methods of instruction. He turned into a lexicographer when he realized that children needed a dictionary they could easily use and produced an encyclopaedia on science for them. He studied art, music and dancing and wrote books on them. He made a feature film in Kannada when he was thirty. He introduced revolutionary changes into Yakshagana, the traditional art form of the area and took a troupe round various capital cities abroad when he was in his eighties. Two gestures of his, one when he was over seventy and the other, when he was over ninety, were typical of Karanth.



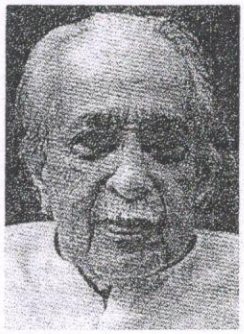
The first one was his returning the Padma Bhushan award to the government in protest against the imposition of Emergency by Indira Gandhi and the second was his contesting Parliamentary elections in the name of safeguarding the environment in his area from the likely pollution from the Kaiga nuclear plant.

Though it is true that talking of Karanth purely in terms of his literary output is tantamount to erecting a pigmy-sized statue in honour of a multifaceted giant, it is also true that he will be remembered as a novelist who left behind him works of great merit. It was for one of his novels, *Mookajjiya Kanasugalu*, that he was awarded the Gnanapeetha Prashasthi, the highest literary honour we have in India.

The distinctive quality of any novel of his is the authenticity of the experience that goes into it. The choice of the novel form, after having experimented with other genres like poetry and drama as his medium, was natural, considering the vastness of his knowledge of the people he was writing about and his burning desire to communicate to others his world view. He has left behind him more than forty novels dealing with the joys and sorrows, defeats and victories of the ordinary people he had come to know so well in South Canara during the freedom movement. He deals with the impact that modernity had on the their lives and the uprooting of the value system they had grown up with. He has portrayed with rare understanding and sympathy the struggles of a few in society who fight heroically against such invasion, all the while maintaining their integrity and beliefs. If the early novels like *Kanyabali, Chomana Dudi, Sarasammana Samadhi* are from a writer roused to a kind of revolutionary anger about the injustices meted out to the helpless sections of society, the latter ones like *Alida Mele* and *Mai Managala Suliyalli* are serious explorations of the meaning of life in the context of an ordinary individual being pitted against societal forces. The values that Karanth upholds in his novels are love and compassion. He believes that these values can lift the quality of a man's life, whatever the circumstances he is born into.

It was Karanth who introduced Realism into the Kannada novel and gave it an honoured place. This becomes evident when we compare any of his novels of the thirties with other novels of the same period, particularly, Puttappa's celebrated *Kanoora Heggadithi*. Instead of creating an idealized character like Puttappa's Hoovayya, he celebrates the heroism of the ordinary individual who stays where he finds himself and yet breathes love and concern for others. Another aspect of Karanth's realism is to be seen in his unconditional acceptance of characters who hold values which are markedly different from his own views. There is no attempt whatsoever to impose his value system on such characters. Sivappa in *Jaruva Dariyalli*, the old lady in *Alida Mele* and Manjula in *Mai Managala Suliyalli* are characters who come to one's mind in this context. Fully alive to the role of sex and belief in God (with the concomitant beliefs in Heaven and Hell, Rebirth and Karma), he treats them in a serious manner, not allowing any scope for either titillation or cheap jibes. It is not out of place to quote Karanth himself on the matter. 'It is the Here and Now that is the stage for my thoughts and action. I do not carry any luggage of thoughts about the Hereafter. I do not want to be indifferent to the present, engaging myself in speculations on Soul, Karma and Heaven.'

In his novel, *Mai Managala Suliyalli*, one of the more than half a dozen great novels he has left behind—Karanth has taken up the life of a courtesan for his theme. He was an angry young man fired by a reformer's zeal when, early in his career, he wrote *Kanyabali*, which



dealt with the life of a girl driven to prostitution by an unfeeling society. One can clearly see the change in attitude that the passage of four decades has wrought in Karanth as he returns to his earlier theme. Considerably more mellowed and much wiser, the novelist in *Mai Managala Suliyalli* undertakes an exploration of the inner life of a courtesan in terms both of her physical and psychological needs.

The story is essentially of Manjula, a courtesan of Basrur, whose autobiographical account is discovered long after her death. Though the novel starts with the story of Shari, her foster child, and ends with Chandri, Shari's daughter, who is determined not to take up the family's profession, it deals with the life and liaisons of Manjula, a legend of her time, well-known not only for her beauty but also for her music and dance.

Manjula's life as a courtesan at the turn of this century may be summed up as her attempt to find out whether her mother's belief that the clan was there to sell their bodies and not their minds is true. Karanth has deftly drawn the portraits of the men who come into her life—Pai, Ulloor, Nanjappa, Subraya, Sheenappa and Swamy Lakshamanatheertha. The novel deals with Manjula's search for fulfilment as she enters into relationship with these men. If a couple of them like Pai are all body and no mind, Ulloor, a connoisseur of art and music, who can whip up her passion with his talk and courtesy towards her, is impotent. Betrayed again and again, even as she feels convinced that body and mind are not antagonists, her dream of fulfilment in which both body and mind have their roles to play, is not to be realized. The nearest she comes to fulfilment is in the company of Swamy Lakshamanatheertha, who, ordained at the age of eight and knows neither a woman's love nor sexual gratification. Having seen her at a wedding where she had given a concert, he falls for her and comes to her in search of happiness. While initiating the child-lover into the art of making love, she

feels almost for the first time that she does not know how to tell the corporeal and the ethereal apart.

This brief summary of the novel is not complete without making reference to Karanth's thinking on man-woman relationship without necessarily forging an understanding of minds. He brings in an event in the married life of the upper caste Ramappayya Adi and Kaveramma in which a child defecates. Instead of doing anything, Ramappayya waits for his wife to come and clean the mess and tells her off for the child's misdeed of putting the shit into its mouth. Karanth offers a contrast to that marriage in portraying the relationship between old Pamma, the untouchable and his blind wife, Duggi. Pamma feeds his wife before he has his share of the gruel. It is not only her dealings with the men in her life that give Manjula the wisdom and insight that she comes to possess, but also her observation of such marriages.

Sharada Prasad's English translation of Karanth's *Mai Managala Suliyalli* is eminently readable and one should compliment him for having done a good job. Concerned as he was only with successfully communicating to the readers what he had to say, and not with matters like style and technique, Karanth's writing could do with some deft editing according to most Kannada critics. The fact that Karanth dictated most of his later novels must have also contributed to the occasional presence of certain redundancies and repetitions. Sharada Prasad has used his judgement and edited the novel at places to make it more acceptable to English readers than any literal translation would have been. It has definitely made the novel tauter.

Purists among Kannada critics who read this translation are sure to cavil about such acts of omission on the part of the translator. They may also feel that the title Sharada Prasad has given for the English version, *The Woman of Basrur*, (which brings *The Woman in White* to one's mind) is rather pedestrian and lacks the force and the suggestiveness of the Kannada title (Literally translated, it would be 'In the Eddy of Mind and Body').

The only sentence in Sharada Prasad's faultless English which gave me a jolt is this: '. . . he had seen Ulloor walking about his house with his own eyes' (Chapter 11). The translator must have forgotten his *Wren and Martin*. Never mind! It happens to the best of us.

Ramachandra Sharma is one of the pioneers of the Modern Movement in Kannada literature. He is a bi-lingual translator who has translated several Kannada and English works. He is the recipient of Karnataka Sahitya Akademi Award.

Arcadian Ambrosia

Kasturi Kanthan

THE SANDGLASS

By Romesh Gunesekera

Granta Books (Viking-Penguin) India, 1998, pp. 278, Rs. 295.00

In 1994, Romesh Gunesekera's first novel *Reef* created waves in literary cricles and it was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. Set in Sri Lanka amidst the seductive whisper of the seas around it, the novel was a poignant and touching tale of obsession, love and a betrayal of sorts in the life of Mr. Salgado as seen through the eyes of his young houseboy, Triton, growing through an uneasy adolescence to a more confident manhood. The sensitive yet daring pen of this writer kindled our hopes. His second novel, *The Sandglass* does not disappoint his fans. It combines a refreshing frankness with an intriguing simplicity, it is brilliant yet the colours are muted. It is a tale unravelled by two young men, Chip and Prins. Even as they talk to each other, we can hear the crackle and static of cross-connections which interrupt, interfere, weave and get entangled in their narrations.

The story begins with Pearl's death in London. Her grand-daughter Naomi is full-term pregnant and has wired her uncle, Prins (the second and only surviving child Pearl's) at Colombo. Prins rushes to London thinking that the funeral is on the 17th of February, 1993 only to realize that it is actually on the 19th. He does not manage to make contact with his niece so he goes to stay with Chip who had been his mother's lodger for some time but was soon their close family friend. As Prins and Chip get together and try to fill in all the missing years we are wafted back and forth, into the past—sometimes the recent past and sometimes way back and sometimes to the here and now. Young Pearl is swept off her feet by the poetic and dashing Jason Ducal. Marriage breeds an ennui in the relationship, and Jason's job keeps him busy thus driving them further apart. They move into Jason's prize purchase from Captain Melrose, the house, Arcadia, in a posh locality in Colombo. Arcadia becomes a sore point in the life of Esra Vatunas as the land had been in their family earlier and he wants to reclaim it. Jason refuses to sell to Esra and unspoken war is declared between the two strong men who also then become business rivals. Jason dies in a freak accident. Pearl who had always detested Arcadia, sells the property and goes to London where earlier she had spent a pleasant time with Jason. Gradually, she manages to get her children to London also, first her daughter, Anoja and younger son, Ravi and then much later, Prins. The Vatunases family has also grown. Esra's son Tivoli who had earlier been a wimp suddenly takes over the father's business and his sons Kia, Dino, Buppy and daughter, Lola get the best of everything. The paths of the Ducals and the Vatunases cross once again and a familiar drama is re-enacted.

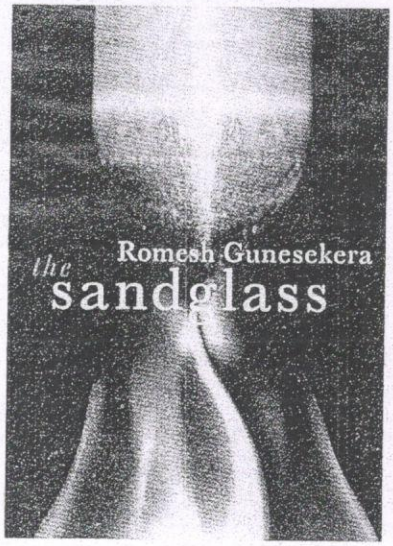
What this novel does is to reinforce more the dilemmas and ambiguities of life rather than the paradoxes of life. Sri Lanka is not seen as Edenic with its serpents but rather as a young nation flexing its new muscles and awakening in a world of deceit, violence, terrorism and *realpolitik*.

What this novel does is to reinforce more the dilemmas and ambiguities of life rather than the paradoxes of life. Sri Lanka is not seen as Edenic with its serpents but rather as a young nation flexing its new muscles and awakening in a world of deceit, violence, terrorism and *realpolitik*. Running neck to neck with this is the suave and urbane world of business rivalry—its nexus with the world of religion and politics—and we have a glimpse of the shocking methods of power brokers.

Pearl portrays the dilemma of a modern woman, groping uncertainly, tentatively and with trepidation towards new moorings in a new place amidst new people trying to forge new relationships. She is beset with the urge, the need to speak, a yearning to have her story told: "There are so many more stories I wish I had told, you know. I am an old body with a lot of untold tales. . . You can't just tell them. . . It has to be the right time and the right place. They tell themselves, if you are lucky" (p. 241). But for all this, Chip comments on the silence at Pearl's deathbed: "We spent a long time without words. Longer than I had ever spent in silence with Pearl. Usually the space around her was teeming with words; her whole life was woven with them. But now it seemed all we have was silence" (p. 235).

We do make some forays with Prins, into the story waiting to be told. Even as we are led to believe that the *denouement* is close, Prins seems to retract. He refuses to look at the notebooks and packets of folded paper that Pearl had left behind in a big, square biscuit tin—"I can't any more. I know too much already. I don't want to discover another damn thing" (p. 266). Baffled by his father's death, he had sought for information and finally is clear, "It was murder and it was fixed. I am sure of that. But who cares any more?" (p. 267). Like Chip, our problem is that we do care and we are not sure and now we do not comprehend what Prins means. Even as Chip sets about clearing Pearl's desk after her demise, he does tend to lighten the heavy air of mystery shrouding the Ducals. Also Prins sends him a cutting of a Colombo newspaper report of a bomb explosion which kills Kia Vatunas and Mohan Jayasuriya, a retired journalist. What makes this piece of information significant is that both these people had been sources of information for Prins in his quest. After this, Chip attempts to touch base with Prins prove futile—Prins "like all the Ducals, had gone" (p. 271). Like Chip, we too are stranded midway, agitated and disturbed, perpetually wondering why the past and the future tug at cross purposes while the present flounders desolately.

The very title of the novel indicates the important role that Time plays in the unfolding of this story. Gunasekera himself says, "Writing, I guess like reading, is about stopping time" (p. 236). The story is here narrated almost in slow motion. This is of course, a calculated, deliberate and conscious effort on the part of the author so that the role of time permeates every aspect of the novel. Dates are given importance, events are fixed in time, historical details are also mentioned yet all these illumine as much as conceal the phenomena of existence. There are twelve chapters to the book (as there are twelve hours on the dial of the



clock) bracketed between the prologue-like "Daybreak" and epilogue-like "Later". The twelve chapters are titled "Morning", "Ten O'Clock", "Late Morning", "Noon", "Three O'Clock", "Quarter to Five", "Twilight", "Darkness", "Seven Thirty", "Nine O'Clock", "Midnight" and "Dawn". The twelfth chapter, Dawn, is not just a chronological paradigm which symbolises a hope for the future—dawn's tender fingers gently tear away the veil of darkness, fear and misery—and it now has a twin function to perform. As old Pearl dies, Naomi delivers a baby girl whom she names Dawn and old gives way to new, pain to a healing touch, death to life and sorrow is mitigated by joy. The connections are strongly emphasized when Prins says on hearing about his new grandniece, "A girl, huh? . . . I dreamed of my mother. She had just been asleep. She got out of a cardboard coffin and came here to wake us up. It was a big joke for her. She was giggling like a little girl" (p. 235). Also, finally Chip wants to hear "the voice of the last of her (*Pearl's*) displaced dreamline, Dawn, spin us forward from this hurt earth to a somehow better world" (p. 278). Earlier Chip has affirmed, "We need to believe that things will work out, that tonight we will sleep and tomorrow wake up. And that tomorrow, we will remember today. What we did today, what happened yesterday—and have some faith in what will happen tomorrow" (p. 254). All the characters in the novel talk about dates, years and parallel events. Pearl starts with, "We had buckets of time in those days, . . . Time to care" (p. 41) and then realizes that time, "will run out for all us" (p. 41). She later advises Bernard to give his adolescent daughter, Naomi, time—time to mould her life in her own way. She knows fully well that "It's time that wreaks havoc with us, you know. Plays hell with everything," yet she advises Dylan also to give Naomi time to come to terms with her pregnancy, "Give our Nimsi time. For now, time will heal" (p. 80–81). This novel deals with specific dates, there is no vagueness about events. Jason is shot on March 22nd 1956 and surprisingly, the last entry in Prins' journal about Mohan Jayasuriya not turning up to meet him is also dated March 22nd but of course the year is 1993. The first entry in that same journal, on his return to Colombo, is dated 3rd April, 1983. Significantly 1983 is the year that his brother Ravi commits suicide, and April 3rd is his birthday. In fact we are given an account of Ravi's 23rd birthday which Pearl celebrates with Chip and Ravi at London. Prins makes some calculations and comes to the awesome realization that at age 41, his father, Jason had moved into his dream house, Arcadia, while Prins at the same age had been appointed General Manager of Gold Sands Enterprises—a group of hotels and had moved into his dream bungalow in the hills—Shangri-La. "Like father, like son. Prins too became a real business visionary (p. 79). At age 41, Pearl left Colombo and came to London. Prophetically, Prins declares that his father died at age 49 and when he is due to be 49, "it will be the last year of the century. . . .The Ducal century maybe, if we all die out. Hunted to extinction" (p. 81). It is not time alone that finds parallels, events are also paralleled. Tivoli feels as claustrophobic in the Vatunases household as Pearl in Arcadia. As Esra Vatunas covets and takes over Ambrose Bodego and Sons, pipping poor Jason to the deal, so Dino Vatunas becomes the President of the newly-formed Great Sands Corporation which earlier had been the company where Prins had been the General Manager. If Tivoli seems to have held a torch for Pearl then Prins is also inextricably bound to Lola Vatunas. Images, ideas, events, dates—they all keep recurring. As Pearl flees to London from Colombo, Ravi returns to London after a year in America and Prins returns like a homing bird to Colombo after almost fifteen years in London, to seek his destiny there. The "promised lands" seem to give no true security. There are no havens, or heavens or paradises of any sort for the protagonists to take shelter. This helps to focus on the internal malaise of the modern individual, his personality fractured, living in a weakening family structure, propped up by an almost disintegrating society outside riven with political and religious biases in a nation fraught with numerous anxieties and concerns. The characters then seek solace by losing themselves in mazes of inward contemplation. All the characters in the novel seem to be searching for their own space, a room of their own, a place in the sun. Pearl seeks it at 52b Almeida Avenue, Ravi in his room, Jason in the bridge at Arcadia, Prins at Shangri-La, Esra and Dino at Bellevue, and Tivoli in a separate house on the other side of the lane. All of them try to isolate themselves, as Pearl complains to Jason, "Always you are closing doors. Like shutting me out, no?" (p. 168)

Interestingly, there is a scene right in the middle of the novel where Prins smells smoke. Chip and Prins follow the glow and see a fire at the old railway warehouses. As they watch the fire, it begins to snow—flakes fall from flames. This scene takes on a significance because it really leads nowhere and it is page-number wise and structure wise right at the centre of the novel. It serves no other purpose but to rekindle the memory of a hedge bonfire in Prins' memory—an event which took place when he was about five years old. The snow also only sensitizes us to Pearl's great love for snow. She always celebrated the first snowfall with the cutting of her sumptuous Christmas cake. One is set wondering whether the snow is to bring in further connotations of the ghostly, unreal, temporary with its usual whiteness, purity, and cold.

Romesh Gunesekera uses language very effectively in all its myriad hues and is able to etch beautiful images. Pearl says that Jason would, "enter her almost, through her eyes, like a smile lodged somewhere between her throat and her heart" (p. 12). Prins describes the view from Shangri-La, "You could see the whole valley curdle with the misty milk of a mothering sky" (p. 79), or simply, "Spring has sprung" (p. 71). He adds nuances of local usage by words like, *putha, inchy-pinchy, guli-guli, dum-dum, or "to plan tak-tak-tak like that"* (p. 50).

The Sandglass foregrounds the crucial terrain on which the battle of the business barons is played out. The characters in the novel keep taking steps forward but they do not seem to forge ahead. None of them seem capable of constructing a meaningful existence. They oscillate between extremes as symbolized by the fire and snow, light and dark, if Pearl is arm and spontaneous then Esra is "frigorific" (p. 4). Pearl dies and Dawn is born; Ravi appears only to erase himself; Prins hurtles into the novel only to mysteriously disappear; one hides and the other seeks; words flow, "each telling its own special story and hiding another between every line" (p. 268); pieces of information are held back only to be supplied later. With all this, the jigsaw begins to take shape, figures emerge and nuances are added. In spite of all the deliberate blurring the final picture is clear and is exhibited to the gaze of the viewer who watches its clarity with a triumph for his skill in seeing beyond and through the facade.

As Sri Lanka celebrates her fifty years of Independence, Gunesekera's fiction (like Sri Lankan cricket) stands tall, having come of age. With its many-splendoured beauty the novel pays the nation a fitting tribute.

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Kasturi Kanthan is a senior lecturer in the English Department at Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi.

Grief is Like a Roundabout

Gagan Gill

CROSSING BOUNDARIES: CULTURE AND IDENTITY
Edited by Geeti Sen
IIC Quarterly, Monsoon 1997, pp. 303, Rs. 150.00

MOTTLED DAWN—FIFTY SKETCHES AND STORIES OF PARTITION
By Saadat Hasan Manto. Translated by Khalid Hasan.
Penguin India, 1997, pp. 214, Rs. 200.00

> ***Grief is like a roundabout which one intersects with an infinite number of roads***
>
> *—Saadat Hasan Manto*

All traumas lead to mysterious impacts. One can never tell what they are going to lead to. Their end result refutes all logic in the same way as did the initial hurt. Perhaps it is only the traumatic encounters of our life which have the potential (and tendency) to walk forth and backwards. In a way, they colour all our existence.

One can even stretch this statement a little further, and say that the history of 20th century mankind is the history of traumas it suffered at its own hands. In our part of the world, one such moment was 1947. Something came unstuck with it. It was not only the polity. Our relationship with the baggage of history also changed. One wonders if all these debates on secularism versus Hindutva in this country and on Islamic versus military rule in Pakistan would have been sustained for so long had we had a normal Independence. These debates are symptomatic of the fact that we did not forget.

But what good is our remembrance? What good are the lessons we never learnt? Is it true that what we remember in public is different from what we were unable to forget in private? How does the narrative of recounting make a different narrative from the one that actually happened?

Unfortunately, the silence after Partition has been followed by cacophony in the 50th year. There is a grand churning out of memorabilia. Whenever there is something new, the new as well as the old generations go all out to find out if this is the account they were looking for, to validate their own version of it. A lucid and dispassionate articulation of the trauma called 1947, and the making of the silence that followed it, has yet to come forth. Nevertheless, it is revealing to know how those who were in the thick of it saw it—and how we, after 50 years, are appropriating it. Here are yet another two volumes on the subject. *Crossing Boundaries*—a special number of the *India International Quarterly* edited by Geeti Sen, and now published as a book, and *Mottled Dawn, Fifty Sketches and Stories about Partition* by Saadat Hasan Manto, brought out by Penguin India.

Let us first take up *Crossing Boundaries*. The celebration "by crossing the borders—to find common cause and shared experiences in identity with Pakistan and Bangla Desh" as asserted by Geeti Sen in her editorial. But no, they transcend the boundaries of time and space, Desh and Kaal. Hence we have some exceptionally well written essays here, i.e. by Rakshat Puri on Bulleh Shah, the 18th century Sufi poet from Punjab; by Muchkund Dubey on Lalan Fakir, the 18th century Baul poet from Bengal; by Nabaneeta Dev Sen on the two Ramayana texts written by two women in different parts of India in the 16th century, and by Bindu Chawla on Hindustani music. They are the articles about Making of an Ethos—an ethos that is going to be severely damaged by the political developments in mid 20th century. Unfortunately, there is nothing to connect them together in the book, and even though, in the end, one may imagine some kind of a scheme in their being there, (for everything is connected to everything else in the end, isn't it?), on first observations, they seem like they are in a wrong book, in a wrong place. They would have stood out in any other number of the *Quarterly* as well. But then, that is the choice and risk editors take when they make special numbers into books.

The first section of the book on "Remembrance of Time Past", as the title suggests, takes you down the memory lane. Clichéd though it may sound, the trip is literally down the memory lane in N.N. Vohra's 91, Garden Town. The arduous search for his family home in Lahore after many years when Vohra visited that part in an official delegation is essentially elegiac in nature, and even if it had not evoked the bloody days of 1947, the loss of a childhood home it grieves about, would

have made it affecting anyway. Intizar Husain, the celebrated Pakistani writer, too, talks about his going away. He is one of the few writers from across the border who did not get over it and all his writing is tinged with this one incident. The account here is about his first visit to India after Partition to see his Hindu friend, and his friend's visit to Lahore right after Partition, to look for him just because Intizar went away without saying good bye! The simple yet powerful picture, taken by Geeti Sen in Lahore, of an old forgotten milestone that said Lahore-Delhi 311 Miles succeeds in conveying that strange pang millions of people feel on both sides of the border even today.

The interesting thing about the memoirs here is that, even though they were not planned like that, each has a parallel version to it somewhere else in the book. Thus, when Zohra Sehgal, the grand old lady of Indian theatre, recounts the travails of IPTA and Prithvi theatre around the mid 40s when the freedom movement was in full swing, it cannot help but be read along with Madeeha Gauhar's essay, "Gender Politics in Theatre", an oblique narrative of how political climate has changed the destinies of individuals in these 50 years. It is in Gauhar's account one comes to know what Partition did to the other sister of Zohra Sehgal, who was as involved in theatre as Zohra. (Uzra Butt ended in the obscurity of a home in Pakistan as the ethos over there, where she had moved with her husband after Partition, was not very congenial to *women* actors.) In Pakistan, they even made a play about the lives of the two sisters, and the very fact that they could do it *there* is enough to tell how subversive art forms can become when subjected to unreasonable pressures for so long. If there were a comparative study on the reasons why Pakistani T.V. plays here and Indian films there are so popular, many interesting things would emerge. One inference, for sure, would be—that is how they coped *without* each other.

The two interviews in the book, with writer Krishna Sobti and film maker Shyam Benegal, too, essentially focus on this *coping without the other*. The interview with Krishna Sobti by Alok Bhalla delves at length on the nature of the communal fabric at the time. Krishna Sobti, who based one of her best known works in the pre-Partition Punjab, is a veteran one can go back to, to reconstruct those times. She talks about some of the historic texts of the time which recorded the raw moments of Partition. One of the moving things she recalls here is the sobbing of announcers from Pakistan Radio in Lahore as they read out the news of Gandhi's assassination, barely five months after Partition. The interview with Shyam Benegal by Geeti Sen revolves around cinematic interpretations of 1947 and would be of interest to film buffs.

Like all anthologies, this one, too, has its share of good, bad and indifferent writing. One piece, that is particularly in bad taste is *Same to Same* by F.S. Aijazuddin and one is surprised that it found its way into *Crossing Boundaries*. Aijazuddin is not only hostile, self righteous and bitter about the events that led to 1947, he eulogizes and deifies Jinnah for things even Jinnah died of in regret! While the absurdity of this piece could still be put up with, (for all grief and loss gives vent to irrational outbursts), it is the offhand snide remarks about anybody and everybody involved in the political deliberations in pre-Partition scenario that makes it trying to read through. Here are two samples—

> . . . Mountbatten emerges as the singularly blessed person to whom Fortune never dared to say no. His many superiors in the Navy did not; Clement Atlee when dispatching him to India as the last viceroy did not; and the rich heiress Edwina whom he wooed and pursued did not. The only person to refuse him anything he coveted was Jinnah. . .
>
> Mountbatten, though having been approached by Nehru (whom he liked and his wife Edwina loved) to be India's first Governor-General, waited for Jinnah to make a similar offer on behalf of Pakistan. . .

An interesting counter-point to the memoirs is the section on *Nationalism and Activism*. It has another perspective to offer on the enterprise of nation building since 1947. The most intriguing is Ranabir Samaddar's *Interpretation of Bangla Desh War*. In this academically well researched article, Samaddar bares all the paradoxes and perils of writing history—of a nation that changed its chronicle more than once in 24 short

years—between 1947 and 1971. Since all history writing is about *connecting* the 'absurd' facts of a polity and containing them together in a logical, coherent sequence, the complex metamorphoses of Bangla Desh from East Pakistan has posed historians with a daunting task. Out of the 3.5 lakhs of documents collected by the official committee of Bangla Deshi historians, working at the job since 1978, only about 14,000 pages of contemporary history have been 'formulated', and since the gory events of 1971 are still fresh in popular memory, the *authorized* version has yet to be authenticated by other intellectual records of that society. And so, the literary memoirs of the time are bound to make an important chunk of the corpus.

In fact, no history is a singular stream of events. Its veracity lies in the multiple narratives it can offer. In recent times, we have witnessed the subaltern as well as the subversive versions of popular history. And it is here that *Crossing Boundaries* has accomplished something exceptional. It is a book of its kind to offer varied insights into the making of personal memoirs, cultural enterprises of nations and the pitfalls that threaten them ever. In the 50th year, the fact that someone has attempted to touch the throbbing (and bleeding) vein of contemporary history of this sub-continent is not a mean achievement. And Geeti Sen, for one, deserves due credit.

The other book at hand—Saadat Hasan Manto's *Mottled Dawn*—competently translated and introduced by Khalid Hasan, a Washington based journalist from Pakistan, carries all the ardour, and irony as well, that Manto would have so cherished to share at this point in history. It is good that Penguin India, for once, has come out with an important testimony of one of the best writers of the generation who saw 1947 in the making.

Even though most of the stories included here are well known and some of them have already become icons in popular imagination, together they pose some poignant things such as: How do human beings deal with an overwhelming catastrophe first hand? Do human beings know, as they suffer, that they are in history? Do they know that they will be judged (and not always understood) by posterity? Is it possible that in such strife, they too, as they go down and under history, leave us with their indictment?

Whose would be a more damning verdict on Partition than Manto? He is his own Toba Tek Singh—refusing to let go, standing and eventually dying in no man's land. Manto created this icon of a man in the name of millions who died sad, tragic deaths in communal violence. And that too, when he was standing so close to the bone of history. It was not a trifling feat. One of the sad things about literature written so close to current reality is that almost always, without exception, it is misunderstood. Nobody needs to be reminded of the fact of Russian writers misunderstood in this century. Manto, too, died a misunderstood and persecuted person. Perhaps it is this which makes him tallest among his peers. He refused to be a tragic figure in his life, not that it saved him from a tragic death.

There are things we all know about Saadat Hasan Manto. That he was a bold and controversial writer. That he died an alcoholic's death. That in his lifetime, he was sued quite a few times on charges of obscenity (6 times to be exact—3 times by the Indian government before Partition and 3 times by the Pakistan government, the country he *chose* to live in).

What perhaps most of us don't know is—that it was a young death at 42 years. That a person of his talents died in penury because there was no work for him in that state (or place). That he was a film script writer in Bombay and even as he moved to Lahore—a place he hardly knew—he could tell what was in store for him. The film industry in that part of the undivided country was mostly owned by Hindus, and with their exodus, workers were virtually left starving. Sadly, Manto was to join them. He spent the last years of his life pining for Bombay. He missed its cosmopolitan character, the anonymity, and thus space it gave to its inhabitants.

All this grief of *coming away* as well as the momentous carnage of the times, that forced people indoors—forms the crux of his writing. His was a restless soul. It could not stay indoors in curfew for too long. It needed fresh air. Quite a few incidents take place outdoors in the collapsing moments of law and order. His sharp, prying eyes follow every one—rioters, small time thieves, rapists, even social workers. It seems, too many demons were talking at the time. In other people's homes. Out there on the streets. He captures all of them in action. Is that why *they* resented him? Because they didn't want to be exorcised by a mere pen?

It is ironic that the writer of those short, crisp *Syah Hashiye*, (sometimes only a couple of lines long), was too find himself marked in black. No wonder that he needed to benumb his senses so hopelessly before he could sit down to record them (often in a newspaper office, and against an instant payment). For his writing to never need a second draft, and they say, it was a neat, steady hand from start to finish, he must have carried too much agony inside him. As he wrote—

> I may be a pornographer, a sensationmonger, a cynic, a jokester and a reactionary, but I am also a husband to my wife and father to three little girls. If any of them falls ill, and I have to run from door to door to get her medical attention, I feel great pain and embarrassment. Yes, I have friends, but they are poorer than I. When they are in need and I am unable to help them, I feel awful. I cannot stand human suffering, I swear to God.
>
> *(Preface to a book, 1951)*

Though connecting a writer's biography to his work may not always be fair, valid or appropriate, in Manto's instance, it is hard to separate flesh from bone. Here is a *man* writer—supposed to have failed in his traditional roles, surrounded by the *women* of his immediate family, seeing the worst that could happen to women in a political upheaval—in conflict with the rather young (he was 35—at the time of Partition) and the full blooded *man* in him. This conflict is apparent in all his fiction. Sometimes he becomes a man, other times a father. His short story *Khol Do* (*The Return* in this collection), for which he was charged for obscenity, cannot but be read in that light. For those interested in gender studies, it will be interesting and intriguing to get into the textual layers of Manto's writings, to see how his being a *male* made his narratives what they are. In fact, he is so authentic a *male* writer that women readers must seek him out. He is the redeeming eye of compassion and understanding in all that chaos of 1947. Isn't that curious?

No one can deny the fact that Partition was so traumatic not because of the ruthless killings, but for the havoc it wreaked on women folk of both communities. It must have put tremendous pressure on Manhood—making them rapists and impotent at the same time—as Manto conveyed in one of his disturbing stories called *Bitter Harvest*. (Strange that the same violence had to repeat itself in East Pakistan as it struggled to become Bangla Desh). In the war of two communities, sexual aggression was used as a weapon, and story after story, as he deals with situations of adultery, prostitution, rape and foreplay, Manto explores its metaphor in all its explosiveness. What makes Manto remarkably humane and different from his fraternity of Urdu writers is that you can never suspect him of getting a kick. There is a certain finesse, discretion and seriousness with which he handles these volatile sexual situations. His are the saddest stories one has read about sex, if they can be described like that at all.

And yet, Manto was essentially of the tribe who enjoyed life, who derived his strength from human warmth—sexual or otherwise. Any change in the temperature of this warmth could have been and *was* destructive. It is curious, and fascinating, to notice the play of wit and humour even in some of the darkest stories he ever wrote. *Colder than Ice, Mazail, A Believer's version* and *Jinnah Sahib* have a certain frightening vitality about them. They hang on precariously to human betrayal as well as sacrifice. Who doesn't know that it is in the danger zones of humanity that *hope* survives, as if that is the safest place it can find itself. Is *that* what makes Manto so disturbing, and compelling, in the 50th year of Independence?

Perhaps, one day, we will have the *heart* to go into the making of schism in Indo-Pak relations and understand the nature of mutual forgiveness after all these years, which is so obvious whenever people from the two sides come together in seminars or any other kinds of interactions. Is it to lighten the burden? The burden of causing such grievous wounds to the other half a century ago. One of the most distressing things about politics is that it doesn't represent anybody. That though it may never make anybody's life better, it does have the innate potential to vitiate people's lives. If the 50th year warrants any soul searching, then Manto is the departure point. And like all departure points, it is the point of beginning too. He warns you that you are not yet out of the tunnel. He warns you against all those callous things you may do inadvertently to the other.

Let us never forget the fact that Manto did not *go to* Pakistan, he *left* India. And why? Because his best friend, a Hindu, told him—as the two of them were listening to the horror story of a refugee from Pakistan—that at that moment, he could have killed Manto for being a Muslim... *That moment*. In *A Tale of 1947*, Manto captures *that* moment. Sad and lonely. A moment refusing to go away. A moment that could not be undone. Not that they didn't try.

Manto carried *that moment* with him to Pakistan, as surely many others from both sides of the border must have. His friend died five years after Partition, carrying the weight of remorse with him. And Manto was to die an alcoholic, with an irrepressible nostalgia for Bombay, a place he could never come back to.

Is *one moment* worth all this? In this 50th year of freedom we must try to find the answer.

Gagan Gill is a poet and critic. She has published two collections of poems in Hindi and edited New Women Writing in Hindi *and* Ram Kumar—A Journey Within.

Stories from History

Bharati Jagannathan

MUGHALS, MAHARAJAS AND THE MAHATMA

By K.R.N. Swamy

Harper Collins Publishers India, 1997, pp. 265, Rs. 195.00

While Indian English fiction has, finally, after fifty years of independence, thrown aside the Raj-fascination, the historian finds India's colonial past one of the most absorbing themes of study. K.R.N. Swamy has put together thirty-nine essays written over forty years dealing with various facets of India's colonial past.

The very first essay describes the astounding jewellery of the Indian rulers in great detail. The language evokes the grandeur of the palaces and the splendour of the gem-studded jewels. But when the same motif is repeated as the central theme of half a dozen other essays, besides recurring in snatches in yet others, one tends to tire of the glitter and the dazzle rather than be amazed anew.

The author's reverence for Mahatma Gandhi informs all the essays that deal with him. Though essays such as "The Mahatma's encounters with British Statesmen" are essentially journalistic, they manage to convey an idea of the unique and towering personality of Gandhi, which never failed to make an impression even on those who had neither appreciation nor sympathy for his ideas. The essay describing Gandhi's gift of a handwoven shawl to Queen Elizabeth (then princess), on the occasion of her wedding, was a heart warming piece, throwing light on the human facets of royal personages. On the other hand, the essay titled "Mahatma, Einstein and the Bomb" suggests some numerological hocus-pocus underlying the struggle against the bomb. Coincidences are the staple of history, and it is best to recognize them for what they are. Besides, the author merely alludes to correspondence of dates in the two giants' resistance to the development and use of the bomb, without supplying any concrete examples. While the philosophy of peace of both Gandhi and Einstein is well known, there seems to be a rather laboured attempt to relate the two through some mumbo-jumbo. Even more mysterious is the purpose of the two articles detailing the occurrences reported in the newspaper on the days Gandhi and Nehru were born. While it may amuse some hobbyist to collect such trivia around his hero and role model, it is peculiar, to say the least, in published form!

Equally purposeless was the essay comparing the Parthenon and the Taj Mahal. Surely the author realizes that the period when all achievements of all civilizations were measured by the standard of 'The Glory that was Greece', is long past. Besides the very fact that the two monuments under discussion belong to historically and culturally different contexts, apart from serving very different purposes should rule out any comparison.

An interesting tale, told well, and with empathy was "The Lost Bible" of the Syrian Christians. The Syrian community of Malabar had preserved, for over a millennium, many ancient sacred texts, among them, the Syrian version of the original Hebrew and Aramaic Bibles, which is older than the Vulgate Bible of the Roman Church, and probably closer to the original. When the Portuguese landed on Indian shores, they found a native Christian community whose tenets however differed from their own. Wishing to compel the Syrian Christians to transfer their allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church, they destroyed all their sacred texts. Like the lone rat that escaped being drowned in the river Weser by the Pied Piper's magic, one copy seems to have escaped the vandalism and surfaced two centuries later. The story of its discovery and final publishing makes for compelling reading.

The author's forte seems, however, to be in touching the emotive chord of the reader. The last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar's death and uncermonious burial in a nondescript grave in Rangoon is described with empathy.

History is neither about affixing blame, nor an instrument for extracting revenge or granting pardon for past wrongs. Britain's economic exploitation, and very often inhuman treatment of its 'subjects' in its Indian colony for over two centuries is a fact of history, and itself an outcome of the capitalist mode of production.

The vanities of the high and mighty are brought out in an amusing tale, "The Queen who wanted to be an Empress". It is interesting to learn of public opposition in Britain to Queen Victoria's assumption of the title of Empress. However, what is more interesting is a quote from a contemporary French newspaper ". . . It is a grave mistake thus to raise the veil, which ought to cover the origin of crowns. These ought not to be played with". The origins of kingship were obviously shrouded in mystery and the arbitrary assumption of a regal title would have naturally jeopardized the popular reverence for the throne.

Equally amusing was the essay on the Delhi Darbar on 1911 which the author terms the grandest pageant of the century. The author manages to capture and hold the reader's interest with his lively narration, specially of the trivia which, though of no academic interest, give events their charm and uniqueness. It is unfortunate however that a large number of essays in the collection are devoted to trivia alone. The essays elaborating details of men who have wanted to build a monument to rival the Taj, over the centuries, is a case in point. The piece about British ghosts haunting India though another such, has a focus of interest and might, if nothing else, provide a few anecdotes for retelling on a cold winter's night among friends.

Among the few essays of genuine historical interest was "Danish Castle on Indian shores". The short but delightful glimpse into the settlement of Tranquebar is just perfect for whetting the appetite for a more serious reader, and sufficiently informative for a prospective tourist.

The author's own position as a historian however seems rather strange. Surely he cannot be unaware that to speak of the Revolt of 1857 as the "Sepoy Mutiny" is to align himself very clearly with the colonialists. The tone of the essay detailing the British view of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre was apologetic—as though suggesting remorse on the part of the imperialists. History is neither about affixing blame, nor an instrument for extracting revenge or granting pardon for past wrongs. Britain's economic exploitation, and very often inhuman treatment of its 'subjects' in its Indian colony for over two centuries is a fact of history, and itself an outcome of the capitalist mode of production. The author seems however, to be trying to explain away various acts of British colonialism as errors of omission.

Though the blurb says that the book is written in a semi-analytical semi-anecdotal style, one cannot help but mark a near total absence of analysis. At the very most, the author has occasionally cited the opinion of a couple of historians holding conflicting viewpoints. Moreover, these so called "famous historians" are, more often than not, obscure names for most serious students of Modern Indian History. Perhaps they were writers of popular coffee table histories of the Raj.

Some howlers stand out prominently in this otherwise well produced work. Calcutta's venerable newspaper is called "The Statesmen" (p. 109). There is a break in continuity between pages 18 and 19. One has heard of asceticism, but 'asceticity' (p. 68)? By far the worst is however "Where a military college should be established in India?" (Sic! p. 253)

While *Mughals, Maharajas and the Mahatma* cannot sustain any pretensions to being a historical work, it definitely makes absorbing reading that could enliven a long train journey.

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Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: *Its Origins and Development in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*

A. JEYARATNAM WILSON

This book is the first of its kind in that it presents the reader with a fully-fledged historical, social and political analysis of Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism. Professor Wilson provides an insider's account of the principal events in Sri Lanka's recent political history. Having set out the wider framework, he describes the key figures in the Tamil nationalist movement and the Sinhalese political establishment; the breakdown of relations between the two communities after independence; and the course of the armed struggle for 'Eelam', the separate Tamil state in the north and east. He focuses, in particular, on the varying phases through which Tamil nationalism passed before the decision was taken to embark on armed struggle. He also considers whether the Sinhalese and Tamils are now irreconcilable. Wilson's conclusion points to the inevitability of division.

Hurst & Co., December 1997, £25.00

BIOGRAPHY

Profiles and Letters
K. Natwar Singh
These letters tell us as much about their writers as they reflect on the engaging personality of the recipient. From these letters Natwar Singh emerges as a man of ability and integrity who writes elegant prose while displaying his ability to laugh at himself.
Sterling Publishers, 1998, pp. 244, Rs. 350.00

ECONOMY

Political Economy of Modern Capitalism: Mapping Convergence and Diversity
Edited by Colin Grouch and Wolfgang Streek. In the wake of Maastricht neoliberalism and de-regulation dominate national and international political economy and this book provides a comprehensive overview for the future of capitalist diversity.
Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 212, £40.00

ENVIRONMENT

The Social Construction of Indian Forests
Edited by Roger Jeffery
Forests were seen as the haunts of outlaws, the source of beautiful images, the abode of holymen, resources for exploitation. This book draws out the relevance of these meanings in diverse settings.
Manohar Books, 1998, pp. 187, Rs. 400.00

Greening at the Grassroots: Alternative Forestry Strategies in India
Eva Cheung Robinson
India's official forestry programs have become a site for confrontations in organizational cultures and knowledge systems between a western model and indigenous notions of development. The author presents case studies of three voluntary groups in Andhra Pradesh where their organizational cultures engender more participatory, interactive and empowering relationships with villagers so that forestry practices grow out of local knowledge.
Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 144, Rs. 250.00

GENERAL

How to Live a Fruitful Hundred Years
Surajnandan Prasad
This book gives readers a first hand account of 'near death' experiences of the author. These are reckoned as incentives to live and how it is possible to escape death by manipulating events.
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1997, pp. 70, Rs. 45.00

GENDER STUDIES

Enslaved Daughters: Colonialism, Law and Women's Rights
Sudhir Chandra
This is a study of the case of a 25-year old Hindu woman whose legal crusade for freedom from the conjugal claims of a husband she disliked sparked off a social and political debate about the position of women in society. It reveals the inner workings of the legal system during the colonial period as well as the conflicting and overlapping ideologies which underpinned it.
Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 249, Rs. 495.00

Feminine Economies: Thinking Against the Market in the Enlightenment and the late Twentieth Century
Judith Still
This volume is intended for all those interested in debates on the eighteenth century, for those concerned by the numerous, sometimes opaque, references to economy and to the gift in critical theory, and particularly for those who wish to see an interrogation of the relationship of both fields with feminism.
Manchester University Press, 1997, pp. 206, £ 40.00

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Ethnicity and Constitutional Reform in South Asia
Edited by Iftekharuzzaman
The linkage between ethnicity and constitutional reform is of ceaseless academic and policy interest, particularly in the context of South Asia where very few other factors are more dominant in national and regional politics. This book probes into the problem of ethnicity in South Asia and examines if and to what extent constitutional reform is a way out.
Manohar Books, 1998, pp. 190, Rs. 350.00

India and The Islamic World
Edited by Riyaz Punjabi and A.K. Pasha
This volume examines in detail India's relations with the Islamic world focusing on Central Asia, Egypt, Gulf Cooperation Council, Iran, the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Palestine Liberation Organization.
Radiant Publishers, 1998, pp. 181, Rs. 350.00

LAW

Philosophy of Law: An Introduction to Jurisprudence
Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jules L. Coleman
In this revised edition the authors have added new discussions of the critical legal studies movement and feminist jurisprudence and strengthened their treatment of natural law theory, criminalization and the law of Torts.
Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 240, Rs. 295.00

LITERATURE

New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism
Claire Colebrook
This study provides a welcome and critical overview to current trends in literary theory after post-structuralism. The initial chapters range from Foucault, to Marxist perspectives, to cultural materialism. The study demonstrates the interpretative application to literary texts of developments in social theory as well as focussing on the theoretical innovations which have recently so marked the exploration of Renaissance literature.
Manchester University Press, 1997, pp. , £12.99

A Partial Woman
Mina Singh
The saga of a young woman in Punjab, a hundred years ago, a woman before her time transiting both the end of the century and the end of her marriage against the backdrop of a turbulent history: the first of the labour strikes, Hindu-Muslim riots, a fortunate escape, abandonment.
Kali for Women, 1997, pp. 249, Rs. 170.00

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Muslims, Nationalism and the Partition: 1946 Provincial Elections in India
Sho Kuwajima
In many parts of the world the political system which was formed after the Second World War collapsed in the 1990s. India is one of the few countries in Asia where parliamentary system has survived despite occasional threats. This work tries to grasp the meaning of the 1946 Provincial Elections and considers their relevance to the present.
Manohar Books, 1998, pp. 258, Rs. 450.00

PHILOSOPHY

Classical Indian Metaphysics
Stephen H. Phillips
This is an introduction to Indian metaphysics in general with a special focus on New Logic and its responses to idealist dialectical attacks.
Motilal Banarsidass, 1997, pp. 391, Rs. 395.00

The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology
Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty
The author has presented here more than a thousand myths from the earliest levels of Indian thought through contemporary tribal traditions and analyzed them to study the problem of evil in mythology which Indologists have failed to recognize so far.
Motilal Banarsidass, 1988, pp. 411, Rs. 375.00

Emptiness Yoga: The Tibetan Middle Way
Jeffrey Hopkins
This is an indepth lively exposition of the methods of realization of the Middle Way Consequence School.
Motilal Banarsidass, 1987, pp. 510, Rs. 325.00

POLITICS

Class Warfare
Noam Chomsky
Through a series of fascinating discussions Chomsky cuts through dominant ideologies, official lies and manufactured consent to shed light on themes as diverse as US foreign policy, Israel, Women's Rights, occupation of East Timor by Indonesia, labour disputes, perfidies of twentieth century capitalism and more.
Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 151, Rs. 195.00

RELIGION

Kali: The Black Goddess of Dakshineswar
Elizabeth U. Harding
Most major religions do not acknowledge the feminine power of God and the concept of the Mother Goddess in the West is very different from the image of Kali in the Hindu pantheon. This book is about the Dakshineswar Temple and how Kali is worshipped there.
Motilal Banarsidass, 1998, pp. 318, Rs. 195.00

Swami Vivekananda and the Modernization of Hinduism
Edited by William Radice
This set of 14 papers shows how modernizing trends in Indian society wrestled with traditional features of Hinduism such as caste and links Vivekananda's religious and social ideals to thinkers and theologians in the West.
Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 299, Rs. 475.00

Understanding Ganapati: Insights into the Dynamics of a Cult
Anita Raina Thapan
This book analyses the process by which Ganapati evolved into a multi-faceted personality, acquiring over the centuries, several distinct roles and attributes—determined by changing needs and perceptions of various castes and religious groups in specific geographical areas.
Manohar Books, 1997, pp. 304, Rs. 500.00

Media and the Transformation of Religion in South Asia
Edited by Lawrence A. Babb and Susan S. Wadley
This volume of essays explores the effects of the religious transformation taking place in India as sacred symbols assume the shapes of media images as posters, comic books, audio-recordings and video cassettes.
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1997, pp. 298, Rs. 295.00

■ ART

Gaston, Anne Marie
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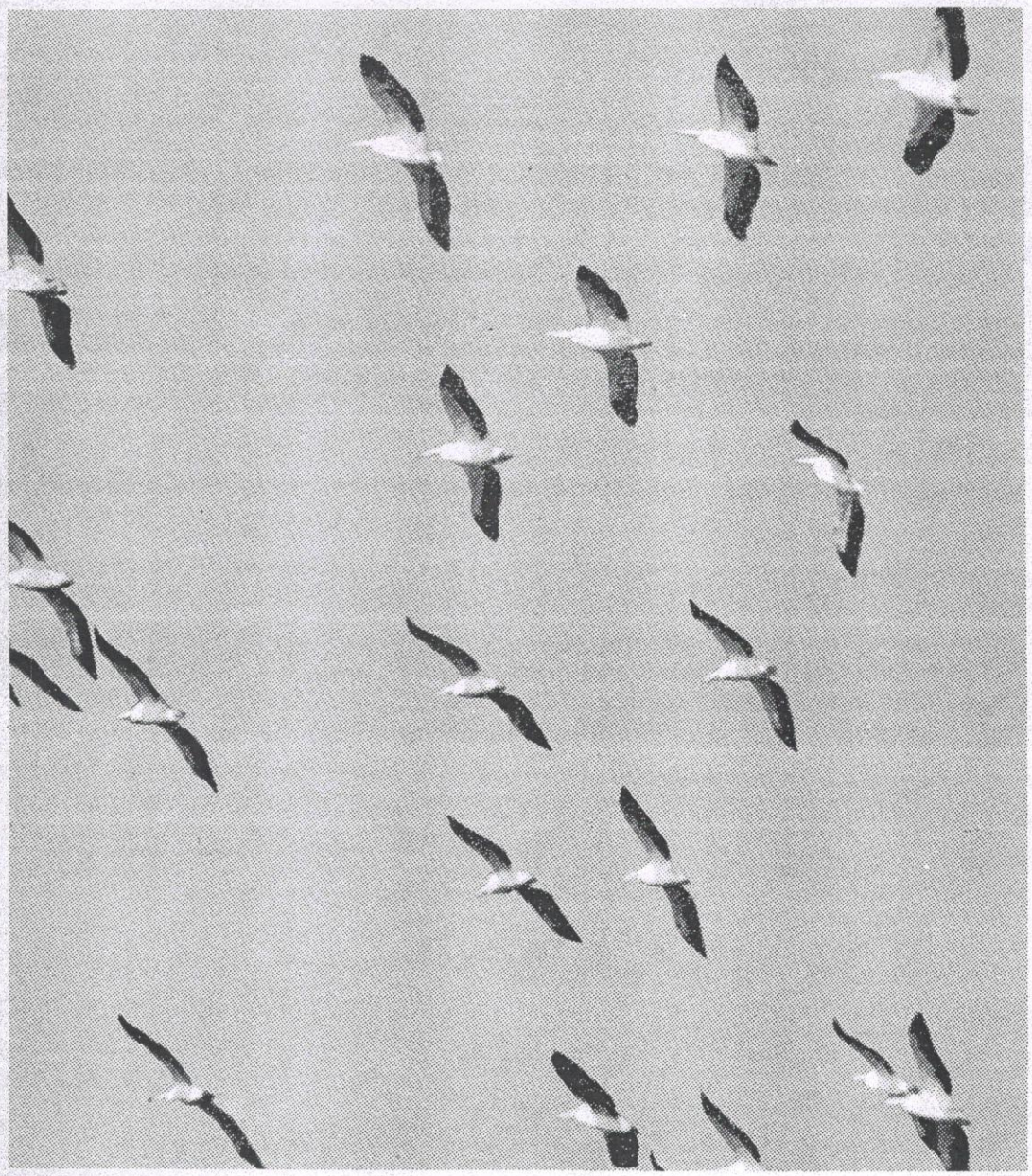

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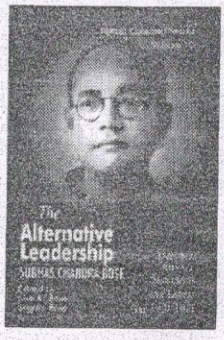

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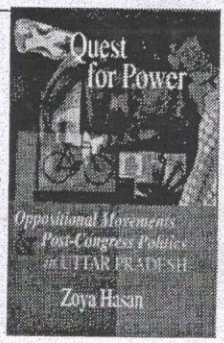

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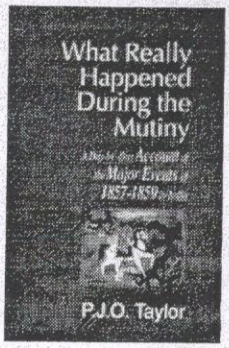

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