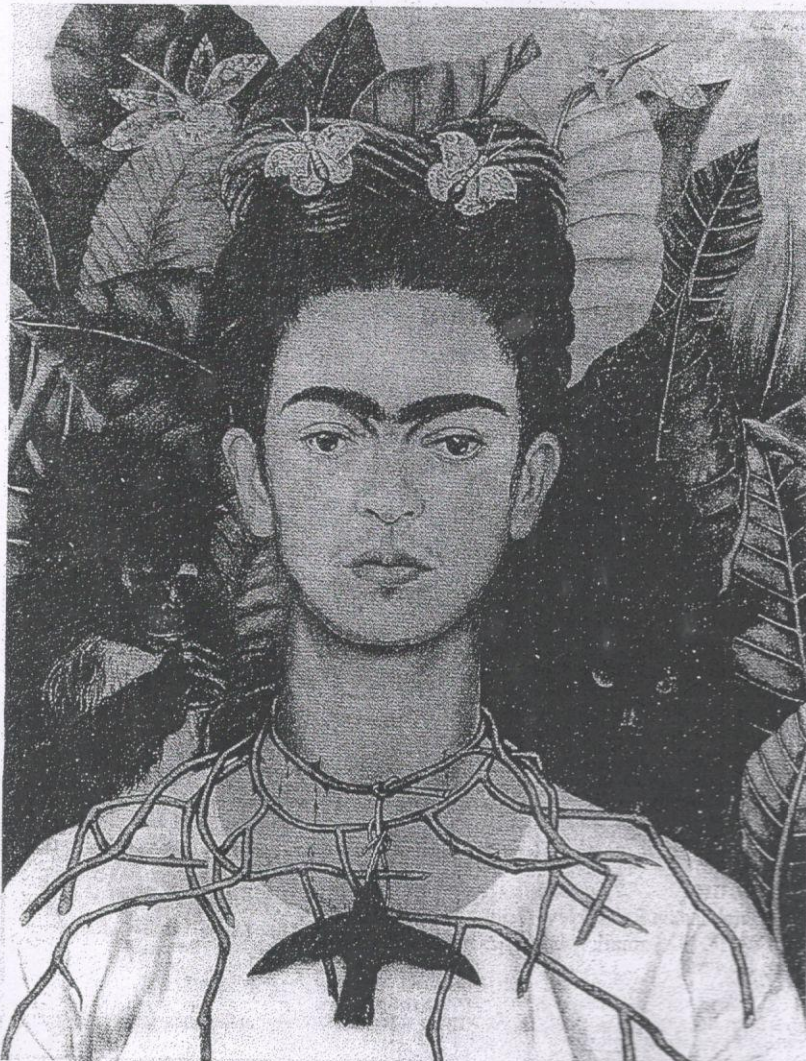


THE BOOK REVIEW

VOLUME XXVI NUMBER 5 MAY 2001

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Design and Layout

Tulika Print Communication Services
35 A/1, 3rd Floor,
Shahpur Jat
(near Asiad Village),
New Delhi 110 049
Telephones 649 7999, 649 1448

Subscription Rates 2001

Single Issue: Rs 30.00
Annual Subscription (12 Issues)
Individual: Rs 300.00 / \$40.00 / £25.00
Institutional: Rs 400.00 / \$60.00 / £35.00
(Inclusive of bank charges and postage)
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Innuendos and Missed Chances

Rudrangshu Mukherjee

GANDHI'S PASSION: THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

By Stanley Wolpert

Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, pp.xiii+304, \$27.50.

The second half of the 20th century has been an era of great biographies. One thinks here of the biographies of William Butler Yeats, Oscar Wilde and James Joyce by Richard Ellman; of Augustine of Hippo by Peter Brown; of Adolf Hitler by Alan Bullock and more recently by Ian Kershaw; of Trotsky by Isaac Deutscher; of Coleridge by Richard Holmes; of John Maynard Keynes by Skidelsky and of both Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell by Ray Monk. There could be others that I haven't read. This trend has by and large left Indian writers and scholars unaffected. Biography is not an art that flourishes in India despite the nation's obsession with individuals. Nehru found a biographer in S. Gopal who showed when he wrote on Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan that he could be more honest and frank about his own father than about the hero of his youth. Ramachandra Guha on Verrier Elwin is a more noteworthy attempt, albeit of a minor figure, to comprehend the complex interplay between context and the individual.

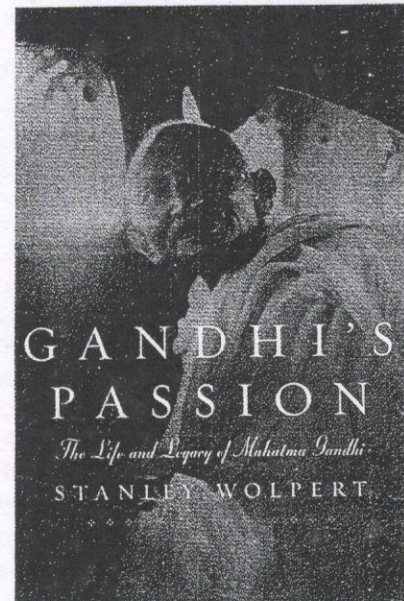
The real victim of the poverty of biography in India is modern India's most charismatic figure, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. This is unfortunate because in terms of documentation, Gandhi's life is an embarrassment of riches. His *Collected Works* run into 90 volumes and cover all aspects of his life and career. There also exists in Tendulkar's *Mahatma* a straightforward chronological narrative of Gandhi's life which, despite its hagiographic tone, can serve as the first stepping stone to any biographer of Gandhi. Gandhi's life was not without drama and was by any reckoning momentous. These should have been an inviting terrain for a biographer keen to analyse the man's life and the times that made him and were made by him. This has not happened. This biography is as disappointing and as shoddy as the previous one by Judith Brown.

Stanley Wolpert does not have a single new thing to say about Gandhi; he does not bring to his recounting of Gandhi's life any new angle of analysis. The approach is chronological and the assumption seems to be that the events and the man are both self-explanatory.

The author says in the Preface that he was driven to finish the book after he learnt that India had gone nuclear in May 1998. This holds out the implicit hope that there would be some attempt to understand how Gandhi increasingly moved away from the movement that he had masterminded. That hope is fuelled when Wolpert opens his biography with Gandhi's absence from Delhi on 15 August 1947. He deliberately kept himself in Calcutta as if to tell history that he was not part of the tryst that India had made with destiny. But such expectations are belied as this theme is not pursued. The understanding of Gandhi's legacy is reduced to the testimonials important persons gave to Gandhi after his death.

Wolpert has the unenviable virtue of skimming over all the important events and aspects of Gandhi's life. Thus, to take a significant example, the text of *Hind Swaraj* receives a two-page cavalier treatment. Any serious understanding of Gandhi's ideology hinges on this text which has been extensively analysed. Gandhi himself never wavered from the views he expressed in this text. It formed perhaps the major ground for the differences in vision between Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. In his autobiography, Nehru, already sold to the idea of a planned economy and a powerful nation-state, had rejected the ideas of *Hind Swaraj* as an "utterly wrong and harmful doctrine, and impossible of achievement".

In political terms, one of Gandhi's major achievements was the complete transformation of the Congress party. From an elite pressure group, the Congress became a party of mass protest. But in Wolpert's book one would look in vain for an analysis of the measures that Gandhi initiated to bring about this change. Under Gandhi's influence, the Congress became a multi-tiered party with representation at every level from an all-India body to a provincial one which led in turn to representations at the district level, the sub-divisional level, at the level of the *taluk* and the village. The Congress thus came to acquire a presence at every level of society. This enabled the party to link its daily routine work to a Gandhian socio-political



programme. It is an example of Gandhi's organizational genius. It was this organization which served as the basis of Gandhi's protest against the British raj. Wolpert of course believes that Gandhi's mass following was no more than a "ragtag army".

Gandhian mass mobilization through the Congress party had a disciplinary aspect to it. Mass protest would be guided and regulated by trained volunteers who would act, he said, in a telling phrase as "people policemen". This discipline was necessary since Gandhi wanted the protests to be completely nonviolent. A disciplined nonviolent movement ensured that the mass campaigns did not turn radical and violent. Whenever they threatened to do so, Gandhi withdrew the movement on ethical and moral grounds. Wolpert refuses to explore this interaction between the popular domain of politics and Gandhi's efforts to

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lead and regulate it. This is more than a failure of understanding. It is fundamentally a failure of scholarship.

Wolpert has chosen to write a biography of Gandhi and has done so by ignoring practically every single important work done on Gandhian politics and mobilization. He follows in this respect his distinguished predecessor Judith Brown. It is not without significance that most of these works have been done by Indian scholars. Thus Wolpert writes on Champaran without reference to the work of Jacques Poucheпадass on Gandhi in Champaran; on the Kheda *satyagraha* with no mention of the work of David Hardiman; as he ignores techniques of mass mobilization, Gyan Pandey's research is ignored. Reading Wolpert on Chauri Chaura, a reader would think that Shahid Amin had shed no light on the

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episode. On the Gandhi-Irwin pact, the article of Sumit Sarkar is not mentioned. An awareness of Ranajit Guha's insights into the disciplinary aspects of Gandhi's mobilization is nonexistent in Wolpert's book. As is Partha Chatterjee's analysis of Gandhi's ideology as the moment of manoeuvre for nationalist thought in India. Many other additions could be made to this list. It would appear that Wolpert's approach to history and biography writing is that of a parachutist. He has jumped on the terrain and has assumed that it is unworked. This can hardly be described as the attitude of a scholar.

This refusal to recognize and to engage with the work of other scholars could have passed muster if Wolpert had something new to say. He has nothing of any interest to offer. He has, however, the gift of innuendo. In his biography of Nehru, he suggested on the basis of very thin evidence that young Nehru may have had a homosexual encounter with a teacher. In this book, there are some equally meaningless pages on Gandhi's supposed "intensely personal passion for a young, golden-haired, blue-eyed Danish beauty, Esther Faering". Beyond a few innocent letters, there is nothing more to this "intensely personal passion". But once again Wolpert misses an opportunity. A sensitive biographer would have used this episode to look at Gandhi's attitude to and relationships with women who came to join him in his work and in his ashram. What was his

In political terms, one of Gandhi's major achievements was the complete transformation of the Congress party. From an elite pressure group, the Congress became a party of mass protest.

relationship with Kasturba? His attitude to sex? What drove him to his experiments with sex? It is worth recalling that Kamala Nehru in a letter to her husband once wrote that there is nobody like Babu but so far as women are concerned he is like any other man.

The descriptions of Gandhi's last hours and his assassination are graphic. But there is no attempt to present to the reader, the assassin, Nathuram Godse. What he represented and what he said in his own defence during the trial are not without significance for comprehending what has become of Gandhi's legacy. A reading of Ashish Nandy on the subject of Gandhi's murder would have taken Wolpert beyond mere description.

Wolpert's book is a wasted opportunity. It is shallow and pedestrian. This is unfortunate because the only pedestrian thing about Gandhi was the fact that he loved to walk. ■

Rudrangshu Mukherjee is the Editor, Editorial Pages, *The Telegraph*. He has edited the Penguin *Gandhi Reader*.

Autonomy is More than a Struggle, it's a Battle Royal

GANDHI: STRUGGLING FOR AUTONOMY

by Ronald J. Terchek

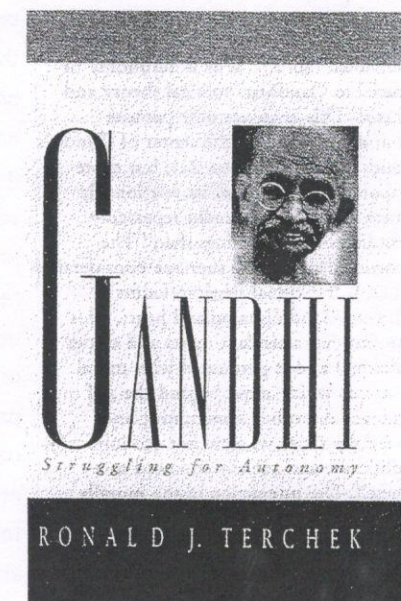
Vistaar Publications, Indian edition, New Delhi, 2000, pp. xiv + 265, Rs. 245 (paper)

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu ultranationalist in the past century, yet his moral and political thought continues to evoke deep interest in the present millennium. Why does Gandhi still influence students, teachers, activists, scholars, leaders and many others the world over? How can his impact be explained? Is a study of his life, "experiments with truth" and failures still relevant today?

If the burgeoning Gandhiana in web pages, films, books, academic courses, chairs in academia and exhibitions are positive indicators, then Gandhi continues to evoke the interest of many who wish to learn from his multi faceted leadership of India's struggle for swaraj. The widely acclaimed aspect of swaraj was azadi (political independence) from the

raj. Gandhi was its principal architect and his method of nonviolent noncooperation based on satya, satyagraha, swadeshi, civil disobedience, sarvodaya, and aparigraha are widely known and well documented. However, what is not quite comprehended, though recognized and researched, is that there was simultaneously another battle that Gandhi was waging and of which he constantly spoke, wrote about, and conveyed to fellow-satyagrahis and all those who wished to listen. It is in this vein that Gandhi posed the question: "What is Swaraj?" in his seminal work *Hind Swaraj* (1909).

It is not swaraj if it was merely lowering the British Union Jack for the Indian Tricolor or replacing sahibs with babus. For Gandhi it was swaraj only when every Indian was



employed, paid, fed, educated, clothed, housed and had access to at least primary health care. In this scheme of things the needs of the individual were supreme. This other deadly combat was intrinsically

It is not swaraj if it was merely lowering the British Union Jack for the Indian Tricolor or replacing sahibs with babus. For Gandhi it was swaraj only when every Indian was employed, paid, fed, educated, clothed, housed and had access to at least primary health care. In this scheme of things the needs of the individual were supreme. This other deadly combat was intrinsically connected with the struggle for political azadi and which makes Gandhi's moral and political thought pertinent even in this century.

connected with the struggle for political azadi and which makes Gandhi's moral and political thought pertinent even in this century.

One concept, among others, in the moral-political lexicon of Gandhi's thought, which transgresses the boundaries of time and invites deep reflection, is that of: autonomy. This is the subject of Terchek's primary concern and he uses it as a prism "to understand (how it) is tied to power, which he (Gandhi) locates in the state, economy, and society as well as in each individual" (p. 2). Why is autonomy so crucial to Gandhian political theory and praxis? This is so not only because "autonomy stands at the center of Gandhi's political philosophy" (p. 21), but more importantly because of its relationship to the individual. Gandhi repeatedly postulates in his writings that, "The individual is the one supreme consideration" (p. 23). Individual freedom looms large on Gandhi's mind and heart. This freedom has attendant rights and duties (dharma) and is permeated with moral concerns which move beyond the self to embrace the other, community, and especially those who are not economically, politically, and socially endowed as oneself. The interaction of the morally free individual with others in society is one of the keys to Gandhi's vision of swaraj (self-rule), curtailing one's needs, cultivating grassroots democracy, self-sufficiency, and ensuring that state power will not inhibit the ambit of individual action. This is what makes it a battle royal. It has to be nonviolently fought with fellow-Indians and at the same time within oneself.

What is the substance of autonomy?

It is according to Gerald Dworkin "the capacity of persons to critically reflect upon, and then attempt to accept or change, their preferences, desires, values, and ideals" (p.26). Freedom is requisite for autonomy, yet as Terchek rightly states "Freedom . . . is not the end of Gandhian autonomy" (p. 25). Autonomy was so crucial to Gandhi because he envisaged a time when those who held and manipulated power, in its various forms, in the nation-state would effectively deny it to others who were literally voiceless and minorities and in the process democracy would be a regular five-year farce unconsciously played by whoever usurped power at the hustings; he predicted that the state would become a conservatory of moneyed and landed interests to the detriment of the landless and displaced; and that a society as diverse as India would become easy prey for zealots, of whatever hue, who wished to crush minority interests and institutions. Hence, Gandhi argued for the creation of "alternate sites of power in civil society" (p. 142), where autonomous individuals would "confront not only the state but the other locations of power that he [she] finds hierarchical, asymmetrical and dominating" (p. 143). Terchek's theoretical category of the "power of love" is valuable, though not original, here. Defined as an appeal to the heart, it is "a force of lasting change which breaks down resistance and creates the

Autonomy was so crucial to Gandhi because he envisaged a time when those who held and manipulated power, in its various forms, in the nation-state would effectively deny it to others who were literally voiceless and minorities and in the process democracy would be a regular five-year farce unconsciously played by whoever usurped power at the hustings; he predicted that the state would become a conservatory of moneyed and landed interests to the detriment of the landless and displaced; and that a society as diverse as India would become easy prey for zealots, of whatever hue, who wished to crush minority interests and institutions.

basis for trust, rather than suspicion that accompanies conventional uses of power" (p. 145). This it certainly does, as Gandhi proved so often, "by speaking to a transcendent, rather than to an instrumental self, and disclosing what people share" (p. 145). For Gandhi, in the final analysis it is "love that holds people together, not their interests" (p. 145).

What this work, as most other theoretical treatises on Gandhi, fails to explain is the interaction of theory with praxis. The point of understanding and explaining any individual's political thought is also to change the world. Gandhi repeatedly stressed that he was a 'karma yogi' (a religious man of action). "My domain is action" was his constant refrain. This is another reason why he still evokes interest and provokes the prospective novice of ahimsa and satyagraha to "experiment" with nonviolence in the face of injustice, though with truth as her/his standard-bearer. When Terchek makes a brave foray into praxis, he falters badly. For example, "His (Gandhi's) specific proposals for the panchayat raj may not offer much guidance in the crowded polity of the late modern world" (p. 231). Now consider this evidence from another American political scientist, James Manor. Writing in a recent issue of the *Economic and Political Weekly* (3 March 2001) Manor says, "Something remarkable is happening in Madhya Pradesh. The state government has decided to transfer nearly all of the powers previously exercised by gram panchayats to periodic village mass meetings or gram sabhas. It has thus gone from representative democracy at the grass roots to direct democracy. . . . Only, one other Indian state, Rajasthan, has adopted a similar policy. . . . It has major implications not just in India, but globally" (p.715).

It is more incredible when an American academic writes, "Most nonacademic readers do not have access to *The Collected Works*" (p. xi). In the exploding Gandhiana there is a well-publicized CD-ROM entitled Mahatma Gandhi, Publications Division, I & B Ministry, Govt. of India, 1999, which consists of nearly the entire corpus of Gandhi's writings and other features. Also, one is puzzled as to why the author is hesitant (p. xi) to refer the reader to one easily accessible primary source on Gandhi, namely, his *Collected Works*, rather than various books, which may not be available. For a study whose central focus is Gandhi these are very serious matters. After all, this is the very least a teacher can offer a curious student. These aspects mar the quality of an otherwise well conceived work. ■

Vivek Pinto is professor of Asian and Peace Studies at a private university in Tokyo, Japan, and author of *Gandhi's Vision and Values* (Sage, 1998).

Formulating History

P.K. Basant

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE INDUS CIVILISATION

Edited by Nayanjot Lahiri

Permanent Black, Delhi, 2000, pp. x+410, Rs. 650.00

The present collection of essays brings together diverse contributions dealing with the problem of the decline of the Harappan civilization. Scholars have speculated about the end of this civilization ever since its discovery. It is a useful collection because the editor has tried to collect articles written over the last seventy years. Many of these articles are difficult to locate. Being prefaced with an introduction in which the editor summarizes the world of discourses within which scholars were trying to build their arguments. This collection of essays is as much a study of the end of Harappan urbanism as a study of the mindset of the scholars who envisioned this collapse. The study of their contributions shows how scholars tried to bring in harmony their notions of the end of urbanism with the available archaeological information. It also shows how the same archaeological material is amenable to different kinds of interpretation.

The argument about the dramatic collapse of Harappan urbanism has moved in two directions. Scholars like Chanda and Wheeler argued that Aryans with their superior weapons and lightning speed destroyed the Harappan civilization. Talking about the end of the Harappan civilization, Wheeler pieced together information from archaeology and very grandly wrote:

Climatic, economic, political deterioration may have weakened it, but ultimate extinction is more likely to have been completed by deliberate and large scale destruction... On circumstantial evidence Indra stands accused..."

There have been many attempts to prove or disprove the hypothesis of Aryan invasion. The tenuous evidence on which this argument is built, becomes clear when the finds of horse bones become the proverbial bone of contention among archaeologists. Edmund Leach's write-up remains the finest contribution on this issue. He has interrogated the mind of scholars who invented the idea of Aryans as a race and their 'civilizing invasions' across the globe.

Scholars like R.L. Raikes have hypothesized about catastrophic earthquakes causing the collapse of the Harappan civilization. The pictures of the devastating earthquake in Gujarat are fresh in our

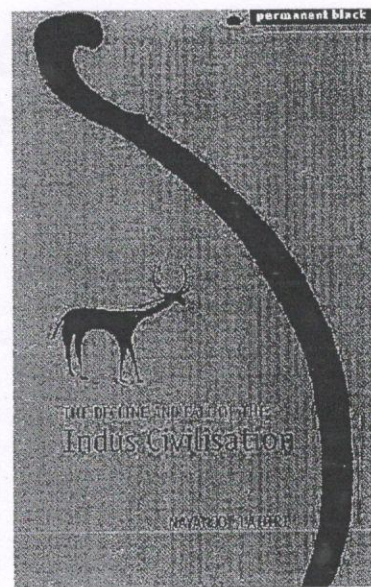
memory. Such a scenario is not unlikely for some of the cities of the Harappan past. But surely an earthquake cannot explain the collapse of all Harappan cities near and far. Except in a few cities, archaeological proof of such a calamity has not been convincing.

While reviewing hypotheses about the end of the Harappan urbanism we must remember that other contemporary civilizations like those of Egypt survived repeated floods and shifts in the river regime. The Mesopotamian civilization survived decline in agricultural production because of salt and silt. Both these civilizations survived repeated alien invasions too. Such information should have deterred us from providing holocaust-level explanations. We need to remember that the so called 'catastrophic collapse' of the Harappan civilization took about 300 years to happen.

The rejection of hypotheses based on the idea of catastrophic collapse brings us to more matter of fact, less dramatic archaeology. It is within this scheme that scholars like Fairservis tried to work out the man-land relationship in Mohenjodaro. Fairservis tried to work out the fuel, food and fodder requirements of the Harappans and explained the emergence and decay of this civilization in terms of these needs. He says, "...What is the reason for this rapid diffusion at the climax period of this civilization? The answer is not readily apparent, but there is a strong suggestion of a growing population confronted by failing resources.

Fairservis's brilliant article opened vistas for research by archaeologists like Possehl whose 'The End of a State and the Continuity of a Tradition' should have been included in the present collection. Other scholars have tried to study shifts in river regimes, and climatic changes to explain the end of Harappan urbanism.

What is interesting is the fact that what many of us believe was an explosive event with a lot of sound and fury, really signified something which happened over a period of three hundred years. It is like treating the 'Glorious revolution' and the 'Computer age' as part of a single event. With this understanding we start raising issues about the mindset of the historians involved in the invention of the idea of 'the decline and fall of the Indus civilization'. Such ideas were



inventions of a generation of historians entranced by the romance of wars and biographies of great men. And so the scattered remains of a long forgotten past had to fall in line and the drama of devastation in the form of Aryans and earthquakes had to be created. 'Decline and fall' are in fashion even now because they sell well in the book bazar and even more in the political bazar of India.

There has been some confusion about how much survives from Harappa. As usual, opinion is divided. There are scholars who believe that the meteoric rise and fall of the Harappans left nothing for posterity. What is forgotten in this kind of formulation is that in history we cannot begin from the beginning. Discrete ends and beginnings are our creations. So, when we say Harappan civilization ended we simply mean that the cities died out and some of the people moved south and east. The people of the succeeding generations could not have begun on a clean slate. A large part of the script of their cultures was pre-written by their 'Harappan ancestors'. Archaeologists could perhaps play this game of memory and forgetting better if one remembered attempts by scholars like Malik to anthropologize the Harappan archaeology. Some extracts from Malik's *Indian Civilization: The Formative Period* would have made the book even more useful. At the end of it all one is left wondering whether we are digging out truths about Harappa or ourselves. Probably we are doing both. It is a little out of fashion but let us hope we do not abandon truth altogether.

The get-up of the book is very good. One wishes that there were fewer mistakes in the text. ■

P.K. Basant teaches history in Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi. His research interests include the study of the process of urbanization in ancient India.

Sufism in the Deccan in the Fourteenth Century

Jean-Marie Lafont

SUFIS AND SOLDIERS IN AURANGZEB'S DECCAN

Translated from the Persian and with an introduction by Simon Digby
Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, pp. xxviii+275, Rs. 595.00

Aurangzeb's conquest of the Deccan was a turning point in the development of the Mughal empire, a tremendous shock for the non-Muslim populations of central and south India, and one has only to read Francois Martin's *Memoires* to feel the tremor in a tiny place like Pondicherry in the late 17th century.

Every synthesis on Mughal history has to deal with the conquest of the Deccan. Simon Digby is not offering us a new synthesis. He is more courageously, and more usefully, taking a manuscript, the *Malfuzat-I Naqshbandiyyia*, and translating it into English for the benefit of his readers. This is the biography of two Naqshbandi sufis, Baba Palangposh and Baba Musafir, who came from Bukhara to join Aurangzeb in Hasan Abdal, and then followed the Mughal armies to the Deccan: "The elder shaykh, Baba Palangposh, became a travelling pir attending to the spiritual and supernatural needs of a military force, later an army, commanded by Ghazi al-Din Khan Feroz Jang. The younger shaykh, Baba Musafir, turned to the task of establishing a takya or khanqah at Aurangabad, which had been laid out and populated by Mughal incomers about forty years earlier" (p. 4). Through the anecdotes connected to the two sufis, this text opens a window into the minds of the soldiers of every rank and file who came from Wilayat (Afghanistan) and Central Asia to India, following the "trail which led from Bukhara and Balkh to Aurangabad and the Deccan" (p. 5).

In a rich introduction (pp. 1-38), Simon Digby collects all the documentary (historical) evidence of the text and puts it in the perspective both of the "Central Asian background" (the past) and the rising power of General Ghazi al-Din whose son, Nizam al-Mulk founded the Nizam dynasty in the Deccan (the future). With his usual mastery, Digby describes the clannish and spiritual connections between these men waging war in the Deccan against the *ghanim* (the Marathas), and their ancestral land through a series of establishments at Istalif, Kabul, Peshawar, Rhotas, Lahore and Shajahanabad (Delhi). These two sufis exert an influence clearly distinct from the more famous branch of the Naqshbandi sufis in converting large sections of Hindus to Islam: in fact these two spiritual advisers' work was entirely

concentrated on their own co-religionists. The self-imposed duty of Baba Palangposh was only to "guard the army" of Ghazi al-Din, and the only mention of a Hindu in this text written in Aurangabad (besides of course the Maratha rulers and generals) was about a man frightened by a follower of Baba Musafir over a question of *jaghir* (p. 150). The section on "Aurangabad in the late seventeenth century"—a huge, thriving city, a frontier town and the headquarter of the Mughal army in the Deccan—is particularly interesting for its military aspects.

Digby also explains the mechanism of the religious thinking of the shaykhs, such as the books they read and meditated upon, the importance of dreams and their interpretation, the ability of foresight and many other supernatural powers such as "removing the obstacles" (*mushkil-kusha*), and even the making of a saint with the funerals and the burying of Baba Palangposh in the takya of Baba Musafir in 1699. Personal interaction between the shaykhs and their disciples are analysed by Digby according to well established patterns of spiritual intercourse, and the description of everyday life in the rapidly developing takya makes for interesting reading. The last pages of the introduction deal with some of the reasons for "the failure of this branch of the Naqshbandi tarika to develop local roots": the importance of the tombs of 14th century shaykhs near Aurangabad, which Emperor Aurangzeb selected as the place of his own sepulture, and the local elite's lack of interest in opposition to the well known Sarhindian policy of cultivating the dominant groups of Mughal society. Digby also mentions "the weakening of the links with Transoxiana and adjacent areas [...] the disruption of long-distance route" in the second half of the 18th century, which was a direct result of the rise of the Sikhs in the Punjab, despite the unending efforts of Mughal governors and Afghan sovereigns, from Ahmad Shah Abdali to Shah Zaman, to keep the Punjab plains "open" for reinforcements from Iran and Turan.

The translation of the *Malfuzat-I Naqshbandiyyia* (pp. 39-250) is divided into nine chapters of different sizes. Chapter one tells the life of Baba Sa'id called Palangposh, the killing of the leopard which gave him his surname (Palangposh, "leopard-clad"), his

SUFIS AND SOLDIERS IN AWRANGZEB'S DECCAN



SIMON DIGBY

OXFORD

spiritual initiation in the Kubrawiyya path at Tashkent, his travels to Mashad, Mecca and Medina, his death in the Deccan. Chapter 2 to 4 deals with the travels and activities of Baba Palangposh and Baba Musafir: their arrival in the Deccan, the installation of Baba Musafir at Aurangabad, the activities of Baba Palangposh as "military pir" of the army and the relations he developed with Ghazi al-Din, the best reason (according to the manuscript) for the successful rise of that family in the Deccan in the 18th century. Chapter 5 gives a detailed account of the "practice" of Baba Palangposh, his wanderings in the bazar, his entourage both in camp and on march, his numerous ways to get money from the rich and use it for the poor, widows and orphans. It was dangerous not to comply with the request of the shaykh: Ghazi al-Din himself lost a battle and then his sight, after refusing to give Baba Palangposh what he had requested, Rs. 2 lakhs in this case. More rational events also take place in this chapter: the murder of a boy, or the wedding of Mir Kamal al-Din, the future Nizam al-Mulk.

Chapter 6 concentrates on Baba Musafir's personal education, his austerities, his public performance of prayers, his daily regimen, and of course his rigorous implementation of the religious law in his takya concerning alcoholic drinks and tobacco. Chapter 7 is a pretty long one (pp. 109-169), and a most important one for the common folk who flocked to the takya of the shaykh since it describes his powers of discovery and other miraculous abilities, including of course the bestowal of sons. All the expectations of the living and the dying—health, land, riches—are mentioned, as also the miseries and worries of life. The chapter concludes with the visit of Nizam al-Mulk to the Baba, and the last days and death of Baba Musafir.

Chapter 9 (pp. 174-249) gives "Notices of the Khalifas and Friends of Hazrat Shah Musafir". It is particularly interesting since it shows the kind of people coming to the

shaykhs for spiritual direction and worldly assistance. Their birthplace, when mentioned, reveals their Central Asian antecedents: Bukhara, Qunduz, Wabqan, Balkh, Samarkand, although some of them came from Kabul, Peshawar and Hissar. Here again, as in the case of Baba Palangposh and Baba Musafir, we are told of miracles, transfer of fevers and sickness etc., but some biographical notices are more precise. For instance the life of Mirza Ibrahim Arab, known as Shah Arab (ix. 16, pp. 228-237), tells us of an illiterate fellow who left Kabul after he murdered a 'rafizi' (a refuser, meaning a Shi'a), joined the Mughal army at the siege of Jinji where he witnessed the terrible sack of a village, after which he had a spiritual breakdown, went to Aurangabad and joined the takya of Baba Musafir. For a while he was in a state of frenzy, but soon started working in the khanqa, cleaning the buildings and watering the trees. He then went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina through Surate, and after his return decided to learn to read and write. His supernatural powers made him feel the death of Emperor Aurangzeb as soon as it occurred. One of the last and most touching anecdotes is Shah Arab's ecstasy on hearing a Hindi verse, sung by a female singer, and here we are informed that the Shah "had a good knowledge of the Hindi language and a competence in the art of music". This verse sent him once again into a divine frenzy. He died a few months later and was buried in the takya, close to the tomb of Baba Musafir.

Digby's erudition and extreme sensitivity allows us to peruse this book for our education and personal enjoyment. The style of the translator is remarkable, and it is almost a physical experience to live in the company of these "Sufis and soldiers in Awrangzeb Deccan", travelling with them from Samarkand to Jinji and Satara, rubbing shoulders with them in the battlefields of the Deccan or in the khanqa at Aurangabad. Unfortunately, we do not meet anybody else on the roads or in the cities and villages of India in this book written at Aurangabad before 1739 A.D. Digby's addition of two indexes helps us travel through the book once we have read it at one go. A map would have been useful: where is Khitta (p. 189), not in the index? The colour illustration of the cover is so beautiful that we would like more of the sort, instead of the four pages (interesting of course) of black and white photographs.

Simon Digby announces "a second volume of commentary to accompany the translation" (p. XI). We shall be grateful both to the author and the publisher if this volume is printed promptly, for the great pleasure of the scholar and the layman alike. ■

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Self-as-other Ethnography

Meena Bhargava

REVERSING THE GAZE: AMAR SINGH'S DIARY, A COLONIAL SUBJECT'S NARRATIVE OF IMPERIAL INDIA

Edited by Susanne Hoeber Rudolph & Lloyd I. Rudolph with Mohan Singh Kanota
Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. xvii + 625, Rs. 595.00

Reversing *The Gaze* is the story of Amar Singh constructed from his diaries. It is an interpretation of the diary and the diarist. The book can easily be categorized as a wide, scholarly, interdisciplinary text representing trends of history, anthropology, sociology and psychology. The book has been written lucidly with deep sensitivity, never losing sight of the complexities that surrounded the diarist, Amar Singh. Interpreting the mind and thoughts of Amar Singh and moving from description to narration, the authors alternate their voice with that of Amar Singh to capture the moment and reflect on the traditions and patterns of the time.

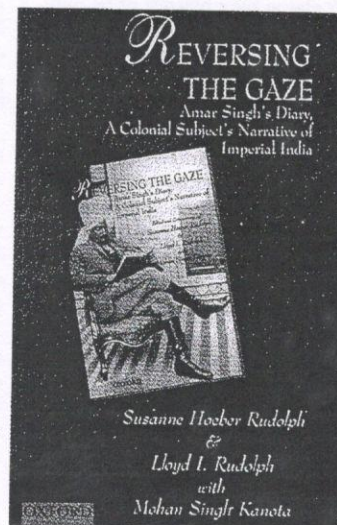
Selecting, editing and interpreting Amar Singh's diary involved 28 years of hard work. The project mooted in 1956 could be undertaken seriously only in 1971 with the active support of Mohan Singh Kanota, the nephew and heir of Amar Singh, also one of the editors of the book. Amar Singh's diary or diaries are voluminous—eighty-nine bound volumes, each about 800 pages. They are preserved in Kanota fort, 12 miles east of Jaipur. Reflecting on the size and enormity of the diaries, the authors observe that even by the generous standards of seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, Amar Singh's is one of the longest-continuous diaries ever written. Amar Singh wrote a daily diary uninterrupted for 44 years since the age of 20 except on the day he fell from his horse and lay unconscious. This volume, however, contains the first seven years from 1898, when he was 20 until 1905, his 27th year—just 7 of the 44 years but the information it provides is amazing.

While the authors narrate their experiences of how they encountered the diary, their description of Jaipur city (beginning with the eighteenth century) as reflected in the diary reinforces the argument of disjunction between political and economic decline of the Mughal Empire and regional growth. Commending the efforts of Raja Jai Singh (an erstwhile Mughal Mansabdar) who planned and built the city of Jaipur, the diary suggests that in the context of Mughal decline, Jai Singh saw opportunities for independence and territorial aggrandizement. "Jaipur quickly became a haven for artists and religious sects seeking patronage and merchants in search of commercial opportunities" (p. 23).

Stunned by a man who not only wrote a diary but wrote it consistently and candidly giving exhaustive accounts of his society,

family and personal relationships, especially when the traditions and customs that he had imbibed did not permit diary-writing, the authors invariably search for reasons as to why Amar Singh wrote. Amar Singh was born and bred a Rajput. He was a *Champawat Rathor*—one of the exogamous clans of Rajputana. Nonetheless, he disproved the popular proverb i.e. "A Rajput who reads will never ride a horse". He not only rode but also read and wrote voluminously.

To begin with, Mohan Singh Kanota did not share the Rudolphs' enthusiasm for selecting passages dealing with private life. He urged that it was not the question of confidentiality but of what was interesting and worth knowing. He argued that family accounts were too obvious, too self evident, "everybody has a family" (p. 25). Nevertheless, the Rudolphs could persuade Mohan Singh. They insisted that the free and frank account of life in the joint family expressed and articulated what for Mohan Singh was tacit knowledge. The diaries contain "gripping narratives, tragedies, dramas, quotidian triumphs—persons in motion and motives in context" (p. 26). These descriptions sometimes illuminate and sometimes challenge the conventional patterns of patriarchal society, status of women, colonial subjection. It is without any hesitation that Amar Singh narrates family disputes and discord, revealing disharmony in the lineage to the outside world. Intimate scenes of love and affection, jealousy and anger are exposed to public gaze. Such open



revelations in the diary by Amar Singh had many a times hurt Rajput sentiment. In fact, the authors tell us that when the excerpts from the diary were serialized in Hindi translation in *Rajasthan Patrika*, a reader protested against Amar Singh's candid and unedited account, alleging that it threatened the moral and public reputation of the Rajputs. Such reactions had made the Rudolphs cautious and discreet but even more determined to pursue the project, which they did. But, only when the members of Amar Singh's extended family, who might have taken offence, had died.

It is apparent that Amar Singh represented rebellious consciousness. To write a diary in private about the self and for the self as Amar Singh did was a culturally deviant act. Such characteristics of Amar Singh have kept the authors in a dilemma. Searching for reasons why Amar Singh wrote and for whom and why he continued to do so for 44 uninterrupted years, the authors wonder whether the cultural or literary models in Rajput or pan-Indian practices influenced him to write the diary. At another level, the writers suggest that it could have been the result of a remark of his teacher, *Barath Ram Nathji*, who told Amar Singh "you should keep a diary in English" (p. 31). Ram Nathji, familiar with and perhaps influenced by the Victorian public school practices of using diaries for pedagogic purposes and also a way to shape discipline and self-control believed that writing a diary would "perfect" Amar Singh's English. The fact that Amar Singh obeyed his master i.e. he not only wrote a diary but also wrote it in English explains the spread of public school practices in India. However, although Ram Nathji's injunctions may explain the cause of the diary, it does not expound its cultural context. Conventionally, Rajput culture does not promote literary pursuits, much less diary writing. But Rajput culture cannot be treated as homogenous and monolithic. The *Charans* or *Baraths* (literary persons) like Ram Nathji may have impressed Amar Singh. Writing at the end of the twentieth century and in the ambience of its cultural patterns, the authors argue that hybridity may have been a dominating factor. Amar Singh writes about hybridity formation before decolonization and hyper globalization. He is constantly involved in negotiating the two cultures – Princely and British India. Looking for options and adaptations, Amar Singh's diary is an attempt to find out what is appropriate for the kind of person he wants to be.

In Amar Singh's time, patriarchal joint and extended families and caste and religious groups enforced rigid rules and patterns of behaviour that curbed individuality and privacy. Diary writing was therefore difficult and dangerous in Amar Singh's 100 member joint family household. Amar Singh, nonetheless, broke these conventions and wrote about men and women, their ideas and attributes, as he knew and experienced them. His enduring attachment to English literature may have influenced him to write subjectively

and reflexively. He was a voracious reader of both fiction and non-fiction. *Plutarch's Lives* had made a major impression on him. His diaries, in fact, contain a list of books that he had read every year and his comments on them (fair, satisfactory, good etc.). He was, as the writers call him, an autodidact and self-created intellectual. He loved books, good conversation and ideas but was surrounded by the ennui and philistinism of his Rajput and British acquaintances. The more one delves into the details of Amar Singh's diary, the more is the conviction that he must have written for self-realization. For Amar Singh "writing to my heart's content" was amusement and pleasure (p. 37). Being kept away from writing and reading brought "lassitude, degeneration, boredom". The diary became an alter ego and his best friend.

The authors argue that the diary was as much an ethnography as it was private writing about a self in formation. They have categorized the first seven years of the diary as "self-as-other ethnography" (p. 39). As Amar Singh writes his daily diary, one sees culture in the making as well as in the doing. One notices "how agency and structure interact, how culture shapes self and how self shapes culture" (p. 39). Amar Singh begins his diary like a *roznamcha* (the daily books kept by scribes at raja's courts and the merchant's *haveli*) and develops it into a reflexive, ethnographic writing. Amar Singh "reverses the gaze". It is he looking at them, not they looking at him. In other words, it is not an account of a native subject by his colonial master. It is a "reflexive natives" narrative about the self, the master and the relationship between them. Amar Singh's reflexive description provides an open-ended, constructionist explanation of history and self.

Amar Singh also writes what Norbert Elias calls "court society". Elias's concept of court society is useful in theorizing and explaining a good deal of what Amar Singh writes. He gives details of the Jodhpur and Jaipur court and society, a history of kings and heroes. His diary, in other words, does not undo Rajput-centred history. He talks of personal equations of court society, rituals of honour, power and wealth, enactment of status and legitimacy.

The book, more than adequately, registers the value of Amar Singh's diary. The diary is a mine, a wealth of knowledge. The more one writes about it, the more one is motivated to write. The photographs from the album of Amar Singh adds to the value and quality of the book. The exhaustive glossary explains the persons, places and Marwari and other indigenous and also English terms. The genealogical chart of the *Champawat Rathor* clan from 1799 onwards to Mohan Singh Kanota (the present heir) is interesting. For all these reasons, the book should be categorized as a "must read". ■

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Selective Reasoning

Amiya P. Sen

CLASSICAL HINDU THOUGHT:
AN INTRODUCTION

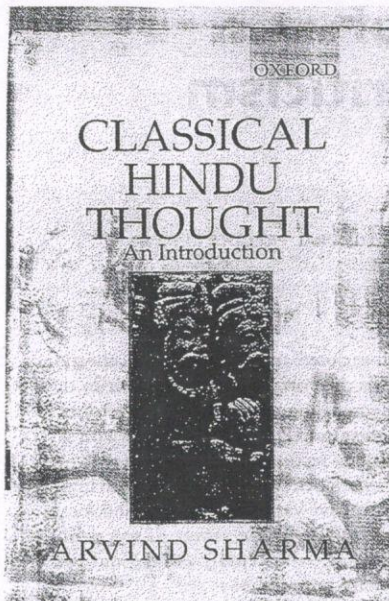
By Arvind Sharma

Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2000, pp. 209, Rs. 475.00

Arvind Sharma's contribution to religious studies, whether in terms of philosophical analysis or historical, is both profound and prolific. In the realm of 'Hindu thought' itself, the present work seems to be an extension of his *A Hindu Perspective on the Philosophy of Religion* (Macmillan, 1990), albeit now presented in a different format.

While the structural changes incorporated in the present work are reader-friendly, the language evocative and the choice of metaphor apt and intelligible, some of us may have a problem with the title of the book. It is a reasonable assumption, I feel, that a book that bears the title *Classical Hindu Thought* need not have focused exclusively on the religious philosophy of the Hindus unless Sharma takes (somewhat after the Orientalist-Nationalist schools of thinking) the term 'Hindu' to essentially constitute a well-defined religious community. Alternatively, he may have collapsed the possible distinction between the religious and non-religious components of 'Classical Hindu Thought' acting on the assumption, again going back to the Orientalist rhetoric that in the context of Hindu civilization, there is virtually nothing unconnected with religion. My complaint therefore, is not that Sharma has produced an otherwise eminently readable book but that he chose to give it a name that may be legitimately stretched to cover important elements of Hindu political or sociological thinking as well. Finally, even within the field of Hindu philosophy, the work reveals a distinct leaning towards non-dualist Vedanta; of the remaining schools, Yoga and Mimamsa are mentioned briefly at places while Samkhya and Nyaya-Vaisheshika do not make an appearance at all. The omission of Samkhya may appear all the more inexplicable especially as some of its ontological and metaphysical postulates deeply influenced the nature of Hindu theology.

I am also not sure if 'classicism', as Sharma seems to suggest (Introduction, p. xxiv) may be simply tied to a particular historical period, in this case from 8th BCE to 100 CE. For some, this might carry a resonance of the 'Golden Age' theory, also once applied to a particular period in early Indian history but now seriously questioned in historical scholarship. Others are apt to wonder if by 'classical', Sharma means not so-much the



argue that given our timeframe, some more elements of Hindu thought and practice may also have been reasonably incorporated. One important development that comes to mind is Tantra, a term that does not even find a place in the glossary but which, as we know, was appropriated within both Hinduism and Brahmanism, albeit with suitable modifications in each. There is a brief chapter on the historical evolution of Hindu religious usages and concepts but the historical framework, sadly, is rather lax and not effectively employed in most of the succeeding chapters where, I feel, it might have been more useful. At places therefore, the concepts/structures of thought have the semblance of being fixed or given rather than evolving all the time. For a work that chronologically ends only by the 11th century, there is surprisingly little treatment of the significant paradigm-shifts within Vaishnav bhakti (see Chapter 8) that increasingly privilege the worship of the pastoral Krishna in place of the more sanskrit and ritually constructed deity, Vishnu. Saivism too, to cite a further example, was gradually appropriated within the 'classical' fold even when it was largely based on *Agamas*, often in conflict with the more orthodox (Vedic) tradition of *Nigama*. Surely classicism too, to use a turn of expression currently much in vogue, must have been 'fuzzy' at the edges.

But let us not be carried away by a historicist critique of a work that does not really claim to be work of history. Even in so far as it only 'introduces' the 'government concepts of classical Hinduism' (Introduction, p. xxiv), Sharma's work is bound to be of great value for its ability to identify the key concepts and the richness of treatment that he brings to bear on each. And while we may occasionally complain about his use of history, there is a reassuring acknowledgement of its worth as

for instance on page 35 when he makes the extremely significant point that the constituent elements of Hinduism made their appearance in a certain order or sequence which in turn vitally shaped the contours of classical Hinduism. The general purview of the work is spelt out in Chapter 1 (Introduction) followed by essays of varying lengths on specific Hindu deities (Chapters 6 to 9); on metaphysical constructs (Chapters 3, 4, 5, 10 and 14); on Hindu soteriological/eschatological concepts (Chapters 11 to 13, 15 to 18 and 21); on Hindu scripture (Chapter 22) and the institutions of Varna and Ashrama (Chapters 19 and 20).

Of these, the longest and perhaps the most rewarding is that on varna, which, notwithstanding its somewhat apologetic tone, is a painstakingly constructed work of scholarship. For one, it serves as a useful corrective to distorted readings of jati and varna, arising typically in the West. The term 'varna' does not itself appear in the earliest of the Vedas (Rig), not even in the famous *Purusasukta* hymn (Rig Veda, X, 90) which alone in the entire Rig Veda speaks of the four categories of Brahman, Rajanya (importantly, not Kshatriya), Vaishya and Sudra as divinely created without necessarily identifying them with the four varnas. This has led scholars to view the aforesaid hymn as a late interpolation (p. 136). No less interesting is the paradox that while the Upanishads overlook the rigidity of social structures in favour of an universal-absolutistic salvific experience, they are also the first to mention the category of the outcaste (*Chandala*) and suggest linkages between karma and varna (p. 155). This raises two interrelated questions; first, whether texts alone can be authentic guides to the incidence of a particular belief or practice and second, whether sufficient allowance should not also be made for the polyvocality of texts. We shall return to this point later.

The discussion on varna however, sometimes takes the author to indefensible positions. Sharma, for instance, is of the belief that in the Gita, varna is based not on birth but *Guna* and *Karma* i.e. mental dispositions and the nature of activity. On the other hand, it is difficult to believe that any enduring social organization could be based on something as subjective and ill-defined as *Guna* and *Karma*. Are these concepts not placed within a given, hierarchized scale of values? Assuming that varna could somehow be delinked from birth and tied instead to *Guna* and *Karma*, which established operative mechanism would determine that a menial sudra had the qualities befitting a brahman scholar? Also, could the cobbler's vocation be intrinsically comparable on the accepted value-scale to the administrative duties of a kshatriya functionary? Surely, the varna structure would have allowed for changes outside the determinant of birth; it is doubtful however, if this happened on an extensive scale.

This brings us back to the problem of texts

often speaking with multiple voices. Why do only certain texts within the same genre of texts take a certain view of varna? Thus only *Panchavimsa Brahmana* invokes the *Purusasukta* hymn to explicate on varna (p. 145) and the *Satapatha Brahmana* is doubly unique in not only alluding to the sudra as a distinct varna but for privileging the kshatriya over the brahman (p. 145). Now one way of solving this riddle would be to use historical chronology but this, I find, is not of much use here. Sharma himself does not help us very much with some broad dating of his textual sources. Nevertheless, assuming that the varna structure grew more conservative over time, it might be argued that texts specifically hinting at some social fluidity would by and large be early texts within say the same genre of texts. By this yardstick, both the *Panchavimsa* and the *Satapatha Brahmanas* would appear to be early works for, in the former, the epithet of 'Sudra-Putra' is not a term of abuse (p. 148) and the latter gives even sudras some access to Vedic rites (p. 146). On the other hand, as cited above, evidence of a contrary kind is also to be found in these works. The *Panchavimsa Brahmana's* accepting the mythology of the *Purusasukta* (in itself an interpolation) may well indicate a regressive and a historical attitude towards varna. The polyvocality of texts therefore, must raise doubts about whether stray references one way or another are reliable evidence of the actual extent of a practice. No social organization in history, I imagine, has had the power to absolutely prevent departures from ascribed practices. On the other hand, exceptional events and deviant behaviour cannot in every case be taken to indicate general organizational fluidity. Thus, bad brahmins may have been humiliated, perhaps even killed (p. 158). Rarely, if ever, were they turned into sudras or outcastes.

On the subject of karma (Chapters 1, 18), Sharma does well to remind us that karma and *Karma Yoga* are actually antithetical to

On the whole, the author is of the view that while karma . . . may cause future action outside ourselves, we still have it in our power to choose an appropriate mode of action. . . . I was also struck by the oddity that while the laws of karma are cumulative and inexorable in their manifestation birth after birth, most of us do not seem to be blessed with memories of our past lives with the help of which we might be able to repeat our good deeds and avoid our follies. It does seem to be an unequal contest after all!

each other; it is *Karma Yoga* that helps man to overcome the inexorable laws of karma that continually bind him to *samsaric* bondage of rebirths (p. 26). As in the case of varna, the discussion on karma too sounds a warning against taking an unproblematic view of complex Hindu concepts. The Hindu view in the matter, we are given to understand, actually tries to steer a middle path between the two extremes of absolute predetermination and perfect free will (pp. 98-99). On the whole, the author is of the view that while karma, inasmuch as it is determined by antecedent causes, may cause future action outside ourselves, we still have it in our power to choose an appropriate mode of action. While A may be persuaded to perform a certain act, he could still decide whether to act selflessly, greedily, charitably etc in the matter. I have to say that I found the logic rather unconvincing even as I realize that the strength or popularity of such concepts as predetermination is not founded on logic. Within the ambit of this definition, I fear, one can never be certain if a particular action grew out of free will or predetermination thus rendering the choice of a mode of action redundant. But even assuming that these were somehow possible, could the mode of action be entirely separated from action itself? If my karma made me steal, could I then choose to steal honestly? I was also struck by the oddity that while the laws of karma are cumulative and inexorable in their manifestation birth after birth, most of us do not seem to be blessed with memories of our past lives with the help of which we might be able to repeat our good deeds and avoid our follies. It does seem to be an unequal contest after all!

Sharma's work may also be singled out for its ability to bring up commonplace but interesting problems from Hindu religious history. There is for instance, a fairly plausible explanation of why Brahma never came to be associated with a flourishing cult (p. 20, 79-81) and implicit suggestions as to why Vishnu alone of the three gods of the Hindu Trinity, is a major source of *avatars* (p. 84). On the other hand, the more pious are bound to be somewhat offended at the author's remarks about Mira's husband viewing her as some 'religious nut' (p. 25) or depicting the Feminine Principle (*Sakti*) in a particular manifestation as she who 'wears the pants' (p. 69). It would seem that Sharma's metaphors from the first chapter, originally delivered before an American audience, have surreptitiously entered succeeding chapters that were not written for the same. Regrettably, the blurb (inside front cover) may add insult to injury by including *Purusharthas* among texts. It is unlikely though that the author himself is guilty of this error. ■

Amiya P. Sen teaches history at Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi. He is the author of *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal 1872-1905. Some Essays in Interpretation and Swami Vivekananda* (OUP, 1993 and 2000 respectively).

A Tour de Force of Contemporary Criticism

Ashley Tellis

WHEN WAS MODERNISM: ESSAYS ON CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL PRACTICE IN INDIA

By Geeta Kapur

Tulika, Delhi, 2000, pp. xvi+440, Rs. 1400.00

Geeta Kapur's *When Was Modernism* is a *tour de force* of contemporary criticism. Nothing short of a history of art and art criticism from the mid-nineteenth century to the present moment, centrally in India, but also in Asia and the West, it is the product of over two decades of writing and a much longer period of sustained critical engagement. This engagement has been simultaneous with creative practices in art, sculpture, installation and film, and the various critical apparatuses in examining these, along with developments in cultural theory.

Positioned chronologically in the book, each successive essay takes the reader deeper and deeper into the terrain from which answers to questions initially posed—those of history, politics, modernism—gradually emerge and are sharpened to cutting edge. Throughout the book, what is especially marked is the passion and fervour with which these questions are addressed. The burnished prose barely conceals the intricate affective and emotional charge of the enquiry. It is the totality of Kapur's engagement not least that makes the reading of this book a humbling and deeply rewarding experience.

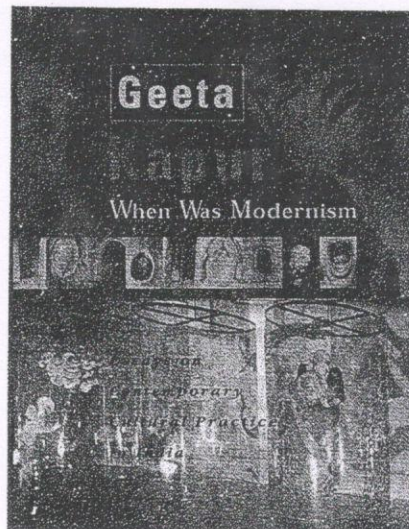
This totality is most apparent in the opening essays of the book. The first is an examination of the body and how it inscribes itself in the work of four women painters across time: Amrita Sher-Gil, Frida Kahlo (and the fascinating overlaps between them in very diverse cultural and geographical spaces), Nalini Malani (and the influence of Kahlo on her) and Arpita Singh. Steering clear of an essentialist view of 'women' and 'femaleness', it nevertheless uses gender and the body as conceptual tools in the work. The essay imbricates Kapur's own subjectivity and her negotiations with gender (that infect all her appraisals), and marks the personal-political nature of her address.

The next essay is on the painter Nasreen Mohamedi and it is a difficult essay, both because of the specialized grammar and vocabulary of abstract painting and equally because of Kapur's pain at the death of the painter who was a friend. The text breaks into different modes from snatches of poetry, extended interpolations of quotation, mixing life and art—and crucially death—in remarkable ways. The essay is, in some ways, the most

self-enclosed and allusive in the collection. From then on, the book opens out to the intermingling and complicated histories of modernism. The next two essays with which this first section, entitled 'Artists and ArtWork', end are on K.G. Subramanyan and 'Raja' Ravi Varma respectively, and locate their careers in the variegated spaces of the mid-nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century onwards.

Kapur looks at the autodidact Varma and how he evolves a way of representation that mixes oil painting, European realist and neoclassical forms, Indian (Parsi) theatre and melodrama, Indian legends and myths, into an emergent nationalism and a trajectory into the modern. The essay ends with an ambitious and alarmingly persuasive reading of Varma's *A Galaxy of Musicians* as a subversive tableau ironizing the male gaze and staging a secular nationalism, enabling the edging over into modernism by Amrita Sher-Gil. The Subramanyan essay is a long meditation (the longest in the book) on the artist's own career and also inevitably the creation and growth of a space for the modern, facilitated by Subramanyan. Following his career from Santiniketan to Baroda, from murals to toys to terracotta, Kapur shows the fashioning of the modern Indian artist as artisan and the internationalist components of Indian modernism. It ends with a brief look at his paintings in the nineties and their corrosive use of the erotic. The essay is a fine example of the genealogical work of Kapur's art criticism. Not concerned primarily with (though highly respectful of and working from) the biography of the individual artist, she always imbricates him/her in the larger

There are moments of warm writerly generosity when suddenly Kapur will pause to explain the differences between watercolour and oil painting, moments of poetic wonderment at the sensual and rhapsodic nature of creative practice, and moments of sombre reflection that can make at least this reader weep.



contexts and zeitgeists with which he/she is inevitably in dialogue.

The next section of the book, titled 'Film/ Narratives', is on film, and begins with a profoundly moving essay on Ritwik Ghatak's *Jukti Takko ar Gappo*. Looking at Ghatak's critical positioning vis-à-vis Marxism and the nation, Kapur delineates a grounded and historical figure of exile and a critical articulation of praxis in Ghatak's work, symptomatic of a certain response to nationalism that is also part of the modern. The other two essays deal with Satyajit Ray (though the second of these also deals with the genre of the mythological through *Sant Tukaram* counterposed with Ray's *Devi*) and see his as a more bourgeois response, a particular middle-class construction of the modern which was one very important constituent of Indian modernity.

The first Ray essay looks at the Apu trilogy and the Tagorean modernizing project it seeks to articulate, a certain national allegory. The next essay, on *Tukaram* vs. *Devi*, is a complex mediation of the tradition vs. modernity dichotomy that is so formative of modern cultural practice. All these essays scrupulously examine the forms they employ, whether it is a certain kind of presence of the actor (*Tukaram*) or a particular understanding of mise en scène (*Pather Panchali*). Kapur's analysis is always rooted in the artistic object and is also always aware of the cultural meanings of chosen practices.

It is clear that through all these essays Kapur has been trying to trace the various component trajectories of Indian modernism and these are brought into sharper theoretical focus in the long final section of the book called 'Frames of Reference'. This comprises several essays outlining in more abstract form (but never without the illustrative material of artistic practice) the coordinates of the strands that form the Indian modern. These essays deal with the bugbears of cultural theorization in a Third World space—tradition, national allegory, the national vs.

... each successive essay takes the reader deeper and deeper into the terrain from which answers to questions initially posed – those of history, politics, modernism – gradually emerge and are sharpened to cutting edge. . . . The burnished prose barely conceals the intricate affective and emotional charge of the enquiry. It is the totality of Kapur's engagement not least that makes the reading of this book a humbling and deeply rewarding experience.

the modern, internationalism, globalization and postmodernism—and grounds them in material practice, never letting them get into airless abstraction. Each of these essays demands a separate review as the questions each raises are many and the analysis incredibly rich.

Special mention, however, must be made of two essays: 'When was Modernism in Indian Art?' and 'Dismantled Norms: Apropos an Indian/Asian Avantgarde'. The first contains a telescopic and yet remarkably multi-layered history of twentieth-century Indian art in relation to cultural and political developments, and the latter looks simultaneously at art from other countries in Asia and the dialectic of Indian art in the nineties through gender, class and responses to historical and political events. The only thing that disappoints is the necessarily telegraphic nature of Kapur's observations on particular artworks and cultural formation. A few lines on Bhupen Khakhar here, on Navjot Altaf there, leave at least this reader wanting more. This is because Kapur's readings are so multivalent and yet sharply articulated, there is such an empathetic passion in her reception and yet an almost clinical weaving of the artwork into larger narratives, that the reader longs to dwell longer in the prose, savour the artwork and, more, Kapur's reading of it.

There has been some tinkering talk in the press of the unreadability of writers like Geeta Kapur. This could not be farther from the truth. The considered nature of this thinker's observations and analyses means that you can't approach them like you approach much instant noodles slush that passes off for criticism in our tiredly superficial times; her prose opens out to layers and levels of reverberating meaning. Reading and rereading these essays is a relentlessly enriching experience. There are moments of warm writerly generosity when suddenly Kapur will pause to explain the differences between watercolour and oil painting, moments of

poetic wonderment at the sensual and rhapsodic nature of creative practice, and moments of sombre reflection that can make at least this reader weep.

The concluding section of the last essay in the book, which looks at Rummana Hussain's *Home/Nation*, a response to Ayodhya that speaks of the position of the Muslim in a state predicated upon the destruction of Muslim identity, is one such movingly and beautifully written section, which also marks the central concern of the book and Kapur's career. This is a scrupulous concern with the political and the historical. Throughout the book, Kapur is in search of ways of articulating the modern that engage with history and respond to the pressures of the political. She searches for a language for this through diverse sites: from postmodernist cultural theory (which she mediates very gracefully—she actually manages to make Homi Bhabha comprehensible!) and Marxist theory (she is eloquent on Raymond Williams and Frederic Jameson) to film theory and art history.

Even when you do not agree with her (like I am in complete disagreement with her reading of the filmmaker Kumar Shahani) or when you feel she should have asked more probing questions (of Ray's gender politics in *Devi* or the effects of M.F. Husain's obstreperous signature in his work), what you cannot deny is the scope of Kapur's vision, the depth of her questions and the intellectual-political-historical frames within which she locates Indian modernism, even as she herself relentlessly questions and restructures them. For me, at least, the exemplary figure of this enterprise is Geeta Kapur herself. Passionate, serious but never too far from the playful, intellectual but also receptive to the sensuous, she does not make any of these seem like the antinomies they are made out to be in popular understanding.

Finally, one must mention the book itself. Most Tulika books are the labours of love. Meticulously edited, produced and thought out, they are embodiments of sheer pleasure. This one is especially so. It is an artwork in itself, richly and carefully illustrated as it is with over 350 paintings, sketches, stills, photographs. The extraordinary cover—a collage of Ghatak, Rummana Hussain and Nalini Malani—by Ram Rahman is in itself a reverberating artwork. The paper is rich, the text not heavy work on the eyes. Holding the book and reading from it is a marvellous experience.

As such, then, it is the perfect material manifestation of and tribute to the longstanding career of Geeta Kapur, the fitting fruit of a pioneering intellectual enterprise that has left us invaluable richer for the experience and, thankfully for us, still continues apace. ■

Ashley Tellis teaches English at Kirorimal College, Delhi University.

Seminar on Women's Studies

A Report by Mary E. John, Smita Tewari Jassal and Vasanti Raman

As part of its twentieth anniversary celebrations, the Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi, hosted a seminar "Interrogating Disciplines/ Disciplining Gender? Towards a History of Women's Studies in India". The seminar was organized by Smita Tewari Jassal, Mary E. John and Vasanti Raman, colleagues at the CWDS, from February 19-22, 2001, at Jamia Hamdard University, New Delhi. Bringing together 45 invitees from outside Delhi and about 100 local participants, the seminar successfully drew on a range of experiences, spanning pioneers in the field and younger scholars, and from all regions of the country. The purpose of the seminar was to initiate a collective mapping of the field of women's studies in its broadest sense, and so enable an appraisal of its transformative impact on institutions of higher education, disciplines and fields over the last decades.

Spread over three and a half days, there were paper presentations on the interface of "women" with the following disciplines—economics, sociology, political science, the law, history and literature. Precisely because scholarship on women has been produced in response to different pressures and beyond disciplinary boundaries, the seminar also included papers in the areas of demography, health, sexuality, violence, the media, caste, tribe and communalism. Two round-table discussions—one on action-research, activism and women's studies, and a second one on women's studies and higher education, played an integral role in the proceedings. In this report, constraints of space make it impossible to do justice to the depth of the presentations, the comments of the respondents, and the wide-ranging discussions of each session. What we present below is therefore a very brief summary of the main points raised by the speakers.

The first session on economics, chaired by K. Saradmoni, began with Maithreyi Krishnaraj's discussion of the regime of economics, its changing frameworks and methodologies in the international context, before dwelling on developments in India. As she summarized it, "women's studies" may have achieved visibility, but not yet power. Nirmala Banerjee's presentation focussed on problems of generalization in the field of economic theory for thinking contextually about gender issues. Drawing on many examples, she argued against trying to fit the diverse experiences of women within a single economic model, whether about labour, trade, feminization or empowerment, and the consequent questions this raises for policy interventions. The second session, chaired by Zoya Hasan, was on political science and the law. In some contrast to the previous session, Nivedita Menon emphasized the relative immunity of the discipline of political science to gender. Moreover, most feminist issues have been

raised by scholars outside this discipline. She also referred to recent attempts to introduce a gender component into the syllabus at the B.A. level in Delhi University, and the difficulties they encountered in politicizing women's issues in a depoliticized university environment. Usha Ramanathan spoke on the law, and on the courts as a site where women's voices are heard. While the courts balk at recognizing constitutional equality for women in mainstream justicing (inheritance law, marriage and divorce), the role of the women's movement has been evident in instances such as dispensing with corroboration by rape victims, in guardianship issues, or in forcing the judicial mind to recognize that dowry deaths actually happen. The last session of the first day was on the discipline of sociology, chaired by Neera Desai. Sharmila Rege offered a rich and critical reflection on sociology's past and present relationship with political agendas as represented by feminism and women's studies. Her paper looked into the history of the discipline, examined the *Sociological Bulletin* for its coverage of "women", and concluded with a discussion of the classroom as a site for interrogating power and for engendering new pedagogies.

The second day of the seminar began with a session on history. Chaired by Narayani Gupta, the first speaker Kumkum Roy provided an overview of studies of early Indian history—nationalist and Sanskrit, Marxist, among others—in their relation to women, gender and sexuality, and the dangerous revival of the "Altekarian paradigm" today. She also offered her own sense of the history/gender interface in the classroom and in research, concluding on a note of qualified optimism. Tanika Sarkar's reflections on modern history and feminist scholarship drew attention to early histories of politically active women. She discussed the problems and possibilities these histories offered, their subsequent stagnation as a field of inquiry, and the present resurgence of interest in women's cultural worlds. The next session on health and demography was chaired by Imrana Qadeer. Malini Karkal's presentation on demography highlighted both its sexism as well as its powerful bias towards population control even when family health was the main research focus. Her paper provided a wealth of statistical information on the subject of sex ratio disparities in the Indian context. Lakshmi Lingam provided an account of the intersecting trajectories of the women's movement and health issues, where violence, fertility and contraception, sexuality, women's work and the household have all been critical. However, major areas of health research continue to be neglected from a feminist perspective, such as gender differences in major diseases and subjects like breast-feeding. She concluded that body-politics and gender strategic concerns needed to be prioritized.

The final session of the day, chaired by Malavika Karlekar, was on sexuality and violence. V. Geeta began her presentation by drawing attention to the new visibility of sexuality in the public domain, as well as contentious issues such as sex-work, AIDS research, gay and lesbian rights. Her paper used "four stories" in the contemporary context of Tamil Nadu, to look at difficult questions of sexual intimacy. V. Geeta argued that though the women's movement has directed attention to issues of power, violence, and legal rights, the terrain of desire and intimacy remains largely untheorized. Kavita Punjabi's paper "Responses to sexual violence: Towards contesting the dominant logic(s)" also focussed on the lack of sufficient attention to sexuality, as a meaningful aspect of one's being, rather than as an act of physical violence, with legal and socio-political dimensions. Citing the growing literature on the subject, she also drew on one of Mahasweta Devi's short-stories 'Choli ke piche' to argue for a radical transformation in social culture outside the logic of the state.

The first session of the third day dealt with the subject of literature. Chaired by Jasodhara Bagchi, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan began her presentation on feminism, literature and women's studies with the early focus on patriarchal ideologies, representation and literary women, which culminated in critical interrogations of "the canon" of western literature. In the Indian context, feminists produced a critique of English literature via colonialism, when gender issues were often as yet incipient. She also discussed the "cultural turn" in literature, as well as present-day backlashes against perceptions of a "doctrinaire" feminism. Kumkum Sangari focussed on the simultaneous gains and losses in the last two decades of feminist intervention within and beyond literature departments—concerning its institutionalization, literary form and genre, translation, historical texts and women's writings. Thus, for instance, even while a lot of good work has been done on the joint formation of Indian and British literatures, wider Indo-Persian configurations have remained invisible. Or again, historical density has been privileged at the cost of aesthetic value where women's writings are concerned, she felt.

In the next session on communalism, chaired by Sumit Sarkar, Vasanti Raman began by pointing to the vexed location of communalism for social scientists and historians of the subcontinent. Her paper mentioned important aspects of the gender-communalism interface and argued for the critical place of inter-community relations, specifically Hindu-Muslim relations as majority-minority, for approaching the question of gender relations within the Muslim community. In the third session on the media, Tejaswini Niranjana's paper on relations between the women's movement, women's studies and the media addressed the ways in which critiques of the media seem to have suffered from a "feminist common sense", with the media question being

reduced to that of censorship. Her paper looked at reviews and articles published in *Manushi* to illustrate some of these problems, and briefly discussed anti-censorship positions, before arguing in favour of historicized approaches to the material and social practices which constitute us as subjects in relationship to the mass media.

This was followed by the round-table discussion on action-research, activism and women's studies, chaired by Devaki Jain. Narayan Banerjee noted the pre-history of action-research in the field of social work, with women's organizations such as SEWA, WWF and AMM providing the impetus for new conceptions of research and action, even though they shared no common methodology. For all its richness as a learning laboratory, however, many questions and problems remain concerning the relations between support groups and local people, sustainability, democratization and local leadership. Kalpana Kannabiran drew on her own trajectory to discuss the interface of activism and women's studies as a member of a women's organization, a research student and as part of a politically active family. The IAWS and autonomous women's conferences were themselves critical forums where tensions between women's studies and activism surfaced, including the majoritarianism visible in the works of feminist academics, the relation of funding to the movement, controversies over homocentricism, or the gap between "domestic violence" as a subject of research and as an issue on the ground. Indu Agnihotri's presentation emphasized the need to contextualize the radical period of the 1970s when women's studies began in comparison to the contemporary political moment and its challenges, so as not to lapse into self-congratulation. The distancing between the women's movement and women's studies also needed to be acknowledged and actively combated on a number of fronts. Kalpana Viswanath focussed on the linkages and dialogue between women's studies and the movement, and the degree of overcoming of earlier distrust and lack of tolerance. However, many gaps remain whether it be the wealth of movement narratives not well documented or lived experiences concerning sexuality, lesbian and gay issues which have yet to merit serious study.

The fourth day of the seminar began with the session on caste and tribe, chaired by Leela Dube. Uma Chakravarti began her presentation on the subject of caste by referring to its problematic and often absent place in contemporary politics and in mainstream academic deliberations. It is imperative therefore to locate practices like endogamy within questions such as land rights and women's labour, and acknowledge the complicity of upper caste women in the maintenance of hierarchical structures. Conditions for productive dialogue between dalit and feminist scholars needed to be fostered, as they exist in south and western India. Virginus Xaxa provided a fine overview of gender issues in the study of tribes in India. In the context of historical

shifts in the conceptualization of tribes over the last two centuries, he highlighted changing conceptions of tribal women—as primitive, amoral and promiscuous, as having a higher social status in dichotomous contrasts to caste society, and so on. He especially dwelt on acute dilemmas concerning individual citizenship rights and the gendering of community identity, as a problem facing both men and women in contemporary tribal struggles against outside exploitation.

The closing round-table discussion on women's studies and higher education was chaired by Karuna Chanana. Manoranjan Mohanty reiterated the importance of consolidating the gains made by women's studies as a base area of democratic thought, especially in the current historical moment epitomized by views of higher education as an instrument towards building a market-oriented society. Women's studies had the potential even to discover as yet undiscovered modes of oppression. Kumud Sharma began by noting that two decades ago "women's studies" was not at all a clearly articulated concept, and noted the massive developments since then at many different levels. Today the challenges and contradictions have sharpened given new conservative agendas; a different question to be addressed was whether women's studies discourses have in turn become, exclusionary. Vidyt Bhagwats' paper drew on experiences, debates and the micro-politics of autonomous versus integrated models of women's studies centres in the university system. After a decade of involvements in research, teaching, extension and publication, she raised questions for the future—the problems of degrees in women's studies, reaching larger audiences and genuine interdisciplinarity. Yashoda Shanmugasundaram described how a separate women's studies department was set up at Mother Teresa University, Kodaikanal. She underlined their pragmatism, close networking, and fundraising activities. Maitrayee Chaudhuri's presentation drew on her years of experience teaching gender in a post-graduate sociology department to emphasize the kinds of challenges ahead. Differences and conflicts in the social backgrounds of students, and in sustaining feminist approaches beyond the initial phase of enthusiasm, are genuine issues that require serious attention. Rekha Pappu raised a number of issues concerning the demographics of enrollments within higher education. She both referred to the gap between addressing women's issues at the state or judicial level without adequate understanding of ground realities as well as the need to look at our school systems.

The seminar was significant in many ways. It forced everyone to take stock of our accomplishments and problems in women's studies from diverse locations and perspectives. It also enthused many who were present to plan ahead and take the deliberations forward in their own contexts. Ana, IECAA0! ■

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Kaleidoscopic Impressions

Kamala Ganesh

INTERSECTIONS: SOCIO-CULTURAL TRENDS IN MAHARASHTRA

Edited by Meera Kosambi

Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 220, Rs. 475.00

Regional/Area Studies as a field is a relatively recent development in academic research in India. Inherently interdisciplinary, it has also no thematic unity except for focusing on one geographical region. Given that often people living in a region have (some) shared history and have evolved (some) unified cultural identity, there is some validity to formally delineating such a field (not to forget its implications for research grants and teaching positions, and of course, its political fall-outs). Of course, individual research on specific aspects of a region, when published in full length, combine two important features: lodged within disciplinary frameworks, they go in depth on a regional canvas. Thus the reader can follow through and evaluate the substantial argument in detail while also enjoying the regional flavour. Such studies are a joy and an eye-opener. But this effect is tougher to achieve in a collection of articles about a region. A volume which brings disparate topics pertaining to a region together can turn out to be a chaotic affair, unless imaginatively put together with a solid editorial input, which goes beyond paraphrasing the articles in summary. The book under review cannot be said to have fully overcome this problem. Further, too emphatic an assertion of regional identity can on the one hand be hegemonic with reference to sub-regional identities, and on the other hand take a parochial tone vis-à-vis inter-regional linkages and continuities.

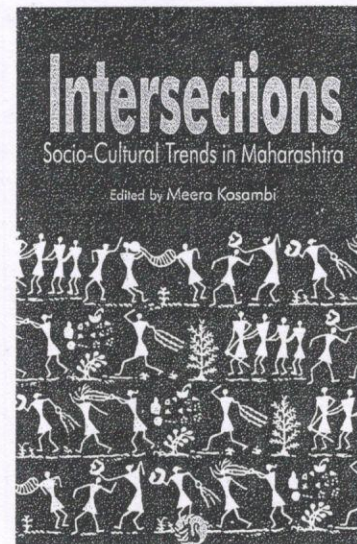
This last danger is skillfully avoided though, with ten contributions from distinguished scholars from India and abroad, all having credentials of sound scholarship. The specific articles comprise a mixed bag of brief, descriptive pieces and longer, well-researched and substantial contributions. Eight articles broadly work within a historical canvas, plus one contribution each from an anthropological and ethno-musicological perspective. This gives the book a certain methodological integrity.

In section 1, the three papers deal respectively with the intricate relationship between the 'Great' and 'Little traditions' with respect to river mythology in Maharashtra (Anne Feldhaus), the norms and values of *varkari* traditions (Irina Glushkova) and Shivaji and the Maharashtrian Identity (James Laine). This section covers a seminal area that is crucial to current self-perceptions of Maharashtrians and the articles by Feldhaus and Laine in particular form a weighty opening for the volume, while also being a

delight to read and savour. Feldhaus superbly employs the method of parallelisms to show how the narrative of the descent of the Ganges onto Mount Meru and thence to Shiva's head can be seen to be echoed in temple architecture and sculpture at the sites of the river sources, and reflected again in water bearing rituals that connect rivers to the temples of the region like Panchaganga temple at Mahabaleshwar. These three are not seen in cause and effect relations, but certainly the parallels are striking and illustrate a larger point, made by pioneering anthropologists like Nirmal Kumar Bose about the links that connect the 'classical'/elite and 'folk' cultures. The connection between Siva and mountains and rivers and their metaphorical significance are discussed insightfully.

James Laine's article masterfully and with great respect for sources, deals with a subject that is a sensitive one in Maharashtra: Shivaji. Maharashtra is a region with great internal diversity and hazy boundaries. 20th century thinking has tried to see this region as a distinctive one, and towards this both the *varkari* tradition and Shivaji's legacy have been harnessed. Analysing the different 'tales' of Shivaji authored over two centuries including the *Shivabharata* composed by Shivaji's court poet, Laine points out that Shivaji's reinvention in the nationalist and post independence periods casting him as a precursor of nationalism, a *vaishnava varkari*, a Maharashtrian and finally even a secular nationalist Indian does not show fidelity to the picture that emerges from contemporary accounts. At the same time, concludes Laine, Shivaji surely ascribed to himself some aspects of being a 'Hindu', 'Maharashtrian' and 'Indian', and in any case, without him the contemporary narratives we call Hinduism, Maharashtra and India would surely be different.

Irina Glushkova eschews the currently popular approaches of either critiquing the saint literature in Marathi for its prejudice against Shudras and women, or ascribing to them absolute radicalism. She prefers to see how these two dimensions are juxtaposed in the perceptions of the adherents. The *varkaris* of medieval times did submit to the norms of their epoch and society, for instance with reference to caste, but at the same time they cherished different values. In the poetry (from which she gives telling examples), there is the idea that the existence of saints itself is confirmation of the fact that values are not illusions but achievable. The values of the *varkari* tradition make a difference to people's consciousness of equality, though it



did not result in the eradication of caste structures.

In a brief note which is a counterpoint to this article, Eleanor Zelliot writes of the ambiguity that 20th century Dalit leaders have felt towards Chokhamela, the untouchable saint whose poetry has touched deep chords, but whose legacy of accepting his fate as *karma* is bitterly rejected.

In a long and characteristically well-researched piece, Y.D. Phadke details the impact of the Depression and the Second World War on agriculture and industry in Bombay Presidency, and concludes that the only silver lining was that with the slowing down of sugar production in other countries, far-sighted Indian businessmen seized the opportunity to convert the liability to a profitable venture and this was followed by the growth of sugar industry and diversification into other industries, giving Bombay a headstart industrially speaking over the rest of the country.

A.R. Kulkarni's article on the Mahar Watan, a specific set of patron-client economic relationships within the *balutedari* system, is based on solid research on British period archival material and contemporary literary works. Painstakingly, he pieces together the complex web of economic interrelationships between the Mahar and the village community or the landed community, which while ensuring survival, established and formalized an elaborate system of social subservience and economic inequality. It was attacked by Mahar leaders of the 20th century as detrimental to the progress of Mahars. He traces the process by which it was eventually abolished in 1959.

Jim Masselos's piece on 'Bombay Time' excavates a piquant moment in the city's history in the late 19th century, when the government decreed that the time zones of the country must be homogenized, and that Madras time would provide the standard. Bombay would have to set its clock forward

by half an hour. The citizens did not agree and energetically crusaded for the right to their own time, and carried on in their own time zone for a while before events overtook them and the unification was achieved.

Ashok Ranade the noted musicologist has contributed an article with nuggets of description of various musical trends between 1800-1920: the development of Naradiya Kirtan based on the writings of the *pant kavis* (rather than the *sant kavis*), and of the *lavani* singing integral to the *tamasha*

form, of *natya sangeet*—trends reflecting the coalescing of a regional identity, not contradictory to the larger affiliations to Hindustani classical musical traditions. In his characteristic style, he weaves into his presentation, the basic point that for a valid reading of a society, the state of and trends in its performing traditions offer vital clues.

Toshi Yamazaki has an article on the life history of Justice Telang, and Meera Kosambi writes once again about experiences of widowhood in the late 19th century, a topic

that she has written much on. Here she deals with the specific cases of Anandibai Karve who remarried and Parvatibai Athavle who went into teaching and the cause of women's education: both were new options that emerged in the period of social reform.

'Quick and interesting glimpses of some salient topics on Maharashtra' is how I would sum up this book. ■

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Samajist Discourse on Feminism

Sayantani Gupta

THE LEGACY OF WOMEN'S UPLIFT IN INDIA: CONTEMPORARY WOMEN LEADERS IN THE ARYA SAMAJ

By J.E. Llewellyn

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 204, Rs. 325.00

In an interesting blend of feminist historiography and the sociology of religion, J.E. Llewellyn's evocative analysis primarily revolves around Arya Samajist women. *Legacy of Women's Uplift in India* is a study of the vigorous yet contradictory connectivities between the selected progressivism of the early Arya Samaj in the sphere of female welfare and its present anti-feminism which makes it an integral part of the chauvinistic discourse of the Hindu Right. Llewellyn's contribution is to examine the tensions within any monochromatic gendered representation of Arya Samajist ideology. While patriarchal constructions of ideal Hindu womanhood have always been a strong component of the Samaj, a parallel conflicting tenor has been its reformist initiatives, especially in the sphere of female education. What emerges is a fascinating insight into the ambiguities of Arya Samajist representations of expected female roles, over a wide timeframe. It covers the colonial milieu in which the Samaj originated and the contemporary context witnessing the ascendancy of pan-Hindu nationalism. As Llewellyn articulates in a lucidly written Introduction, the tensions between a conservative and a liberal ethos within the Samaj have been its leitmotif since its inception. Why exactly its 'masochistic maternalism' could not hold back the early Samajist vigour in female education and how the same maternalist ideology constrains yet creates a public arena for conservative Indian women in the present day, are the areas which Llewellyn seeks to probe.

An initial chapter is devoted to a critique of the reformist agenda of Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj. Llewellyn reads his attack on child marriage and female illiteracy as limited in emancipatory potential. For Dayananda's 'Satyarth Prakash' polemics never question that domesticity, home-making and

maternalism are the cornerstones of female identity. Llewellyn does detect a novelty in Dayananda's notion of a domestic division of labour, between the external male arena and the inner female domain of domesticity. This is a conceptual break with the past, as also is the notion of a mutuality of the marital bond. It makes Dayananda a part of the intense mid and late 19th century socio-intellectual ferment, induced by the colonial state. But, this was a partial and limited progressivism which never visualized an overhaul of the intra-household balance of power in favour of women. The early Samaj continued to remain within this paradigm of patriarchal definitions of expected female roles. Even the enthusiastic espousal of educational achievement for women was more of a means to an end; of being a pre-requisite for successful and nurturing motherhood. Propagating the cause of female education also allowed the Samaj to counter the colonialist attack on Indian civilizational backwardness. Llewellyn thus brings out the revanchist elements in the gender ideology of the Samaj, even in its apparently reformist phase.

Having dealt with its antecedents, Llewellyn moves on to a detailed dissection of the conservative female mindset of present Arya Samajist female activists. Through cameos of three prominent women of the Arya Samaj he attempts to expose the deeply internalized contradictions of female activism within the Samaj. He also enunciates the paradox of gender discrimination reinforcing communalist stereotypes instead of subverting the politics of violence engendered by the Hindu Right.

Neither Swami Miran Yati, nor Prajna Devi nor Shakuntala Arya all of them working for the cause of women's uplift within the contours of the Samaj, can tone down their anti-Muslim rhetoric, as chapters four to six of the book show. Yet Llewellyn's analysis

brings out the nuanced nature of each of these personalities, which belies an universalist rubric of a chauvinistic female mind-set within the Arya Samaj.

Swami Miran Yati's activist persona, based on a strident public preaching role against the ills of Sati, and her own challenging break-away from an orthodox rural upbringing by remaining single are diluted by a zealous commitment to the ideology of domesticity. Prajna Devi, scholar and educationist, founder of Panini Kanya Mahavidyalaya and upholder of the cause of female education, in attempting to recreate the withdrawal and insularity of ancient Vedic life, completely rejects the modernity of Miran Yati. Shakuntala Arya is perhaps the balance between these two extremes of Samajist female activism and is also the most explicit link with the political sphere in her RSS membership. She too straddles the bipolarities of espousing women's causes (as in organizing demonstrations against bride burning) while vindicating a maternal home-based role for the ideal Indian woman.

While Llewellyn successfully projects the contradictions in Arya Samajist gender ideology, his identification of the Samaj as a 'post modern' movement is problematic. Although the Samaj does incorporate anti-modern elements, it is perhaps too simplistic to understand it as 'post-modern'. This is especially so as there is a strong component of irrationality, dissonance and localization in the latter, which the organized and systematic rationalism underlying Samajist activism is an anti-thesis. What Llewellyn has attempted to categorize as 'post-modern' probably fits into the established tradition of anti-colonial resistance, spilling over into the post-1947 crisis of Indian national identity. The Samaj has its roots in the 19th century construction of 'Indianness' pioneered by the western-educated intelligentsia of the maritime Provinces of British India. It is this link which Llewellyn hardly explores including the point at which the Arya Samaj continued the reordering of notions of appropriate female behaviour inaugurated by the Brahmo Samaj in Bengal and the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay. It would have been interesting if Llewellyn had explored the contradictions in the emancipatory agenda of the Samaj in consistence with the partial modernity of the entire process of westernization in colonial India. While all 19th century reform

movements reflected an overall patriarchal discourse, there were also shades of difference in the exact components of conceptualizing ideal Indian womanhood. The Brahmo 'New women' were more westernized in superficial attributes, which could be traced to a stronger influence of the contemporary ideology of Victorian domesticity. In contrast, the more Hinduized and anti-western idiom of the Arya Samaj could be related to the lesser receptivity of northern Indian Hindu elites (who comprised the backbone of the early Samaj) to westernization. Llewellyn ignores these cross-currents in elite ideology in so far as they shaped the emancipatory agenda of colonial reform movements, especially in reformulating notions of female conduct and achievements. This could have been part of the answer to why the early progressivism of the Arya Samaj steeped in a sense of cultural defence against colonialism could so easily dilute itself into the exclusivist championing of a Hindu Indian identity.

One would also have liked to see a more in-depth analysis of the wider environment of post-independence India which has enabled the Arya Samaj to reiterate its innate conservatism in gender issues. While Llewellyn touches upon the inter-relatedness of the politics of the Hindu Right and the assertive patriotism of the Samaj in the brilliant cameo of Shakuntala Arya, a separate chapter devoted to the theme of public activism on gender issues by conservative Indian women would have been useful. This would tie in with the dilemma faced by the contemporary feminist movement in India in evolving a progressive yet anti-western idiom of feminism. The hybridized activism of Samajist women is one way of grappling with the theme of adapting western notions of female empowerment. A deeper and focussed probe of the dichotomous pulls of economic empowerment and maintenance of traditional female roles while situating the contradictory expressions of Arya Samajist women within this wider contemporary context would have been pertinent.

Nevertheless, this is a valuable addition to understanding the complexities in the gender ideology of the present configuration of Hindu nationalist forces in India. Llewellyn's strategic readings of Arya Samajist female voices are also useful in comprehending the nuanced nature of traditionalist forces in contemporary Indian society. Despite its espousal of appropriate female behaviour, the Arya Samaj has been able to constitute a conventional public area giving an opportunity to sizeable sections of women to break out of the confines of homebased seclusion. This book thus ultimately points towards avoiding linearist and ethnocentric notions of progress in the discourse of feminism as it exists in India. ■

Sayantani Gupta is working with the United Nations in Kosovo.

Problems of "Life Style"

Imrana Qadeer

THE NUTRITION CHALLENGE FOR WOMEN

By Louise Lambert-Legacé and Jyoti Gulati
Penguin, Delhi, 2000, pp. 206, Rs. 200.00

When news about rising infant mortality, poverty levels and unemployment becomes oppressive and readings in Indian nutrition begin to undermine hope, one does look for relief. Relief from the sordid reality of under-nutrition and malnutrition that perpetually contribute to disease and death in this country. The easiest way is to look away, to say that those are not the only problems. After all, we the middle-class too have problems. More than that, our problems are of the kind that something can be done about them, they are not intractable, not systematic. These are problems of "life style" and we can change it by disciplining ourselves without bothering about systematic changes.

The author Louise Lambert-Legacé, a nutritionist, and Jyoti Gulati, a specialist in home science, must have felt this way when they chose to write this book. *The Nutrition Challenge for Women* a truly "chatty and informative" book, may help overcome the tide of depression when one is faced with the reality that systematic constraints often make one's knowledge inapplicable. Then, you wear a nice shirt, cook a good meal or take a break just to save your soul!

An escape from the larger reality into the tiny world of the well-off which is often rationalized by the notion of 'epidemiological transition'! This book offers many good and healthy insights into ourselves, and highlights the possibilities that are open to us but that we don't make use of.

The book is divided into four main sections. The first section offers a range of information in the nature of nutritional and health problems of women, their dietary problems and the links of these problems with life in general. The second part deals with the kind of problems that need to be overcome. These according to the author are obstacles that affect women's nutrition and range from living alone or eating out regularly to fear of gaining weight. Women need to set new priorities so that they get sufficient iron, calcium and magnesium. This is the subject of the third section. The final section offers a range of alternate recipes and a healthier menu for women to help them meet the nutritional challenge.

The book is interesting to read; written in a simple and direct style it avoids technical jargon and therefore is very accessible. The authors have dealt with those sections of women, with whom they are most familiar and that is a strength of the book. Some of

the interesting insights are into the male and female differentials in nutritional ailments of the privileged. This is not only because of higher biological demands on women but also because of the sheer excess of intake of men which provides them with higher levels of micronutrients compared to women even in the same social class. Similarly, it is sobering to note that among the privileged of Delhi at least, obesity among women is as high as 50 per cent. Progressive increase in their diets of refined cereal, poor quality fats and increasing amounts of sweets have made women more vulnerable.

Apart from the transformed, refined, "diminished" food of the modern Indian woman, the middle-class woman faces the problems of new life styles. This means double burden of work (home and office), sedentary lives, increased smoking, consumption of alcohol, and eating out adds to poor quality diet. To deal with these the authors offer specific suggestions to overcome fears, unhealthy habits or the practice of treating the act of eating as unimportant.

The author's philosophy is locating diet and nutrition in a framework of health that includes, "being vibrant, attuned and open minded with no self imposed limits". It requires responding to body messages to readjust oneself and demands that we strive, "to discover our fundamental needs" so that our interpersonal relationships become balanced and we become healthier.

If such self-assertion of even the middle-class woman was purely in her hands and if her social conditions were incidental, life would be so much simpler! Non-recognition of a middle-class woman's constraints further narrows the readership for the book. Yet, it quotes from National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (NNMB), and National Health and Family Welfare (NHFW) data that talk of 'Indian women'. They certainly are not the focus of this book. This has been clearly stated by the authors themselves. Why then, give inflated figures of malnutrition for the privileged?

If you can ignore the absence of a social perspective, methodological issues such as use of comparable data, and are looking for sound guidelines on how to eat healthy food, here is a book to read. ■

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Rich Excavations

Mohan Rao

HEALTH AND POPULATION IN SOUTH ASIA:
FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT

By Sumit Guha

Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2001, Hardcover,
pp.178, Rs.475.00

The Sixty-First Session of the Indian History Congress in Kolkata earlier this year hosted an extraordinary panel on the history of diseases and health. A large group of scholars heard a number of papers in these areas, from the ancient to the modern periods, attesting to the fact that the excavation of these histories is of richly rewarding gifts to not just demographers and public health scholars, but historians as well.

Over the last decade in particular, the archeology of disease has been extravagantly mined. A classic in this genre remains the Dubos's *The White Plague*¹ that studied the impact of tuberculosis on society in the West and the causes for its secular decline, commencing well before the identification of the tubercle bacillus in 1865, and the discovery of chemotherapy in the 1950s. Zinsser's classic *Rats, Lice and History*,² rich with epidemiological and historical nuggets, elaborated on the impact of typhus on medieval and modern society in Europe and indeed on the tides of history, tracing the decline of this disease to a broad range of social and economic factors.

In contrast to these masterpieces, bold themes on a large framework, McNeill's *Plagues and Peoples*³ shrunk the epidemiological equation to a peculiarly germ-centric focus that characterizes much of the literature on the history of diseases. The history of health is of course largely the history of the remarkable decline in infectious diseases. It involves tracing secular trends in the consequences of exposure to changing, evolving, disease producing agents (the agent factors) and human resistance to infectious diseases (the host factors) equally changing and evolving, in a complex environment (the environmental factors). Together, these interacting, complex, systems constitute the epidemiological triad. That social, economic and political factors in the environment have relatively faded into the background in these studies is perhaps due to two factors. One is the shift in the concept of health itself, from one encompassing broadly social factors—availability of food, regularity and security of employment, hours and conditions of work, the structure of the family and of work for women, leisure time and care of infants, and

a more nebulous sense of social solidarity and well being—to the absence of disease.⁴ Thus the Chadwickian revolution narrowed public health to water supply and sanitation while the Germ Theory sharpened this narrow focus further. Together with technological hubris and the behavioural approach to public health, these factors have profoundly shaped not just health, but how historians approach the subject.

The history of disease in India is an area of research that has come of age. Scholars such as David Arnold, Ira Klein, Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, and others have done remarkable work in this field. But in this exciting field of study, two scholars stand out both for the depth and breadth of empirical and analytical detail and for the fact that they study the history of health and not of disease: Sheila Zurbrigg and Sumit Guha. Thus the book under review, comprising six previously published essays collected in a volume is very welcome indeed for students of demography, public health and history of disease.

Thomas McKeown, surveying the decline of the death rate in England and Wales in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries noted that significant and long-term declines in mortality had occurred due to a decline in infectious and communicable diseases, the quintessential diseases of poverty and hunger. More remarkably, he noted, medical technology had little to do with this decline of mortality with the possible exception of small pox. This decline of infectious diseases was unlikely to be related to changes in the virulence of the infectious agents over so short a period of time. Nor could it be attributed to salubrious changes in the environment, which indeed had deteriorated due to industrialization and urbanization. Excluding these causes, McKeown went on to conclude that this dramatic decline of infectious diseases could only have been a consequence of increased general resistance to infectious diseases through improvements in the nutritional status of the population⁵.

McKeown acknowledged that the public health revolution of the late nineteenth century played an important role in reducing exposure to water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery and cholera. However these could account merely for a quarter to a third of the mortality decline. Even in this group of diseases, the underlying cause may well have been the same: increasing human resistance due to improvements in nutrition. While McKeown's thesis has been a matter of controversy, Guha notes that "there is substantial evidence to support McKeown's case for England and Wales" (p.13). But in fact this thesis has been strengthened by similar work in other countries. For instance,

the McKinlays research reveals that modern medicine (both preventive and curative), accounted for a minor proportion of the mortality decline from infectious diseases in the U.S.⁶ Moreover, late nineteenth century Britain witnessed an increase in the mean height of the population, along with a decrease in class differentials in heights, both attesting to improvements in nutrition.

Could the McKeown explanation be applicable for the decline in mortality in India, commencing in the 1920s? The guru of demographers, Kingsley Davis, argued that the colonial gift of "death control technologies" was primarily responsible, referring to the role of DDT in the control of malaria. Perhaps picking up from Davis, the *Cambridge Economic History of India* in its chapter on population assumes that the post-1921 decline in death rate was due to measures of public health.

Guha notes that these explanations are "fairly certainly not applicable to India between the Wars" (p.71). Over this same period, income per capita and food availability per capita both stagnated. Considering Ira Klein's argument that the decline in the death rate was not due to changes in economic and sanitary conditions but due to changes in the host-parasite relationship, Guha observes that "the evidence does not support the immunological explanation which requires variation across age groups, whereas we find an almost simultaneous improvement in all ages" (p.81). He suggests instead that the "Indian population... lived longer because the weather gods enabled it to maintain a stable level of moderate malnutrition rather than alternating between adequate nutrition and severe malnutrition as it was doing earlier. This basic improvement was supplemented by the withdrawal of plague, the non-recurrence of lethal influenza and perhaps by public health measures that checked kala azar, cholera and small pox" (p.86).

Guha's explanation in fact begs many questions. How does divine providence translate into less hunger, and thus infectious diseases? If net food availability and per capita food availability stagnated, is there any evidence that better food distribution protected the vulnerable poor?⁷ What public health measures plausibly checked kala azar, cholera and small pox in the period? Indeed, how significant were these diseases epidemiologically as causes of death? Above all, why is it that public health workers like McKeown and Zurbrigg, rather than social scientists, are curiously skeptical about the public health contribution to health during the period?

Another essay visiting many of these themes is the study of the health of the British

¹ Rene Dubos and Jean Dubos (1952), *The White Plague*, Little Brown & Co., Boston.

² Hans Zinsser (1935), *Rats, Lice and History*, Little Brown & Co., Boston.

³ W.H.McNeill (1978), *Plagues and Peoples*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.

⁴ Christopher Hamlin (1992), "Predisposing Causes and Public Health in Early Nineteenth-Century Medical Thought", *Bulletin of the Social History of Medicine*, Vol.5, No.1.

⁵ Thomas McKeown (1976), *The Modern Rise of Population*, Edwin Arnold, London.

⁶ J.B.McKinlay and S.M.McKinlay (1977), "The Questionable Contribution of Medical Measures to Mortality Decline in the U.S. in the Twentieth Century", *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, Summer, 1977.

⁷ To make a comparison, in the 1990s, while the rain gods have been munificent and the food godowns overflow, infant mortality rates have distressingly increased in ten of the 15 major states in the country.

army between 1870 and 1920. Europeans in India in the nineteenth century, Guha notes, bore a huge load of mortality due to disease. Indeed both the conquest and the consolidation of the jewel in Britain's crown was constantly jeopardized by fearful disease mortality. Mortality in battles, in contrast, were a small fraction of these deaths. It was not only expensive, but also physically not possible to replenish troops from England given this scale of morbidity and mortality.

David Arnold points out that the high morbidity and mortality load was considered a huge drain on imperial finances. It was estimated that 100,000 British-born soldiers died in India between 1815 and 1855, excluding war casualties. At an estimated cost to the government of a hundred pounds each for recruitment and training, this represented a cumulative and largely preventable loss of 10 million pounds to the exchequer.⁸

If India was, in Arnold's resonant phrase, a 'disease zone', it was above all a colony. The colonial government was thus unwilling to make the kind of investment in public health that had been seen to pay such rich dividends in the sanitary revolution in England. Indeed the colonial drain of resources themselves contributed in no small measure to the harvest of deaths in the country—in appalling famines and epidemics of cholera and plague, that crossing borders with impunity in pandemics, threatened existing order in Europe.

One partial solution was the cantonment, protected from the squalor and dirt of natives by a *cordon sanitaire*, "creating little islands of purity in the miasmatic landscape of India in

order to protect the health of both soldiers and administratively important civilians" (p.118). Massive investments were made here in water supply and environmental sanitation.

The records of this population offer Guha an opportunity to study, as it were, a natural experiment. Adequate food, both quantitatively and qualitatively, was available to this population. However, medical care during the period positively did more harm than good. Scrupulously constructing time series data on morbidity and mortality for men, women and children, Guha reveals that measures of sanitation indeed had a significant impact on mortality levels in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Extending his observations into the early part of the twentieth, however, Guha treads on slippery ground. Medical knowledge, health education, and consequent changes in health behaviour, he avers, were responsible for the marked improvements in morbidity and mortality, particularly among women and children. While careful to note that these improvements could not have "occurred without the sanitary and administrative infrastructure built up over the previous decades", he nevertheless argues that health education and changes in health behaviour "immensely boosted the effects of macro-sanitation" (p.134).

There is no doubt that individual behaviours do have important health consequences at the individual level. Nor indeed that better hygienic practices are among the many factors that impinge on health. However these do not generally add up to significant factors at the population level. Or how does one explain the singular failure of health education in contemporary times? Indeed fundamental doubts about the behavioural approach to public health have

been cast by data from the Whitehall Study exploring mortality differentials over a long period among British civil servants. The study, which found systematic differentials in mortality by social class, found individual behavioural patterns accounted for a minor proportion of these mortality differentials.⁹ This fascinating paper, then, raises issues in methodology as well: the lack of a control population, one without health education.

The volume carries an extraordinary document in a chapter: a pamphlet by Thomas Coats, a surgeon in the English East India Company at Pune, involved in popularizing vaccination in the early nineteenth century. Yet another fascinating essay is on household size and household structure in western India in the eighteenth century. This adumbrates with contemporary relevance, questioning both the tradition of the 'traditional' Indian family and the supposed reproductive profligacy of the poor. The former view upholds the case for the regressive laws related to the Hindu United Family, while the latter, that for coercive population policies. These two essays, sitting somewhat uneasily in the volume, nevertheless make it all the more interesting for their presence. Exacting scholarship, a fine ear for detail and prodigious hard work, add to the charm of these essays. As indeed they characterize all the essays in this slim but expensive volume. ■

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⁹ M.G. Marmot, G.Davey Smith, S.Stansfield, C. Patel, F. North and J. Head, "Health Inequalities Among British Civil Servants: the Whitehall II Study", *Lancet* 337, 1991.

⁸ David Arnold (1993) *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth Century India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

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Responses-to-Crises

M.S. Ganesh

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS IN INDIA: THE PRESIDENT, PARLIAMENT AND THE STATES

By A.G. NOORANI

Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, pp.358, Rs.525.00

Here from the prolific pen of a piqued political commentator comes a collection of legal opinions on matters of constitutional moment "In the last hectic decade" of the last millennium. They were originally published as articles in newspapers and periodicals between 1989 and 1999. They have now been transmogrified into this book.

As the subtitle indicates, this compendium of essays addresses principally the Executive under the Constitution in its three conventional scenarios. "In the nature of things they are not definitive studies on the topic" (Preface). "It is hoped, however, that they will provide material enough for the interested reader to explore the subject further and form his own definite conclusions precisely on where and why the Constitution was badly mauled in its actual practice" (Introduction, p.10).

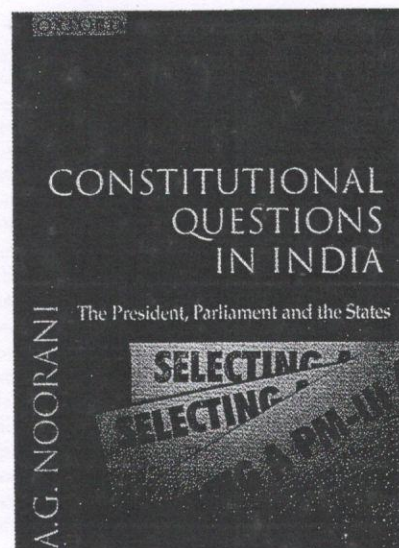
These responses-to-crises articles expatiate on "issues.....of far reaching consequences": (Preface). They concern the institutions and entities of the Constitution: The Centre and the States, the President and the Cabinet, the Government and Parliament, the Courts, the Governors and so on. "Not one of the major institutions and high offices established by the Constitution has worked satisfactorily; be it the President, Parliament, the Prime Minister, the Council of Ministers or the Supreme Court of India" (Introduction pp.1-2). Professor Coupland's prediction of *The Constitutional Problem in India* (OUP 1942) that "the intentions of the Constitution could in fact be contravened and a federal system converted, by unconstitutional but nonetheless effective means, into something like a unitary system" and C. Rajagopalachari's musing in jail that from independence "the only thing gained will be that as a race we will be saved from dishonour and subordination" have proved prophetic.

There is however no mistaking where Mr. Noorani's answer to the constitutional problem in its major dimensions lies. It lies in old Blighty. It is to be found in Dicey's *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, Bagehot's *The English Constitution*, Sir Ivor Jennings' *Cabinet Government*, and *The Law and the Constitution*, Sir Arthur Berriedale Keith's *The King and the Imperial Crown: The Powers and Duties of His Majesty*, Eugene A. Forsey's *The Royal Power of Dissolution of Parliament in the British Commonwealth* and in writings of more recent vintage such as Geoffrey Marshall's

Constitutional Conventions: The Rules and Forms of Public Accountability, Wade and Bradley's *Constitutional and Administrative Law*, de Smith's *Constitutional and Administrative Law*, Rodney Brazier's *Constitutional Practice and Constitutional Texts*, and so on.

The present collection of articles has been classified in three sections: The President, parliament and the state. In Section I, the articles range from the options available when a government loses its majority to the selection and appointment of a prime minister. Section II traverses the gamut of dissolution of the House, the office of the speaker, parliamentary privileges, expulsions and defections, the sub-judice rule and bribery in parliament. Section III covers the dismissal of governors, appointment of chief ministers, imposition of President's Rule, dismissal of chief ministers and the states and foreign relations. The desperate quest for "practice and precedent in India and elsewhere" that marks these writings suffers from two disabilities. First, it fails to discern the distinction between the constitutional principles under a written Constitution such as ours and constitutional practice or precedent under an unwritten Constitution such as that of the United Kingdom. The President and the Queen are not quite the same. Secondly, the attempt to marry and-apply British constitutional practice to Indian political developments is to drown the baby in the bath water. Such disabilities lead to misdirection.

For one thing, such misperceptions may involve sacrificing constitutional provisions and principles to political expediency. Worse still, even the recommended constitutional practice may yield to political casuistry. Writing on 4th November, 1990 after the fall of the V.P. Singh government the previous month, and in anticipation of the Lok Sabha session on 7th November, the author addressed certain questions as to the options available to the President: If the prime minister's motion of confidence were to be defeated in the Lok Sabha, would he be entitled to seek the dissolution of the House for holding fresh elections and what would be the powers and duties of the President in such a situation. He commended as "the correct constitutional practice" a statement in a pseudonymous letter (subsequently revealed as written by the King's Private Secretary) published in *The Times* on 2nd May, 1950, in which the relevant passage reads: "[N]o wise sovereign, that is, one who has at heart the



true interest of the country, the constitution, and the monarchy—would deny a dissolution to his prime minister unless he were satisfied that: (1) the existing parliament was still vital, viable and capable of doing its job; (2) a general election would be detrimental to the national economy; (3) he could rely on finding another prime minister who could carry on his government, for a reasonable period, with a working majority in the House of Commons". The author then wrote: "This statement of principles governing dissolution defies improvement" (pp.18-19). Writing a few months later, on 5th March, 1991 on the prospects of the Chandra Shekhar Government, the author suggested that the honourable course for the Prime Minister "is to resign and advise the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha". This event in fact transpired the next day. In that context, the author once again cited and quoted the above passage from the very same letter dated 2nd May, 1950: "as an authoritative statement of the law". Assuming that was so, the sovereign's satisfaction was predicated on the coexistence of all three ingredients or considerations. Plainly, they were not disjunctive. But this time round the author justified dissolving the House, notwithstanding that a general election would be detrimental to the national economy: "A poll will undoubtedly be expensive, but the existing parliament is not at all 'capable of doing its job'. No alternative government with an assured 'working majority' is in sight. Besides, the political situation has changed radically since 1989. The election manifestos of almost all the parties have been torn up" (p.25). So much for correct constitutional practices, principles that defy improvement and authoritative statements of the law.

The same problem arises in regard to constitutional conventions. The desirability of maintaining these conventions under an unwritten Constitution is one thing. They

impart a certain stability and expectation to the structure and functioning of government. The efficaciousness of such conventions under a written Constitution is quite another. There is an inherent danger that conventions developed historically in other climes and other times, when imported and applied indiscriminately in the host country with its colonial past, would impair political vigour and attenuate the content and flexibility of its written Constitution.

Following the Supreme Court's judgment in *U.N.R. Rao vs. Indira Gandhi* (1971), the author asserted that "the court recognised that the provisions of our Constitution are based on certain British conventions regarding the Cabinet and that to ignore the latter would be to misinterpret the former" (p.54). But the very passage from the judgment quoted by him hardly justifies his contention. The question before the Court was whether after dissolution of the Lok Sabha, continuance of Mrs. Gandhi as Prime Minister was contrary to the terms of Article 75(3) of the Constitution, which provides that "the Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the House of the People". On that narrow issue the Court observed: "It was said that we must interpret Article 75(3) according to its own terms regardless of the conventions that prevail in the United Kingdom. If the words of an Article are clear, notwithstanding any relevant convention, effect will no doubt be given to the words. But it must be remembered that we are interpreting a Constitution and not an Act of Parliament, a Constitution which establishes a Parliamentary system of Government with a Cabinet. In trying to understand one may well keep in mind the conventions prevalent at the time the Constitution was framed". Thus, in no uncertain terms, the Court made it clear that no convention can be allowed to govern the language and construction of a constitutional provision. Keeping in mind certain conventions would only be an aid to interpretation and not determinative of it. In fact, the judgment surveys and considers other relevant and connected constitutional provisions and briefly adverts to material from various text books and the Constituent Assembly Debates placed before the Court and concludes with a telling passage (not mentioned by the author): "But on the whole we receive assurance from the learned authors and the speeches that the view we have taken is the right one, and is in accordance with conventions followed not only in the United Kingdom but in other countries following a similar system of responsible government". In other words, the Supreme Court found that its constitutional analysis and interpretation of the various provisions of the Constitution bearing on the issue stood reinforced by constitutional practice, not the other way round.

The fallacy as well as the irony of the author's approach in 1971 came home to roost over two decades later in his own essay. The provocation for the essay was the 1993

report of the Republic Advisory Committee set up by the Prime Minister of Australia and its discussion on "The Reserve Powers" of the Head of State in a Parliamentary system, especially in regard to the appointment of the Prime Minister, his dismissal, and the dissolution of the Lower House of Parliament. Relying upon the report, the author pleaded for codifying the conventions in these areas. If our constitutional provisions such as Article 75(3) are already based on and incorporate the essence of certain British conventions, it would be idle to codify them all over again. The author does not clarify whether he proposes such codification by way of constitutional amendment or by way of legislation. If the former, the exercise is meaningless and unnecessary; if the latter, it cannot improve upon or be inconsistent with the constitutional provisions. In either event, the codification would be redundant and an exercise in futility.

The coup de grace to the author's contention comes from the very authorities cited by him. He says: "In 1982 the Canadian Supreme Court has described them (conventions), sometimes commented upon them, and given them such precision as is derived from the written form of judgment". (p.59). Against this sentence, footnote 8 on that page cites "Re. Amendment of the Constitution of Canada, 125 DLR (3d) 1 cited with approval in Supreme Court Advocates' on Record Association vs. Union of India: (1993) 4 SCC 441 at p.646 (sic, for 656), para-352". That very passage in the Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association case (this Reviewer was the Secretary of the Association at that juncture and himself also the second Petitioner in that Writ Petition) bears out what I have stated above regarding the earlier decision in *U.N.R. Rao's* case. Paragraph 352 of the cited report of the 1993 judgment opens thus: "There is abundant authority to show that the courts have recognised the existence of conventions and have relied upon them as an aid to the statutory interpretation". There after the Canadian case is merely cited and referred to without any discussion. However, Geoffrey Marshall's *Constitutional Conventions*, cited by the author in another context (p.124) but not in this, points out the very opposite of what the author has to say of the Canadian Supreme Court judgment. Marshall says (p.16 of his book): "In Canada also the Supreme Court has firmly rejected the thesis that constitutional conventions may be directly enforced or may harden into law" and immediately proceeds to quote the following passage from that same judgment (1982) 125 DLR (3d) 1 at 22: "The proposition was advanced ... that a convention may crystallise into law. In our view this is not so. No instance of an explicit recognition of a convention as having matured into a rule of law was produced. The very nature of a convention as political in inception and as depending on a consistent course of political recognition ... is inconsistent with its legal enforcement". As

Marshall clarifies elsewhere in his book (p.51): "Constitutional conventions are established through the medium of belief and conviction, both of which can be changed. As to realism, it could be urged that the more realistic down-to-earth view lies with the recognition that a decision to hold a General Election is no less a piece of political decision making than any other issue of cabinet policy".

The author's *idée fixe* about padding after the British constitutional legacy receives a hard knock from recent perception and writing on these issues in that country itself. His preface and hence, presumably, his introduction to the present collection of his articles, was written on 26th January, 2000. Though the work was possibly available to the author by then, he does not refer to or cite Terence Daintith and Alan Page, *The Executive in the Constitution: Structure, Autonomy, and Internal Control* (OUP, 1999, special Indian price). At the very outset, they caution people in the way they "think about the United Kingdom constitution" against accepting "the received theories of constitutional lawyers as adequate to the needs of intelligent constitutional discussion" and seek to show "how influential concepts such as the separation of powers are challenged by modern socio-economic theory, and how ideas drawn from such theory may enrich the analytical apparatus which constitutional lawyers might use" (pp.1-2). This approach is commended on the perception that "the constitutional order is neither self-contained nor *sui generis*. The borderline between what is and is not a constitutional issue is not given *a priori* but has to be constructed and constantly adjusted by each society, whether explicitly (in societies which give themselves codified constitutions) or implicitly (as in our own case)" (p.2).

The essays under review are but variations on a theme. They are historically informative but theoretically sterile and intellectually hardly enlightening. Though seemingly pragmatic, they are actually on a plane of constitutional rarefaction that has little to do with the lives of the citizenry. They blot out a whole teeming landscape. In these essays one hears the old imperial refrain in its post-modern version: The Constitution is dead. Long live the Constitution.

The author is "a leading constitutional expert" (blurb). He is an honourable man. Many politicians are lawyers. Many lawyers have become politicians, some latterly nominated to the Rajya Sabha. They also are "constitutional experts" and hold forth likewise on the Constitution. And so are they all, all honourable men (by honorific too). Here under leave of *Brutum fulmen* and the rest come I to speak at the Constitution's funeral. But my heart is in the coffin, there with the Constitution and I must pause till it comes back to me. ■

M.S. Ganesh is a senior advocate, Supreme Court of India.

'Which Reforms? Whose Democracy?'

S.Muralidhar

REVIEWING THE CONSTITUTION

Edited by Subhash C. Kashyap, D.D.Khanna and Gert W. Kueck
Shipra Publications, Delhi, 2000, pp. i-vi+408, Rs.200.00

There were mixed reactions to the appointment by the government of the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution ('Commission') in 2000. At the end of one year of its functioning the Commission was able to release two working papers on electoral reforms for discussion. The initial reaction to these papers has been far from encouraging. Meanwhile the Commission has wangled an extension till the end of October 2001 to complete its exercise. Voices of protest over the lack of public participation, not helped in the least by the fact that the discussion papers are available to only the select few having access to the internet, have begun to be heard. The composition of the Commission, headed by a former Chief Justice of India, raised expectations about its performance even while the discerning few expressed doubts whether an overly judge-heavy body to review the Constitution was best suited for the task. The large number of other 'specialists' that have been coopted into sub-committees assisting the Commission perhaps keeps alive a promise of serious scholarship.

The book under review clearly anticipated the constitution of the Commission. It is a collection of papers presented at a workshop organized in Delhi to discuss the need for a review of the Constitution. There are thirteen contributors of papers of varying lengths—from two printed pages to seventy-two. The three editors in their preface kindle the reader's interest by declaring the book to be an assemblage of "the most outstanding contributions" and "an indispensable reading". A careful combing of the four hundred page tome reveals the adjectives to be misplaced.

Subhash Kashyap, one of the editors, has penned an 'introduction' that argues for a review of the constitution by a commission to be appointed by parliament. Surprisingly, in the preface he welcomes the appointment of the present Commission by the executive, which certainly is one of its serious and irreversible shortcomings. Kashyap's largish piece gives no introduction to those that follow or even an insight into the logic of the book's arrangement. On the other hand, it repeats the now all-too familiar and controversial lines of the need for a fixed tenure for the legislatures, the removal of the President's powers in relation to the appointment of the Prime Minister, the two-

party system and the point that a no-confidence motion should not be permitted to be tabled until it names the alternative head of government. In Kashyap's paper one sees the first drafts of the two discussion papers that have emanated from the Commission, of which Kashyap incidentally happens to be a member. Given his long years of service in the administrative side of the Lok Sabha as its Secretary General, Kashyap's contribution is particularly strong on parliamentary procedure and handling the Parliament's image building exercise, both of which have little to do with the kind of constitutional review for which he roots. Kashyap's inability to resist the temptation to hold forth on every issue under the sun proves to be his article's undoing. Its sweeping suggestions ("The New Economic Policy should lead to cutting back on Government involvement and drastic reduction in the role of the state in national economy" - p.47) with no sources whatsoever to help the reader understand their genesis compels rejection of Kashyap's rambling monologue for lack of serious scholarship.

Of the three pieces in the first part, 'Case for review of the Constitution', Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan's merits mention. In a sense he answers Kashyap pointing out that the idea of a fixed tenure for the legislatures or voting by the system of proportional representation will not work in our country. He traces the failures of the working of the constitution to the structures that have come into being and would have us believe that the root of the problem lies "not in our people and politicians or officials or judges" (p.108). While he advocates "fundamental transformation of the rules of the game", he suggests that "such a reform need not be an all-or-none exercise" (p.144). Justice J.S.Verma and former President R.Venkataraman give the 'view from the top'. Typically, they don't see the need to engage with other contemporary points of view of sociologists and political scientists. They do not help to understand the Constitution as a situs, and perhaps even a product of, political struggle but essentially as a legal document saddled with the attendant rigidities. Justice Verma's caution that "the entire exercise of whatever kind must be in conformity with the basic structure of the Constitution" (p.95), which has become the refrain of the present Commission, is not posited in a discussion of its origin. It is difficult to understand why the

editors did not think of commissioning a piece exclusively on the idea of the basic structure that constituted the bulwark of the Supreme Court's judgment in the *Kesavananda Bharati* case. For that matter P.P.Rao, the only other law person in the list of contributors, also misses the opportunity and confines his piece to judicial reforms. Rao proceeds on a tacit acceptance of the present structure of the legal system without acknowledging the other points of view that argue for a drastic overhaul.

The less said about the two pieces constituting the chapter on citizenship values, the better. Karan Singh, in four pages, dismisses us as "a soft society constantly stressing rights, never looking upon our duties." Former Vigilance Commissioner U.C.Agarwal displays a surprising lack of sensitivity when he proclaims that "people have now been taught to assert their separate caste and communal identities and rights. They now talk as we the Yadavs, we the Kurmis, we the Gujjars, we the Dalits, we the Thakurs, we the Jats, we the Muslims etc. The 'old enemies' have been rearmed and regrouped in full force by self-serving politicians to divide and weaken India" (p.166). He turns out to be one more among those who believe that "Ramayan, Mahabharat, Geeta, Upanishads etc. are rich sources for character building stories and lessons" (p.173).

These self-righteous and presumptuous assertions are taken on frontally by Yogendra Yadav in his article "Which reforms? Whose democracy?", clearly among the better pieces in the book. Yadav expresses the apprehension that the Commission may "reflect the narrow middle class agenda that has come to dominate much of the contemporary discussion in the English language media and academia and much of the official reports" (p.297). In what could be easily adapted as a comment on the contributions on some of his co-authors, Yadav points out that the characteristics of the dominant perspective: a universal search for good political system on the basis of proposals not anchored in any analysis of the here and now; a simple-minded belief in the magic of design ("Once we have the right design, the desired set of consequences will follow as a matter of course" - p.298) and a narrow understanding of the design itself as a legal-constitutional one. He forcefully argues that the second democratic upsurge that the country has witnessed in the recent past with the regrouping and consolidation of the marginalized sections places the need "to carry forward the process of democratization" on a priority over reforms of administrative or procedural nature. Yadav raises uncomfortable questions about the middle-class bias in the recent electoral reforms and offers suggestions to correct that perspective. He concludes that the struggle for reforms will have to be a political one which will have to be facilitated by, and not substituted with, the task of the legal-constitutional designing.

It is remarkable that none of the thirteen articles reflects on people's perceptions of the working of the constitution. The high profile of the contributors only accentuates the disappointment with the book as a whole.

Yadav's piece makes compulsory reading for the members of the Commission.

K.C.Sivaramakrishnan and Ajay Mehra bring to bear their experience and long years of engagement with the issue of decentralization in their contributions on the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution that brought about the Panchayati Raj institutions (PRI) and the Nagar Mahapalikas. While both articles are well researched, the one by the former is analytical and offers useful suggestions for improvement of the working of these institutions with a view to achieving their purpose. Importantly, it makes out the case for greater functional autonomy for the PRIs. However, the pieces inevitably overlap in their content thus betraying the absence of any editorial input. The editors also appear to have failed to get Balveer Arora to add a comprehensive and relevant analysis of the statistics on electoral performances of political parties that he generously shares with the readers.

The contributions on the German, Japanese, and French legal-constitutional systems by Dieter Umbach, Chiharu Takenaka and Emmanuel Balayer-Bouchet somehow do not fit into the overall perspective of the book. The absence of comparative analysis in these pieces is remedied to some extent by James Manor in his article on the vote of no-confidence. Manor's caution against the adaptation of the German and other foreign models as being unsuited to Indian conditions warrants notice by the Commission.

Among the many failings of the book that are inexcusable are the omission of any analysis of the working of the major chapters of the Constitution—the Fundamental Rights (Chapter III) and Directive Principles (Chapter IV), ignoring the need for a separate treatment of the complex issues of reservations and minority rights, lack of an acknowledgment of the on-going struggles for self-determination that have come into sharp focus in the recent past; the growing demands for separate geographical states and its impact on the centre-state relations and the quasi-federal structure of the constitution. It is remarkable that none of the thirteen articles reflects on people's perceptions of the working of the constitution. The high profile of the contributors only accentuates the disappointment with the book as a whole. ■

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From Colonial Times To The Present

Lotika Sarkar and Usha Ramanathan

LAW RELATING TO PRESS AND SEDITION

By Rai Bahadur G.K.Roy, edited by Anukul Chandra Moitra and R.K.Mehra
University Book Agency, new edition 1998, pp.906, Rs. 950.00

This is a strangely amalgamated, oddly incomplete, book. Spryly hopperscotching through the early colonial years, the "Historical Evaluation of Press Laws" with which the book begins, stops tantalizingly at 1919. As you turn the page anticipating the legal historian's preoccupation with the Rowlatt Act, you come face to face with the bare statute of the Contempt of Courts Act that was enacted in 1971. A sense of suspension of time and history, and of context and content, settles upon the reader.

In that all-too-brief introduction to what is to follow, we behold some statements of fact to which every law student and journalist-apprentice should be led but most often is not. For instance, the beginnings of pre-censorship, drawing on a "rule of law" approach, is tracked to Wellesley's law making in 1799 (p.5). A precursor to law's protection of the "public servant", now embodied in the "good faith" clause, is found in Wellesley's Regulations which forbade editors to "publish animadversions at the conduct of the public servant" (p.5). The requirement of a licence before publishing a newspaper is located in March 1823 (p.5). The growth of the press, and of presses, and in the vernacular too, is tersely traced, while explaining the emergence of laws which were enacted to control and tame the press. The Licensing Act of 1857 is seen to owe its genesis to the Mutiny; the Press and Registration of Books Act 1867, it is clarified, imposed "no restraint on freedom of discussion as the general tone of the press was decidedly loyal" (p.8); the Vernacular Press Act 1878, we are told, was otherwise known as the "Gagging Act". After a period when the press was, largely, governed by the ordinary criminal law, the Partition of Bengal, and the disaffection to which it gave rise, altered the attitude to the press and the Newspapers (Incitement to Offence) Act 1908 followed, as did the Indian Press Act in 1910. And then, it was 1919, and the book does a vertical dive into the here and now.

The rest of the book is a mystery wrapped in an enigma, as someone said, somewhere, someday. For, annotation is one of the clueless features of this book. While the case law referred to in some chapters stand footnoted, imagine the agony of the curious who have Justice Tek Chand's "Rules of Caution for the Journalists" revealed to them; but with no information at all on where and why the caution was administered. When we read the

31 DO NOT dicta, beginning with:

1. Do Not labour under the misconception that the press is not accountable to the law. The 'special privilege of the press' is a time worn fallacy

and go through such finger-wagging admonitory assertions as

5. Do Not assail the integrity of Judges as it is not a just criticism

and

29. Do Not be sparing in the use of the word 'alleged' wherever necessary, but it is not a complete defence against a charge of contempt of court
the questing mind thirsts for more on the whys and wherefores; but the thirst is left unslaked.

The ageless, undying eternity of the law is subtly (i.e., saying nothing; just setting out) canvassed when the Indian Post Office Act of 1898 and the Press and Registration of Books Act of 1867 are reproduced, cheek by jowl with modern statutory contraptions as is the Cable and Television Networks (Registration) Act 1995 (the Rules under which set out an Advertising Code including this, that: "The picture and audible matter of the advertisement shall not be excessively 'loud,'" leaving one wondering how the printed word of the law translates 'loud' into the sound and noise of the gaudy and the vulgar!)

The book is allegedly a "new edition", "revised and enlarged". The legend has it that this edition is of 1998. But when was it first published? What revisions has it been through? The questions echo, bringing back no answers. Authorship is attributed to Rai Bahadur G.K.Roy, and two editors stand alongside him on the cover. Who is responsible for this edition?

A certain flair, a certain comprehension, a cohesion, is evident in the treatment of the colonial laws. It seems the Rai Bahadur cared to comment. The collection, even if motley, of archival information—reproducing documents providing historical evidence of seditious manifestations, Lord Minto's letters to the native princes and their replies, are instances—or of select Select Committee reports and debates, obviously belong to an

earlier era of retrieval.

In revising the volume, a mere putting together of legislations which the updating editors perceive as related to the press or to sedition seems to have happened. This is a wide arc of deviation from the early author's conjunctive appreciation of press and sedition. There is either an incomprehension of what the book, in its original content, was about. Or there is a politics that is not easy to grasp. How do we understand the reproduction, under "sedition", of

- the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988
- the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1952
- the Extradition Act 1962 (which has to do only with extraditing "out", and not receiving in of those extradited from foreign lands to face trial in Indian courts) or
- the Special Courts Act 1979 (which was to try emergency excesses—often termed a subversion of democracy; but sedition? Hmmm, interesting ...)

Why has the development of case law on the breach of public order and the application of extraordinary laws such as the National Security Act of 1980 and the Preventive Detention Act of 1950 been placed under sedition? Is the existence of these being portrayed as sedition, perhaps? Why have cases of conflict between Muslims and Hindus been introduced into the section on sedition? (see, in illustration, pp. 650-51, 652, 653, 661) Why does the TADA Act of 1987 enter a book on sedition which promises to tell the history of the law, but reduces comment into a commentary—where, in legal tomes, commentary is a hotchpotch production of parts of what courts have said about the law

in question? So, here we have the Supreme Court being quoted chapter and verse, in section after section of the TADA Act. That court had held the law, including its negation of fair trial standards, valid. Not too long thereafter, concerted pressure from a range of actors including civil liberty groups, the National Human Rights Commission (which is chaired by a retired Chief Justice of India) and the political opposition, led the law to its natural death, which in this case was by the efflux of time. And even before the wrongs of the TADA days disappear into antiquity, and while TADA detainees still await trial years after the alleged event and after the demise of the law, TADA threatens the citizenry in various state manifestations. But none of this is the concern of the author (editors?) despite promising "history". Why, even that the law has lapsed doesn't appear to have been found worthy of mention!

Is the word "terrorist" sufficient to make a law fit for inclusion in a book on sedition? Is that why the Protection of Human Rights Act 1993, under which the NHRC has been established, is in this volume? But then why is it among the laws governing freedom of expression? Are the editors telling us something when they bring the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act 1997 into a book on the press and sedition?

Such are the unplumbed shallows of the editorial mind that their import and content are not easily understood. This is particularly disappointing to those who are seeking the relevance of "sedition" in a post-colonial state. There is such a dearth of writing on the law relating to sedition that a voluminous production which dedicates almost half of itself to sedition makes the heart do a skip and a jump with hope. When that hope

comes crashing amidst the unyielding (of any meaning) rocks of unrelated statutes, it is, at the least, a fiasco of sorts.

There are so many unexplained, and inexplicable, parts of this book, that one more or less should, perhaps, not excite comment. Yet, when in the midst of the 1993 statute on the protection of human rights, there is a pause (between pp.445 and 457) while the three Lists of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution are laid out, you know this is a riddle. But, may be by now you also know that this is a riddle without an answer. Again, when the printed word advises that "No advertisement shall be permitted which ... in its deception of women violates the constitutional guarantees to all citizens" (p.262), you are unsure if it is an error, to be replaced by "depiction", or if, in fact, there are hidden concerns in law unbeknownst to us.

It is difficult to conjure up a likely user-body/readership for this book. The first part of the book which has the imprimatur of early authorship would invite scholarship to attend to it. This is also the only part that is relatable to the theme with which the title engages. May be there is virtue in finding laws governing the media all together, in one place; but the burden of bulk that the "sedition" half of the book imposes on it quite offsets this virtue.

There is an axiom that lingers long after the book is read: mass is not equal to substance. Nor, one may add, can it be a substitute. ■

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Creating Human Rights Awareness

B.B. Pande

HUMAN RIGHTS—A STUDY

By Shivagami Paramashivam

Shriram Computer Prints & Offset, Salem, 1998, pp. 283, Rs. 255.00

PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Edited by Abdulrahim P. Vijapur and Kumar Suresh

Manak Publications, New Delhi, in association with the Centre for Federal Studies, Hamdard University, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 430, Rs. 750.00

HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA—HISTORICAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Edited by Chiranjivi J. Nirmal

Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 333, price not mentioned.

The three books are being jointly reviewed for the reasons of, first, commonness of their theme, and second, their emergence in the post-fiftieth anniversary year of the enactment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. However, despite the commonness of

their theme the three books differ in respect of the dimensions and perspectives of approaching Human Rights issues, as well as the North-South divide in the origins of the contributing authors, which has some bearing on the identification of the problems and the styles of their treatment.

...these books and other initiatives like these are the necessary first steps towards creating better human rights awareness that will ultimately lead to a transformation in the anti-human rights environment that may appear to be all pervasive today.

It is a happy augury that today the Human Rights theme is drawing the attention of a larger number of social scientists than ever before. The very fact that both Chiranjivi J. Nirmal and Shivagami Paramashivam are basically Professors of History, shows that Human Rights is no more considered the

monopoly of Departments of Law, International Relations and Political Science disciplines. While their books on Human Rights are a product of scholarly research or requisitioned articles, the edited work of Vijapur et al. is the outcome of two seminars organized by the Centre for Federal Studies of the Jamia Hamdard.

Paramashivam's treatment of Human Rights theme is more theoretical and International dimension-oriented. Beginning the discussion with the 'Theories of Human Rights' in Chapter I, she has alluded briefly to jurisprudential issues like relationship between Human Rights and Justice, Human Rights and Liberty, Human Rights and Equality etc. One only wishes that this very useful chapter could be given greater elaboration. Chapters II, III, V and Appendices I to V have undertaken a discussion relating to the U.N. Declaration, 1948 and significant international conventions, covenants and protocols. However, certain important conventions relating to torture and non-discrimination against women ought to have been mentioned too. The discussions on Human Rights of children, refugees, indigenous people, women, prisoners and right to education, right development and non-exploitation have been given a sketchy treatment. In the context of rights of the children no mention has been made to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989. At some places the information provided is factually incorrect (refer to p. 68 lines 5-7). The printing and the layout of the book calls for improvement.

Vijapur et al. and Nirmal's edited works are far more serious exercises. The essays in Vijapur's compilation are categorized in six sections, which are devoted to 'Human Rights: History, Theory and Philosophy', 'Human Rights in India', 'Minorities, Subordinate Groups and Human Rights', 'Environmental and Developmental Issues', 'Human Rights Education' and 'Human Rights and International Relations'. Almost all the contributions to this excellently produced compilation (except the ones contributed by veterans like K.P. Saxena, R.M. Pal and R.V. Pillai) have come from young scholars who have the advantage of fresh ideas and modern style. The freshness of ideas is amply reflected particularly in Kumar Suresh's 'Multiculturalism, Federalism and the Agenda of Human Rights', Ajay Kumar Singh's 'Role of Judiciary in the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights', Sanjay Joshi's 'The Right to Equality, Life and Liberty Under the Constitution', K. Savitri's 'Political Violence in India: Implications for Human Rights', Abha Chauhan's 'Dowry-Related Crimes: Violence of Human Rights', A.S. Narang's 'Debate on Minority Rights', Abdulrahim Vijapur's 'Freedom of Religion and Belief in India', S. Imtiaz Hasnain's 'Linguistic Human Rights and Language Planning', Arshi Khan's 'Educational Backwardness of Muslims: The Human Rights Perspective'.

These essays coming from young minds have been very helpful in broadening the horizons of knowledge discourse on the human rights theme. The first essay 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Cornerstone of Modern Human Rights Regime' by Vijapur traces the origins and development of human rights at the international dimension. The same theme is followed up in essays 2 and 3. Guha Roy attempts to trace the roots of human rights movement in India, but one wishes he had devoted more attention to the pre-colonial and colonial period evolution of human rights concept in India. Apart from the complex exposition of human rights in vedantic religion, human rights in the modern sense were accorded a significant place in the Buddhist and Jain religions. However, in most of the essays one gets a feeling of excessive brevity that often mars the full and complete exposition of otherwise worthwhile ideas. The printing and get-up is of high order. The compilation has a definite message or a statement coming from the young, the minorities and other vulnerable groups whose voice deserves to be heard and supported.

In contrast the contributions to Chiranjivi J. Nirmal's compilation are mostly by academics of considerable standing, some of whom have been associated with research and teaching on human rights and social justice issues in India and abroad. It comprises thirteen essays on most of the current human rights debates on some special topics such as 'Victims of Human Rights Violations: Nature and Indigenous Populations', 'Human Rights Awareness in Education', 'Situating Human Rights in the Media', 'Refugees and Human Rights: International and National Experiences', 'Organizational Basis of Human Rights', 'The Working of the Natural Human Rights Commission: A Perspective', 'Awakening of Human Rights' traces the historical roots of the human rights concept. In this context the discussion on the origin of human rights in ancient India appears to be logical. However, within the Indian tradition the Buddhist and Jain period idea of human rights, as well as those of the renaissance period could have been included as well. Similarly the human rights discussion in the context of the nature and indigenous people could have been made more India-centric, because the problems of project displaced people (PDP) is still a formidable issue in our society. The third essay relating to the constitutional context of human rights is a lucidly written piece that has excellently portrayed the relationship between fundamental rights and human rights. Indirani Sridharan's essay on feminist perspective of human rights is very well articulated and incorporates almost every Indian debate on women's rights issues, including judicial decisions, conventions and covenants and statistics. Along with women the essay has discussed the human rights of

children as well, to arrive at a conclusion that in a male dominated society like India, even after fifty years, the human rights of women and children still remain under-protected. Chiranjivi J. Nirmal's essay on human rights of prisoners is too short and has relied upon court rulings and legislative measures only till the eighties. Significant court rulings have been handed down in the last five years.

The three essays that stand out for their uniqueness are 'Organizational Basis of Human Rights', 'The Working of the National Human Rights Commission' and 'Setting an Agenda'. Organizational basis has provided useful discussion relating to international and national institutions and agencies that are responsible for providing organizational support to the human rights concept. An excellent critique of organizational practices is given thus: "Most organizations in reaching out to the dispossessed and needy, go by the values and policies of industrialized societies, creating centralized and pyramidal enclaves, and by sponsored projects they enforce a certain kind of dependency. The solution lies in greater participation of people in the work involved" (p. 207). Professor Vijai Kumar's essay on the working of the NHRC does provide some useful inside information, but the valuation of the 'working' is more formal rather than critical. This essay, because of its theme, could have been better explored empirically. We should have with us every possible professional information about an institution which has aroused many hopes. The last essay has alluded to the broadening horizons of human rights discourse on account of the ongoing phenomenon of globalization and free-market principle. But even in the wake of growth and progress, we cannot afford to forget and ignore the refugee and the homeless, who are bound to be thrown up in the course of the 'lop-sided' development. However, at times one does feel that the sequence of the essays could have been altered. For instance the fourth essay could have come in place of the second essay, which relates to the human rights of a specialized target group. In the end for the benefit of students and activists an elaborate bibliography along with notes is appended.

The human rights discourse initiated in these books may only marginally alter the ground realities, that still remain in the stranglehold of gender, caste and religious hierarchies. But these books and other initiatives like these are the necessary first steps towards creating better human rights awareness that will ultimately lead to a transformation in the anti-human rights environment that may appear to be all pervasive today. ■

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Human Predicament and Its Sublimation

Naqi Husain Jafri

ZIKR-I-MIR: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MUGHAL POET

Translated, annotated and with an introduction by C. M. Naim

Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 213, Rs. 395.00

Mir Taqi Mir (1723-1810) by general consensus is the most celebrated poet of Urdu whose mastery of the verse has been acknowledged by several of his notable contemporaries and later poets including Ghalib, Mir's illustrious rival to fame. Among many distinctions that Mir has, his understanding of the human predicament and its sublimation through a poetic medium in a felicitous manner are the easily recognizable features of his poetry. Mir makes no effort to initiate us into tough intellectual postulates for the explication of the human situation, but baffles us with his renderings of couplets, which are subtle and attractive. Besides inheriting the common themes of the Indo-Persian tradition of poetry, Mir witnessed the two devastations of Delhi, which brought about untold miseries to the people of India, i.e. the sack of the city and its neighbourhood consequent upon the third battle of Panipat (1761) and the earlier calamity due to the invasion of Nadir Shah Durrani (1739). Furthermore, the later half of the eighteenth century Mughal India was characterized by the declining imperial authority and an empowering nobility. It unfolded innumerable situations of betrayal and treachery, ambition and greed and flickering fortunes particularly at a time when the British had begun to assert their authority after their initial successes in Bengal. Mir's poetry betrays the tension and the pathos of the age through the glorification of human love. The celebration of life remain the dominant passion of his ghazals.

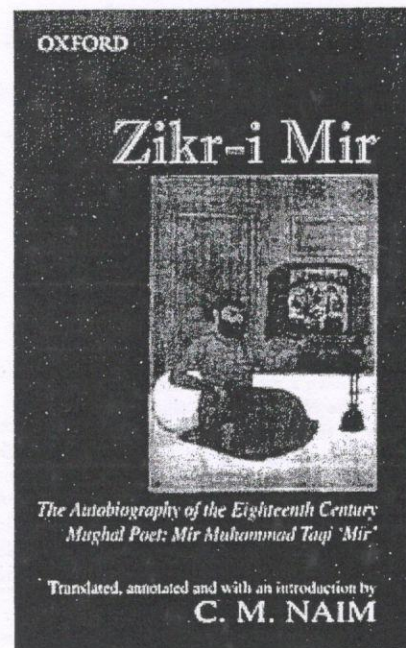
Zikr-I-Mir is the account of the poet's life and antecedents in Persian which is a pioneering work as it is the first ever autobiography of an Urdu poet. Besides his autobiography, *Zikr-I-Mir*, he also wrote *Nikat-al-Shu'ara*, a chronicle account of Urdu poets and *Faiz-I Mir*, a collection of sufistic anecdotes, both in Persian, which may be seen as supplementary texts to *Zikr-I-Mir*.

The present book is the English translation of *Zikr-I-Mir* by C.M.Naim, Professor of Urdu studies at the University of Chicago. The translator/editor has annotated the text with useful information prefaced by a scholarly Introduction. Professor Naim has collated the texts from the existing six manuscripts of *Zikr-I-Mir* available at Aligarh, Calcutta, Gwalior, Lahore, Lucknow and Rampur. On the basis of the difference in the concluding passages of the autobiography,

Professor Naim has appended them, as Narrative A and Narrative B. Besides there are appendices on historical personages, glossary of Persian words, Mir's patrons, Mir's literary milieu, Mir's 'lunacy' and love and sex. Professor Naim has done his job so painstakingly that the book deserves to be rated at par with an Arden edition of Shakespeare.

The book as it now exists "contains a brief notice of Mir's ancestors, an extended section about Muhammad Ali, Mir's father, and his dear friend Amanullah, followed by a comparatively detailed narrative of the political events of the time only some of which were actually witnessed by Mir. The account of Mir's own life is scattered and quite summary in nature. He does not give us the kind of personal details we expect in an autobiography" (p.11). Naim considers *Zikr-I-Mir* to be 'a deliberate enterprise' and avers that Mir had specific purposes in mind when he wrote *Zikr-I-Mir*. One of the purposes attributed to Mir is 'to claim a Sayyid lineage for himself while the other objective according to Naim was 'to establish his father as a major Sufi... whose fame had spread far and wide.' Naim also sheds light on the efforts of Mir to denigrate Sirajuddin Ali Khan Arzu, his stepbrother's uncle and his self-acknowledged mentor.

Naim convincingly argues as to why Mir put so much effort into projecting his father as a prominent Sufi. One of the possible motivations, Naim surmises, "may have been the envy of his Peer Khwaja Mir Dard, who belonged to a prominent Naqshbandi Sufi family and who was also a Sayyid on both sides of the lineage." Naim further argues: "even if we disallow any envy on Mir's part, it remains safe to believe that Dard's glorification of his own father could have suggested to Mir the way to establish a distinguished figure other than Arzu for his own identification" (p.13). The so-called objectives of the autobiography, i.e. 'to claim a Sayyid lineage' and 'to establish his father as a major Sufi', who otherwise was a 'non-entity' in his age testify to the fact why there did not exist a tradition of autobiography in India in earlier times. The people were not interested in reading the authentic accounts of personal lives but expected their writer/heroes to conform to certain socially acceptable norms of the elite, the distinguished and the illustrious, whose flaws of lineage or character were either suppressed or negated. Naim



The Autobiography of the Eighteenth Century Mughal Poet: Mir Muhammad Taqi 'Mir'

Translated, annotated and with an introduction by
C. M. NAIM

posits that Mir managed to enter a forged entry in a copy of Arzu's tazkira, *Majma'-al-Nafa'is* about himself and his ghazal writing though he had his grouse against him for unknown reasons.

Mir was singularly fortunate in living through the reigns of five Mughal emperors from Muhammad Shah to Shah Alam II. He also saw the age of some of the most powerful nobles of the eighteenth century Mughal India like Najib-ud Daulah, Safdar Jang, Mahadji Sindhia, Suraj Mal, Jugal Kishore and Imad-ud Mulk, besides such illustrious poets and scholars as Khwaja Mir Dard, Mirza Muhammad Rafi Sauda and Shah Waliullah and mystics like Mirza Mazhar Jani-I Janan and Shah Fakhruddin. It was the best of the times and in a sense one of the most treacherous and depressing times. *Zikr-I-Mir* sheds light on almost all the aspects of life that Mir experienced. In the absence of any model of a biographical format, whatever we get in Mir's autobiography is illuminating.

Zikr-I-Mir recounts some of the events of that age which had a bearing on the political and social life of the people particularly in and around Delhi and Lucknow. We get a glimpse into the intrigues of the imperial Mughal court, the Maratha-Rohilla rivalry culminating in the Third Battle of Panipat and the conduct of Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India later impeached by the British parliament. The book also sheds light on the social fads and literary taste of the nobility and, in general, offers a comment on the life and worldview of the people. The 18th century Mughal India has received the critical attention of historians and social scientists in the recent past focusing upon the possible causes of the crisis of empire that ultimately led to the fall of Mughal dynasty.

The translation of the source book in

Persian has been rendered into English with such care as is expected of a text dating back to eighteenth century. The ambience of the archaic modes and manners of expression have been preserved. The narrative is punctuated with anecdotes, incidents, admonitions, tales, subtle points, rare words, excellent remarks, Dervish-like advice, morals and in the end witty tales. Some specimens of Naim's translation deserve to be cited in order to bring out the feel of the narrative:

"Endless praise be to that Eloquent one alone... The Master of Eloquence who makes known a thousand different hues of speech; the Noble Teacher who provides a tongue to those who cannot speak. The Creator who blessed the world with creation; the Crafter who turned dust into the human" (p.25).

"Houses had collapsed. Walls had fallen down. The hospices were bereft of Sufis.

The taverns were empty of revelers. It was a wasteland, from one end to the other" (p.93).

"Circumambulate human hearts, for that is truly the *tavaf*. Be a votary of yourself, for there is no finer goal. Nothing exists besides Him; nothing is manifest without Him. (Verse:)

I asked the House, 'Who is the Intimate of the House?

It softly asked back, 'But who is a stranger?' (p.62)

The archaic expressions, culture specific terms and Persian idioms have been copiously glossed in the footnotes by frequently referring to Arzu's *Charagh-I-Hidayat*, the lexicon Mir had richly exploited. With regard to the literary merit of the book Naim's opinion deserves to be cited: "Contrary to the claim made for Sir William Jones, Arzu was the

first person to note and extensively comment on linguistic similarities between Persian and Indic languages" (p.149). Professor Naim deserves accolades for accomplishing such a stupendous task.

In Appendix I the absence of Shah Waliullah Dehlavi in the entry on 'Other Important Persons' is conspicuous. The reference to '*Sabihe ke sabahat-I-oo*' and '*Malihe ke malabat-I-oo*' (p.26) may also allude to a saying of the Prophet, which may be rendered as 'I am *Maleeh* and my brother Yusuf was *Sabeeh*.' The footnote on Mu'aviya, the founder of Umayyad dynasty, that he had been an 'honored companion' of the Prophet is factually incorrect. He was undoubtedly one of the companions but by no stretch of imagination an 'honored companion' (p. 28). ■

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The Man, His Times and The Ghazal

Shama Futehally

THE FAMOUS GHALIB

By Ralph Russell

Roli Books, Delhi, 2000, pp. 192, Rs. 295.00

This slender volume contains selections from Ghalib's ghazals translated into English by Ralph Russell. He makes it clear that for the great part he did the work in collaboration with the scholar Khurshidul Islam, although they were not able to complete the project together.

The selections comprise couplets rather than entire ghazals, although a few ghazals do appear, somewhat unexpectedly, in the middle of the book. Fortunately the publishers have followed the practice, now recognized as necessary for Indian readers, of printing the verse in the Urdu, Devnagiri and Roman scripts.

The translations are complemented by essays on Ghalib the man, on the times he lived in, on the ghazal form, and on problems of translation. They are written for the general reader, in the precise but unforced style which has made Russell one of the foremost interpreters of Urdu literature to the non-Urdu-speaking world.

Or even to the Urdu-speaking one. I am a speaker of Urdu, so-called, but it took this book to make me see exactly *why* love became the main subject of the ghazal; how the social structure ensured that it was forbidden, terrifying, hopelessly longed for. And the essay called 'The Humanism of the Ghazal' captures what might be called the personality of the ghazal as few pieces of writing have done.

Russell makes it clear that in making his selections, he has deliberately excluded verses which 'needed an explanatory note'. Obviously this has meant the exclusion of many difficult couplets which tease Ghalib-lovers unceasingly. He also explains that he has chosen to translate couplets rather than entire ghazals because it is the individual couplet which is retained in the public memory; which is quoted and shared and loved. The ghazal becomes more important on the occasion of an actual *mushaira*, where the repeated use of the end-rhyme creates a steadily mounting excitement. This is true as far as it goes, but I think that in regard to English translation, Russell's reasoning is misplaced. For the English reader, quite as much as for the *mushaira* audience, there is a thrill in seeing the end-rhyme cunningly used. Also, the structure of a ghazal is more easily recreated in English than are the fine nuances of a couplet. For this reader, at least, the ghazals which have been translated in their entirety are the most satisfying part of the translation.

For the rest, readers may well feel that the success of the translated couplets lies in *tone*. It is tone, again, which is the triumph of Russell's translation of Ghalib's prose: the speaking voice which emerges is so eerily close to what one imagines Ghalib would have said in English. Needless to say, accuracy of tone results from accuracy in vocabulary—in matching the English word with the Urdu one, shade for shade. (This is a task in which Indian translators fail abysmally.) The following examples will demonstrate:

*Pila de ok se saqi jo ham se nafiat hai
Piyala gar nahin deta na de sharab to de*

If you dislike me, saki, pour the wine in my cupped hand

I may not have the cup? So be it. Let me have the wine (p. 79)

Kabe kis munh se jaoge, Ghalib?

Sharm tum ko magar nahin ati
Ghalib, you have the face to go to Mecca?

But then you never feel a sense of shame

(p. 96)

*Han, vuh nahin khuda-parast; jao, vuh
bevafa sahi*

*Jis ko ho din o dil aziz us ki gali mein jae
kyon?*

No, she does not bow down to God

Yes, she is faithless too. Now go!

If I had prized my heart and faith

Would I have gone into her lane? (p.54)

The care which is required for such close translation is made evident in Russell's description of his method in working with Khurshidul Islam:

'It was...my task to produce a draft translation into English and we then sat together again and discussed these drafts, line by line and word by word, amending and modifying until we were both satisfied that we had captured all the essentials of the original' (from the Preface).

However, some readers will question whether such fixed and unchanging 'essentials' can exist. And, supposing them to exist, whether a close reproduction of the poem in another language is the only way to capture them, as Russell seems to imply in his discussion of translation. The paradox which most translators have to deal with is this: in one language, a certain collection of words, structured in a certain way, provides that rush of energy which makes a poem. In another language, the same words structured in the same way provide only a good translation. This is why translators sometimes go their own way to work, and try to recover meaning by acts of apparent faithlessness. Russell himself has proposed the construction of an imaginary poem by stringing together couplets from different ghazals which have a common mood, although 'it would not be authentic'. I hope very much that Russell, stern disciplinarian that he is, will allow himself to produce this lawless poem. ■

Shama Futehally is a writer and translator.

Patches of Kerala

A.J. Thomas

THE BETTER MAN

By Anita Nair

Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 1999, p. 361, Rs.250 (Paperback)

Packaging Kerala seems to be the latest phenomenon in Indian English fiction. The kind of global attention to the State on account of the Booker Prize was matched only by the global rating of Kerala last year as one of the fifty tourist destinations of the world one must visit, made by *The National Geographic Magazine*. Both have direct market implications—and the spate of Indian English novels featuring the Malayali's home State and tourist packages offering a juicy bit of 'God's Own Country's have many things in common: exotic 'grabs' from the endless 'serial' of Keralite quotidian life and the gaps filled in by the riotous imagination of the author, in the case of novelists, and, the 'instant' Ayurvedic massages, the 'capsule' Kathakali, local-specific ritual performances like Theyyam, Thira, Padayanai etc., plucked out and paraded on the streets of cities for the visitors' benefit, in the case of tourism packages. No one is interested in the holistic approach and first-hand knowledge or experience. In my opinion, fiction-writers should either write from direct experience, blended with cementing imagination. Like Hemingway. Yes, the rare genius can write purely from imagination. Like Kafka wrote America. Oh, we are talking about old-time writers. I am launched into such musings by Anita Nair's novel, *The Better Man*. The blurb declares, 'Rich in social detail and written with remarkable ease and restraint, this is a first novel of rare sophistication. I freely admit that I was filled with unrestrained admiration for the efforts of the author who provides page after page of exhilarating prose. But what about authenticity? Where do you find in any Kerala village now, a village crier with a drum? Is there an exclusive house-painter in such a 'sleepy little village,' noted for its 'idyllic rural existence' even after the Gulf boom left the Kerala rural landscape dotted with concrete monstrosities? I think something has gone wrong at the conceptual level. Characters whimsically put together do not perform the alchemy of turning themselves into living beings in their own fictional domain. And authenticity is the biggest casualty resulting from all this.

Like a film with some wonderful footage put together, but failing to make a coherent artistic whole; like a painting with excellent brush strokes, but, which, on the whole, doesn't show figures, landscapes, or anything else that has a distinct identity; like a sculpture with well-formed hands but hideously out-of-shape lips or legs—this novel fails to establish in the readers' minds a totality of artistic experience. The 'esemplastic imagination' the old masters speak about, is lacking here, it seems. Neither is it a work in the fragmented vision mode set in a 'postmodern' scenario. The narrative is a traditional one, shifting between the speaking subject and the third person.

One always comes across the counterparts of one-screw-loose Bhasi in real life—faith healers, pranik healers, reiki healers, and simply, healers. But this character is too unconvincing in fiction where reality is necessarily defeated by virtual reality. His delicate relationship with Mukundan, which serves more or less as a thread to hold the random narrative segments together, is too flimsy and unconvincing. The sheer will of the author wrought this relationship, one feels.

The whole story is supposed to take place in a village that is so remote and out of civilization's reach, and yet sports a sub-post office, electric office, and is dotted with countless Gulf-houses. The Odiyan episode and several others like it are very authentic indeed, but very poorly woven into the fabric of the novel. (But a doubt remains: is the Odiyan a 'thotty'—scavenger—in a Valluvanadan village? I thought he was an agricultural labourer, belonging to the scheduled castes.)

True, the author has worked very hard with the topography of this Valluvanadan village, and has snatched chunks of its culture, but fails to form an integrated vision of life in such a village. Sadly, what the protagonist says of an exile, gapes through: "Let me tell you, an exile is a creature who, in spite of being banished from his land never ever manages to sever the ties with the place where his umbilicus lies buried a pitiful being who combines one part memory and two parts imagination to create a land so magical, so unique, that he can never truly belong to the present—to the land that now offers him refuge...." The entire novel seems to stem from such an exiled existence.

Power House Ramakrishnan is utterly unreal and superfluous. As unreal as Mukundan climbing into the urn to rediscover himself. Winning a lottery and getting twenty lakhs and a Maruti Deluxe doesn't make a man a king overnight, especially in a village where there are the regal Namboodiris of Plashi Mana wielding their 1925 Bentleys and have the last say over everything of importance and Achuthan Nairs with their gargantuan, imposing tharavaads. It would have been more convincing if the author could conjure up a nouveau riche from the Gulf, with possible connections with Dawood Ibrahim or Chotta Shakeel! (There were actually rumours a couple of years ago, that animas of these worthies were amassing property all over Kerala, especially in the Malabar region). There are in reality a lot of Gulf-rich even in the rural interiors of Kerala, like in Kaikurissi, who flaunt their money and appropriate power and social respect, before whom a mere lottery winner pales into insignificance. It has gone on record, according to newspaper surveys from time to time, that most of the lottery winners have ended up as paupers, owing to their mindless squandering of the money they got without any effort. Hence, Power House Ramakrishnan is the least authentic of all the characters.

The observations of the omniscient author are necessarily that of an outsider: like the garishly dressed women in conspicuous gold ornaments, the imperviousness of the government servants, the complacent telephone exchange official, the trade-union ridden Kerala—all these are in place, but obviously so.

The story of Anjana's married life and later on Mukundan's winning her forms a separate story. Like Valsala and her paramour Sridharan who end up killing Prabhakaran Master, Meenakshi and her many avatars, many other sub-plots are individually developed, but not adequately integrated into the novel forming its warp and woof.

The goody-goody ending, like in a third-rate entertainment film, with explosions set off by Mukundan blowing up the building Ramakrishnan erected on the plot of land acquired by evicting Bhasi, brings to a halt this bumpy narrative. The chapter headings catch one's eye more as flippant than half-mocking.

Whole sections of the novel strike the readers as brilliant. The depiction of Mukundan's encounter with supernatural beings—his dead ancestors and mother—for example. So also, his efforts to win the affection of the villagers. The portrayal of Achuthan Nair's character is so life-like and convincing, one feels almost sorry that it is wasted in the failed totality. There is rare finesse in the portrayal of the petrified Damayanti, whose husband and six-month-old child were mowed down by a speeding truck, breast-feeding Bhasi, and relieving herself of the burden of unshed breast-milk, and Bhasi eventually healing her. The description of Krishnan Nair's preparation of chicken curry is perfect. Read this: "...A free-range fowl just the right size and age. He would wring its neck and pluck its feathers....He would chop it, wash the pieces, and drain and wrap them in a plantain leaf so that the meat wouldn't dry out.

"He would take handfuls of coriander seeds and dried chilli pods and roast them well till they made them sneeze. Then he pou-nd them with a mortar and pestle. He would fry coconut slivers till the air was fragrant with browning coconut and grind it with a few drops of water till the paste rolled off the stone. A reddish brown ball to dress the chicken in.

"The old bronze urli would be dragged out and cleaned. It would be kept on the wood fire to warm its belly. A cupful of coconut oil. Shallots, ginger, and green chillies sliced fine would hiss and splutter in annoyance till the curry leaves joined them. Then ground paste, the chopped chicken, rock salt, coconut milk, and a cup of coconut water

"Krishnan Nair's chicken curry would bubble with the weight of emotions. He would stand there by the cauldron till he knew for certain every drop of it tasted of joyous welcome...."

I can remember only Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's descriptions of preparing biriyani and mutton curry to match such brilliance.

What is clearly lacking in this novel is a vision unifying all these brilliant strands, and a perfect pattern in which all these could blend, making a masterwork.

There is a litmus test for the authenticity part. Translate the novel into Malayalam and see how it is received. This test is applicable even to novels that have received wide acclaim. What I have learned from personal experience is that many novelists are not very enthusiastic about it. ■

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Celebrating Locality and Landscape

Namita Gokhale

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ALTU-FALTU: A FABLE

By Ranjit Lal

Indiaink, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 374, Rs. 250.00

The first thing that strikes one about Ranjit Lal's *The Life and Times of Altu Faltu* is the outstanding quality of the design and production. The physicality of the published book as an object is an increasingly important aspect in the times of Internet and downloading. India Ink and Buffalo design have produced an elegantly conceptualized and designed format, which is pleasing to hold and read.

This anti-anthropomorphic allegory is descended from the highly regarded *Crow Chronicles*, published by Penguin in 1996. The story in brief: Altu Faltu is a slim, lithe Rhesus Macaque, a two-bit awara who loafs about smoking bidi butts and drinking stolen bottles of cough linctus. He is in love with Rani-beti, a simian with gold-flecked eyes and strange pixie ears; Rani-beti who is the favourite daughter of the mighty Chaudhury Charbi Rai Sahib, scion of the Flagstaff Tower Macaques. This feisty figure defies both her powerful father and her fearsome fiancée Bade Badtameaz, self-styled nawab of the much-feared Tughlakabad clan, to elope with the eponymous Altu Faltu.

The problem with fables is that the autonomous unity of the fable has to be strictly maintained. This is naturally difficult to do through three hundred and seventy-three pages of prose; neither the author nor the reader can manage to sustain the necessary level of credibility and involvement. All kinds of inconsistencies emerge; "Sheepish grins," "the rat-race" and the voluntary suspension of disbelief becomes increasingly tenuous.

Ranjit Lal has a story to tell but the chosen mode of communication seems inappropriate except for the most intrepid and persistent of readers. Fable and allegory require a transcending simplicity of vision, or else a savage sense of satire which cuts across all echelons of the animal kingdom. Contemporary social comment is all very well, but who has the time or inclination to tunnel through all the verbiage and coy innuendo and arrive at the point of it all. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, and Ranjit Lal's ambitious use of these lofty themes was doubtless inspired by visions of telling truths and incisive insights.

One of the first rules in sustaining credibility through an expansive tract of narrative matter is to limit the dramatis personae and keep the cast of character clear and distinct

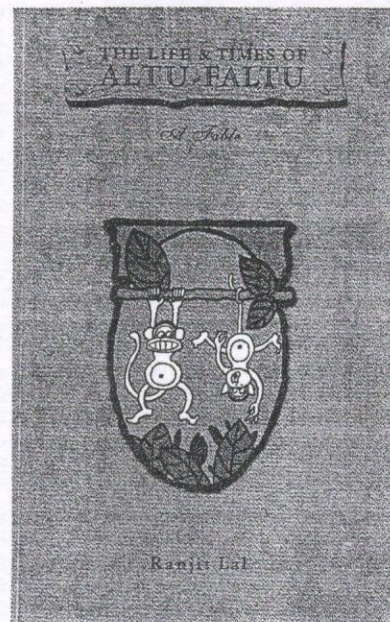
in terms of empathy and identification. Instead Ranjit Lal builds up a veritable *Mahabharata* of monkey lore, and these epic proportions completely belie the inconsequential contours of the story-line.

"The posh, elite Delhizens of Sardar Patel Marg," and "the bureaucratic 'baboons' living in the presidential estate nearby" are as unfunny as they are uninteresting. Tedi Poonch, Shri Kachhaji and Shri Banianji are all self-indulgent emanations of the authorial ego; General Zabardast, 'Muscles' Mushtanda Swami Palang Tode (Professor.Guruganthelji in his previous incarnation)... who are all these creatures, and what is it they are doing at the Harbandar Ashram in Lodhi Gardens and other sundry spots?

The extensive use of Hindi and Urdu names brings up another problematic area of Indo-Anglian writing. The use of other languages to provide depth and range to allusions is by itself laudable, but in practical terms I would imagine that only a confirmed bilingual Dilliwallah (not even a Delhi-ite, mind you) would be able to understand or enjoy the allusions, private jokes and double-entendres which clutter the book. A serious reader from Bangalore or Chennai might find it difficult to keep track of these subtexts. There is a sort of extended *Kooler Talk* feel to the whole book, a sense of disjointed *deja-vu* and self referentiality. *Kooler Talk* for the uninitiated is the prolific and seminal humour-journal published from St. Stephens which has hosted some of the most luminous literary talents of our times. Yet effective university humor of the national lampoon variety has a quality of raw vulnerability, of sock-it-to-them-as-it-is, which this contrived and somewhat supercilious tale completely lacks.

Perhaps one of the central characters in the book is the Ridge itself. Ranjit Lal's deep knowledge and understanding of the natural sciences reflects in his evocative descriptions of the North Delhi Ridge, of the 90 acres of ravines and gullies that form an integrated eco-system between the "sprawling campus of Delhi University and the still-genteel area of Civil Lines." The ridge is the chief protagonist in this fable, and it is the natural wisdom of the forest and of jungle lore that triumphs and prevails in the moral sense, with the next generation of heroic simians like the young Baba-Faltu.

Fable and allegory are primarily designed



to convey a couched moral lesson. The *Panchatantra* is of course the classic text in this genre, as are *Aesops Fables* and the *Reynard the fox* series, which were known and imitated by Chaucer and other subsequent social satirists. The works of La Fontaine, Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees* and the definitive *Animal Farm* were the benchmarks of genius in this mode. Orwell's *Animal Farm*, published in 1945, was satire in fable form on revolutionary and post-Revolutionary Russia. As a literary work, it has survived the dismantling of the Soviet Empire, the immediate provocation for the telling of the tale, and retained its contemporaneity as a satire on all revolutions, and on the enduring nature of corruption and tyranny.

In contrast, a book like *Altu Faltu* loses itself in a welter of clever allusions and complicated episodic events. There is no unifying vision, no gifts of wisdom or insight. These unfunny annals of wannabe monkeys are a labour of love gone wrong. And yet there are passages of lyrical prose that make the reader pause and ponder, as when the night, "acrid and sulphurous", is described as "muffling the world with its soft paw" or the "thorny, desolate interiors of the Ridge, where the partridges screamed and the monitor lizards sunbathed on the hot mica-bright rocks." Ranjit Lal's instinctive and intuitive feel for the genius loci of the Ridge, for the place-spirit of the rocks and bush and rugged terrain that he so clearly understands and loves, is what makes *The Life and Times of Altu Faltu* worthwhile, elevating it from a macaque-manqué tale gone wrong to a celebration of locality and landscape. If only he had steered clear of the simians. ■

Namita Gokhale is a novelist, columnist and Publisher.

Bilbo Baggins Rides Again

Bill Aitken

FACING UP: A REMARKABLE JOURNEY TO THE SUMMIT OF EVEREST

By Bear Grylls

Macmillan, London, 2000, pp. 289, £ 14.99 (India: £ 3.00)

Does the lure of Everest lie in its status as a metaphor for psychic wholeness, uniting our masculine and feminine sides? Although the world's highest peak is always bruited abroad as a hard macho challenge to human endurance (as opposed to technical climbing skill) this overlooks the reality that the masculine image is only a hundred years old. For a millenium before European surveyors and Alpinists imposed the name of Colonel George, Everest the peak was (and still is) known to Tibetans as the female deity Chomolungma, goddess mother of the world. And as everyone knows when it comes to human endurance women often outshine men in the stamina stakes. To underline the androgynous persona of the mountain there is the timely conundrum of Jan Morris's identity, doyenne of travel writers. She started out her career as James Morris the *London Times* correspondent who broke the news to the world of the mountain's first ascent in 1953. Morris long before his sex change operation had found the masculine approach to Everest by Hunt's expedition akin to military manoeuvres that signified nothing.

Bear Grylls' unique selling point is his status as Britain's youngest topper of Everest at the age of 23 but the significance of his book lies elsewhere. A hint of its value may be detected in the unusual subtitle *A Journey to the Summit of Everest*. (Macho climbers usually prefer "ascent".) Young, handsome and as dashing as a Sloane Ranger, Bear declines a commission in the Guards and joins the army as a survival instructor, displaying the same kind of common touch and charisma that Lady Di counted among her gifts. Bear is like a Hobbit, both tough and sensitive and understands (like few Everest climbers before him) that his strength allows him to be gentle with others including the mountain herself. The significance of Bear's book, it seems to me, is that for the first time a climber has understood why he is there. Uncannily you get the feeling from the number of times the Goddess Mother lets this innocent off the

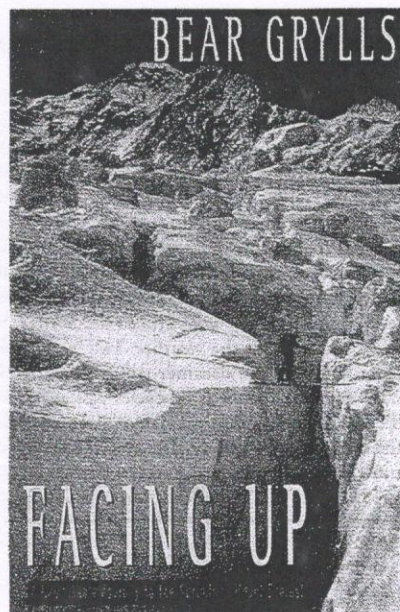
When asked by Eton schoolboys what it felt like to have conquered Everest Bear replies "Everest allowed us to reach her summit by the skin of our teeth. She has never been, nor ever will be, conquered"

hook (he has a series of close shaves with death) that the mountain recognizes in this intruder a pilgrim poet whose footsteps help redeem the ugly behaviour of modern climbers who have sullied the reputation of Everest by their selfishness.

My first glance at the gimmicky jacket (showing a classic Freudian face-off between groping climber and icy cleft ("British Hero Subduing Virgin Wilderness?") gave rise to "Oh gawd! Not another boring ascent of Big E. by stiff upper Brits." Ominously the foreword is by a public school chaplain and to make matters worse the blurb includes a recommendation from the rarefied altitude of the Archbishop of Canterbury's pulpit. I remember how odious it was to read of an American astronaut to the moon whose first act on landing was to perform Mass whereby the lifeless orb was spiritually annexed to the "living church". I find such communal aggrandizement a mark of neurosis more than true religion and devoutly prayed that "Gladly my Cross-Eyed Bear" would avoid the trap of waxing evangelistic on the top of Everest. After Chairman Mao's bust all we need is the "Allelujah brother" of Jesus freaks.

It is a mark of Bear's sturdiness of character that he never allows his personal convictions to overwhelm either his narrative or his friends'. Here is a well-balanced climber with a remarkable story to tell and he just gets on with the job of telling it. He writes with the simple joy of John Bunyan's pilgrim and for someone so young Bear possesses an extraordinary fund of commonsensical insights that translate into practical wisdom on Everest. "Strength is often hidden in absurdity." "Mountains are climbed by Injuns not Chiefs". "The draw of the mountains is their simplicity". "The mountains like the sea demand our deep respect".

It is this respect for Everest that makes *Facing Up* so different and so much more readable than most accounts. Reinhold Messner, the phenomenal athlete who climbed all fourteen of the world's 8000 meter peaks, lacks this quality of respect and his books are more about what a helluva guy he is. Because Messner puts toughness before gentleness he loses out in imaginative appraisal of the peaks he has "knocked off". Bear's equation with Everest is both masculine and feminine and this emerges from the chaplain's foreword. When asked by Eton schoolboys what it felt like to have conquered Everest Bear replies "Everest allowed us to reach her summit by



the skin of our teeth. She has never been, nor ever will be, conquered"

Because Everest draws to its flanks many more power seekers than poets, this credo of love for the peak helps atone for the political and commercial abuse that the mountain has been subjected to. From imperial flagwavers to community party committee meetings the top of Everest has hosted a wild array of motivation. In 1996 the exploitation of the summit's magical potential by commercial guided tours resulted in appalling casualties as rich Americans queued up under the summit for their \$65,000 moment of glory, only to be wiped out by the storm they all knew was imminent. So great is the lure of the summit that many Everest addicts betray suicidal tendencies, vainly hoping to find wholeness through annihilation.

Bear's book makes it clear that no mountain is worth losing fingers and toes for, let alone sacrificing your life. How come then that this young man beat all the statistics and emerged unscathed on his first attempt? The answer is "he pushed and pushed hard" to get there. A year after this "youngest British ascent" another climber, even younger, achieved the summit; but he tragically died on the descent: he had pushed too hard and died of exhaustion. Those who argue that Mallory may well have been the first summiter before he died (when they found his body his wife's photograph—that he had promised to place on the top—was missing from his wallet) overlook the argument that to really lay claim to a peak you must return to base. Even there death may lurk to catch the unwary. After the long catalogue of near misses Bear almost loses his life in a helicopter crash.

It is clear a lot of grace was at work in this unorthodox and very laid back ascent of

Everest. Bear's journey starts while still in the army, when his parachute fails to open on a training jump and he breaks his back, not to mention his career. Amazingly he claws his way back thanks to a remarkable life affirming philosophy of High Anglican non-logical positivism plus a strict regime of self-discipline. He decides to climb Everest to fulfil a personal dream and teams up with three old friends to ride piggy back with a professional set-up who (for a price) will arrange for sherpas to place reserve oxygen at the upper camps, the most crucial input after a correct reading of the weather. Two weeks before departure the dreamer still has to raise \$20,000 and suddenly as he cycles past an office he notes the magical name "Everest". Incredibly this is a family firm descended from the great Surveyor General who "just happen" to be on the lookout for someone to

advertise their product (coffee!).

As with sponsors so with the weather. Everest conspires to make straight the way of Bear. After months of getting fit by running around the Brecon Beacons with rocks and Shakespeare's *Collected Works* on his back, the hardest part now would be hanging around for another three months acclimatizing near the Khumbu Ice Fall waiting for the magical moment when the onset of the monsoon would deflect the killing windstream and leave the summit for a brief few days climbable. You had to be fit and ready for that moment as well as prepared for the heartbreak of the weather changing back to its killer mode. Bear fails to make the first attempt, having contracted a virus, but his friends nearing the summit have the chagrin of finding their equipment buried and irretrievable and there is no rope for the crucial Hillary Step. Bear

will his body to take the next opportunity "striving valiantly and daring greatly" and the mountain seems to lend him strength. "With tears creeping down my cheeks the summit of Mount Everest opened her arms and welcomed me. It was as if she now considered me somehow worthy of this (sacred) place".

Like that other instant adventurer Bilbo Baggins, Bear makes it safely home to his family. He is greeted by his mother who reminds him that just because he has climbed Everest does not mean he can put his feet up and loll around the house. It seems Bear has yet to learn that for an only son it is easier to climb Everest than escape the thrall of a loving Mum! ■

Bill Aitken, mountaineer, has written travel books on India's rivers, railways and mountains.

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Subjective Culture as Research Tradition

Sushila Singhal

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

By John Adamopoulos and Yoshihisa Kashima

Sage Publications, 1999, pp. 305, \$ 39.95 (Paper)

The volume is a tribute to the contribution of Harry C. Triandis to the nascent field of cross-cultural psychology spread over nearly four decades by his former students, colleagues and collaborators. Triandis' notion of subjective culture as a distinct research tradition has been the homogenizing force behind the different contributions to be understood in a historical perspective. The terms 'culture' and 'individual psychology' are considered mutually constitutive, where conceptual collectivism used individual as the unit of data and analysis. The book contains a foreword by Professor Walter Lonner, a preface by the editors, seventeen chapters, epilogue, references and index, in addition to the information on contributors.

Chapter 1 introduces subjective culture as a self-contained conceptual methodological package. Chapters 2 to 17 are divided into five parts. Part I spells out the research tradition; Part II the theoretical orientations in cross-cultural psychology; Part III elements of subjective culture; Part IV group and interpersonal processes, and Part V applied cross cultural psychology. Chapter 2 is titled 'Unity of the Field of Culture and Psychology', in which Berry searched for some overarching dimensions of culture and unifying issues. He presents a very broad framework to evaluate the strength of current psychological traditions of research and culture. He recognizes that being cultural was a prerequisite to be cross cultural and that it was necessary to use both within and across approaches to understand the relationships between cultural context and human experience and behaviour. Cultures come in contact with each other leading to acculturation. He argues in favour of a common space for understanding relationships between culture and behaviour, and suggests the use of the three dimensional model having, culture (given-created), comparative perspective (absolutist-relativist-universalist), and acculturation (contact non contact). Triandis took the leadership roles and demonstrated scholarship by researching on all three dimensions.

In Chapter 3 Bond talks of various social psychological orientations and strategies for building a harmonious, multicultural society that could characterize unity in diversity. He recognizes the differences between political context prevalent at the end of World War II

and in the 90s, where 'Porous border' was the reality, placing enormous stresses on national boundaries. Demographic shifts, migrations, technological and informational advances, ecological changes and liberalized capital and human flows made the world more interconnected and interdependent. The considerations pertinent to achieve national unity should serve as the basis and standard for international level of policy, resource utilization, planning procedures, implementation methodologies and organization. The emergence of global social change organizations generated national and international social capital, recognized oneness of human kind and facilitated its investment in various projects linking nations.

In Chapter 4, Feldman asks four broad multifaceted questions encompassing the entire range of human behaviour, from individual judgement to group processes, from the effects of context on people's responses to simple questions about the influence of culture on perceptions, judgement, affect and behaviour (accessibility, diagnosticity, motivation and capacity). He reviews the existing literature by adopting social cognitive approach to understand social behaviour. He argues that these questions were necessary to respond for investigating general processes within specific contexts as desired by Mischel and Shoda (1995) and Triandis (1990), and could be applied to correlational and experimental investigations across the domain of human behaviour. Moreover, these reflected more of a naturalism looking for smallest details of changes in the organism and environment to understand its evolution, behaviour and ecological function. While the processes are general and repeatable, each event, person, context and culture remain unique and historically non-repetitive.

In Chapter 5, Adamopoulos attempts an extension of the social cognitive approach and proposes a more integrated view of individualism and collectivism as behavioural patterns resulting from particular psychocultural processes. He adopts the resource exchange principles of Foa and Foa to evolve a framework for the analysis of interpersonal structure. He identifies three distinct facets—direction of action, relationship between actor and target, and the type of resource involved in the exchange along which various

types of individualism and collectivism (interpersonal, referential, idealistic and altruistic) occurs. He adopts an evolutionary approach in which shifts between types of individualism, and collectivism could be seen. Also the possibility of between and among differences in cultures was real. A comparison of his theoretical model with the circumplex model of Schwartz shows a good fit. It thus offer a way of integrating the work on individualism, collectivism and on human values. The model could be used to identify some measurable key variables for the cross cultural studies on individualism collectivism.

Kashima and Kashima in 'Culture, Collectionism, and the Self' use the metaphor of river to give culture a dynamic image in a bid to get away from the ongoing rift between cross-cultural and cultural psychologists and be able to link it with connectionalism. They argue that the connectionist conception of mind provides it stability, and continuity over time. They accept though that the two images of culture are complementary. The systemic approach gives descriptive strategy, whereas the dynamic approach provides explanatory concepts. The connectionist framework can be used to explicate hypotheses, to demonstrate the existence of some processes giving rise to the psychological phenomenon as a consequence of some specifiable cultural practices and to make needed cross-cultural comparisons. They try to illustrate the utility of this approach in relation to culture and self by the linguistic analysis of English and Japanese deictic personal pronouns. Also, the use of ELMAN's Simple Recurrent Network suggests that the practice of dropping first personal pronouns may make self representation more variable and interlinked with other representations.

Part III deals with elements of subjective culture by including five chapters, each relevant to a particular domain of life. In 'Subjective Culture and Social Behaviour', Jaccard, Litardo and Wan take note of major contributions of Triandis and others (Bandura, Eisen, Zellman and McAlister, and Fishbone etc.) to the development of general theories of social behaviour. They refer to subjective culture as a model of social behaviour predicated on the premise that humans are social agents reflecting and acting on their social environment. A unified framework of behavioural analysis has been proposed by including perspectives from behavioural theories, researches on attitude theory and decision making. The model incorporates immediate determinants of behaviour, such as knowledge and skills for behavioural performance, motivation, environmental constraints and salience of behaviour, but recognizes the importance of distal variables functioning often via social psychological mediators. Some of the useful distal variables of social behaviour are—social and familial, personality and demographic covariates, while influences of media, biological, genetic and cultural forces should also be considered. The

use of immediate and distal variables in operationalizing etic constraints using culturally appropriate emic ways can help in the analysis of numerous human behaviours.

In Chapter 8 entitled, 'Multimethod Probes of Basic Human Values', Schwartz, Lehmann and Roccas address two questions. Is it possible to validate the key postulates of the theory of individual values validated so far by a single instrument by another alternative instrument? Can the distinct context of 10 motivational types of human values (used in theory) be expressed in spontaneous self constructs? They applied the multitrait multimethod approach to the theory of human values with two different hard methods (Schwartz's value survey and Portrait's questionnaire) and compared the findings. The second study predicted the correlates of value constructs as a method to validate the distinction of 10 value types. They thus able to extend Schwartz work to the area of self-construct. They found that the two approaches differed substantially in terms of methodology and theoretical significance. They were also able to specify the critical attributes of the constructs. They found their approach better than Triandis for the study of individualism and collectivism, as it would inform us about the nature and components of these cultural syndromes on one hand, and their correlates on the other. Although the social psychological concepts underlying subjective culture were known to be tic concepts of human behaviour, yet emic concepts could provide a rich texture to the experience of a particular cultural group.

This has been illustrated in Chapter 9 by Naidoo on 'The Experience of Contrasting Subjective Cultures'. She has taken up the case of South Asian women in Canada, many of who displayed a complex interaction of collectivist and individualist values (vertical as well as horizontal orientation). She focuses on three areas of interest—negatively perceived behaviour, integration within a pluralistic society, and achievement orientation of South Asian women. She asserts that the South Asian women have a dualistic world view, which is rooted in Hindu ideology, both at the level of cosmology and biology. The indigenous culture (Hinduism) is powerful in giving them strength to value their collectivist values and in adopting to the individualistic values of the host culture with manageable cognitive dissonance and have a dualistic self image. She uses the concept of Shakti to explain the cognitive and psychological resources utilized by these women in meeting the challenges of western society with promise. Inherent in this active/power element symbolized in the red dot on the forehead of Indian women was the potential for self determination, ego strength, belief in self and action orientation. She is optimistic that the multicultural climate of Canada should foster their cultural self determination and unique culture base creativity, and help in their adaptation.

In Chapter 10, 'Subjective Culture in Health Interventions', Marin has illustrated how subjective culture framework can be gainfully used in applied social psychology. The characteristics of subjective culture, which different ethnic groups hold, can guide in the design of culturally appropriate health promotion materials and interventions. Conceptual distinctions were drawn among culturally tailored, culturally sensitive, culturally competent, and culturally informed, to decide in favour of the use of culturally appropriate as it tends to make different assumptions. Marin illustrates its relevance by the work on smoking cessation community programme for Hispanics, in terms of group specific cultural dimensions, how it related to their targeted behaviour, and how it helped in identifying and using group specific preferences for intervention modalities having the potential to yield desired cognitive and behavioural changes in the targeted group. The success of the programme indicated that the psychological study of culture could be used in designing a variety of social and educational interventions.

Malpass in his chapter on 'Subjective Culture and the Law', illustrates how cross cultural psychology can be used to determine the normative nature of different behaviour. Cultures of law are often at variance with the culture of the accused and administration of appropriate justice necessitates an understanding of this variance by the judge as well as the accused. In many countries legal systems have developed out of historical cultural populations, like in China, West Europe, America and Canada, while in certain others like Africa legal control was established by indigenous populations. He indicates six possible steps beginning from specification of the specific empirical community of identification of the focal person; identification of a cultural community as standard of source culture; empirical identification of contexts of particular events; identification of domains of behaviour of interest, identification of actors and recipients of actions, and identification of relations among persons and actions. He has also acknowledged the inner strength of immigrant groups settling as communities in a nation to successfully regulate their own affairs, despite the differences between their standards of governance and those pursued in a host society.

Part IV of the book focuses on what is central to social psychology, group and interpersonal processes. In the chapter on 'Family in Cross-cultural Psychology', Georgas argues that despite the centrality of family to human behaviour it has been neglected by researchers in social and cross cultural psychology for having no appropriate research paradigms. He suggests the use of ecological approach, cross cultural theory and methodology from different perspectives to study the effect of family structure and function on psychological variables across cultures. The

researches on individualism and collectivism have engendered interest in the study of family as a context variable. A number of researches have been cited to prove that Parson's model of nuclear family is a myth. A nuclear family also maintains connectedness and communications so one cannot generalize for the East or West as possible to be characterized by a family type. Functional aspects of residence, economic cooperation, communication and social support cannot be ignored as these affect the psychological variables.

In 'Conflict Management Across Cultures', Leung and Chan argue that both at the interpersonal and intergroup levels culture is intertwined in ways that give rise to conflict and also its resolution. A general framework is proposed having three domains—motivational, cognitive and normative, to identify where intercultural contacts trigger conflict and produce difficulties in its resolution. In the motivational domain, intercultural anxiety, power equalization and instrumental concerns are predominant. In the cognitive domain, conflicts arise from ethnocentric fairness bias, similarity bias, attributional differences and misattributions. In the normative domain, difficulties arise because of differences in norms for resource allocation, procedures, interpersonal treatment and hierarchical relationships. Factors affecting diversity dispute resolution in organizations include inter group stereotypes, although not much research in the area has been traced. The influence of cultural syndromes (Individualism vs. Collectivism) is visible in conflict resolution styles, and in intra versus intercultural conflict resolution. Cultural differences were visible in norms for hierarchical relationships. The subordinates from high power distance cultures relied more on superiors for conflict resolution. Future researchers should investigate this area to improve organizational effectiveness.

Kashima and Kashima in 'Negotiation of the Self in Interpersonal Attraction', undertake Japan Australia comparison within a practice oriented perspective. They acknowledge that language and culture are both relative and interrelated subsystems, but so far cross-cultural psychology has not incorporated the role of language in the process of cultural learning and transmission at the level of personal and interpersonal activities. Models of Triandis and Berry, Vygostky and other linguists are discussed. They observe conversations of Japanese and Australian monocultural dyads under comparable controlled conditions, and note different cultural practices in their sentence co-production and use of pronouns. Language contributes in the reproduction of culture, as socialization occurs through language as well as socialization to use language. Becoming a linguistically competent speaker entails becoming culturally competent too. Numerous linguistic forms and contents could be linked to cultural practices. Language can not

be separated from culture and cross cultural psychology should address this issue to explicate how human behaviours are shaped and influenced by social and cultural forces. The future research should look into deixis—an epitome of the situated nature of language use from a practice-oriented viewpoint.

Part V of the book focuses on 'Applied Cross-cultural Psychology'. Brislin and Bhawuk discuss Cross-cultural Training and the related research and innovations. Goals of cross-cultural training could be immediate or end goals, but irrespective of it the programme should enable the trainee to, 1) learn how to learn, 2) make isomorphic attributions, and 3) handle disconfirmed expectations. The training could be cognitive, self-insight, behavioural, experiential and attribution type. They developed a general theoretical framework called individualism—collectivism assimilator with the support of Triandis. The advantages of a theory based assimilator were, 1) the usual structure of critical incidents was retained; 2) theory could be used for explanation, and 3) manageable number of concepts could be used so as not to overload the working memory of the trainee. Innovations were made in this to help the users develop a more complex cognitive framework by proving the usefulness of more than one correct answer, percentage of people selecting the options, and by the use of computers. Future researchers could compare various culture specific assimilators based on different theories (Triandis, Hofstede, Schwartz and Fiske) to explain cultural differences and develop new insights into more effective assimilators to bridge the gap between culture specific, culture general and theory based assimilators.

Davidson, Ahn, Chandra, Diaz-Guerrero, Dubey and Mehryar in the chapter on 'Culture and Family Planning', recognize the role of men in the family planning process, despite the absence of modern contraceptives for men. They examine the acceptability of existing male contraception (condom, vasectomy) and two potential methods (male daily pill, male monthly injection), and thus contribute towards informing policy makers about health related issues and behaviour. They also address the question of generalizing the finding of willingness of Americans to try a new male contraceptive to various countries particularly the developing, and identify those attributes of new male contraceptives that would enhance their acceptability. They conducted a survey in India, Iran, Fiji, Mexico and the Republic of Korea on non-sterilized married men under 45 years of age randomly selected from rural urban areas by using a structured questionnaire. In addition to the survey, interviews were conducted with knowledgeable sources in each country (physicians, family planning workers and social scientists etc.). Data on the beliefs of users and judgements of acceptability support the need of continued development of new male contraceptives. In each country vasectomy

was least preferred. There were similarities in responses of two nations (India and Fiji). Results indicated that social scientists could take the lead in providing cultural specifications for important new technologies and products, and not only be reactive to bio-medical researches/family planning programme administrators. They have a central role in improving contraceptive methods and service delivery systems.

In Chapter 17, Hui and Yee examine the issues of culture in relation to control beliefs and job satisfaction. They note the relationship between locus of control and job satisfaction in available researches, but recognize the dearth of research to cross validate the western findings of differential effects of internality, powerful others, and chance on job satisfaction of employees. Job satisfaction is a function of the work itself, reward aspects, internal aspect, general job satisfaction and powerful others' belief. They found that chance has a special meaning in Chinese society, a part of the natural order inherent in person-environment dynamics, so this belief could not necessarily lead to negative job attitudes or dampen overall job satisfaction. The psychological mechanisms regulating the relationship, in different countries to different extents, were of internality, powerful others, belief and chance. Future researchers should develop an indigenous instrument to measure Chinese view of fate and chance and broaden the understanding of its relationship to work.

In the epilogue, the editors have tried to reflect on the convergence of intellectual roots and theoretical assumptions, and the divergent approaches underlying numerous chapters included. The convergence is seen on the role of culture in the analysis of human social behaviour. The divergence was a tribute to as well as outcome of the work of Triandis. Historically, although subjective culture label is not much used, the framework is used to describe emerging cultural syndromes.

The book successfully puts social psychology in the cross-cultural context by integrating numerous cross cultural issues between theory and application of the paradigm, and from individual to group and community. The number of areas explored by former students and colleagues of Triandis has been undoubtedly impressive. Thus it fulfills the agenda chartered by the editors. It is very well edited and has given a fair representation to writings. The scheme of categorization is good, though one wishes it extended to include researches on education, employment etc.

The attempt of editors to put various contributions in the research tradition of subjective culture showed in one way the tremendous potential of the paradigm, but the selectivity of researches also constrained the relative strength of other theories vis-à-vis this research tradition. What happens when western models and theories fail to yield results in non-western cultures? Should it be seen as a case of wrong assumptions to begin with as questions of methodology, analysis

and abstraction come up only if you make the right assumptions and ask the right questions. In the context of alternative paradigms the strength and weakness of Triandis model need to be evaluated more fully. The argument that Chinese conception of chance is different from the western one should be taken as suggestive that eastern models applied in western culture would enrich the theory and broaden the scope of cross-cultural psychology in a much more meaningful way. The universal and the specific elements in any culture may be differentiated equally well, as no culture can be taken to be poor and weak. A test of the western model in the eastern culture when it demonstrates convergence may be an expectancy confirmation to some extent, as the research design, data gathering, analysis and interpretation have a predetermined direction. For example, why do American management models succeed only partly in other cultures should be understood in terms of meaning of results in the culture of test. Naidoo's finding that South Asian women living in the West try to retain their cultural practices, and yet adapt to the context of host culture was exactly suggestive of it. Do westerners living in eastern cultures, even for period of 3-5 years, display the same behaviour as individual and culture are inseparable. These questions have become even more relevant in the 90's in the light of globalization and liberalization of economies, and political powers more shaky coalitions. Do changes in economic practices parallel the changes in beliefs, values, attitudes, interests, and actions the elements of subjective culture?

The decision of the editors to state in the beginning of each part certain questions related to each chapter should prove of positive help to the reader to understand and evaluate the writing with focus. Also the book ends with questions like a good piece of research should. One would have liked however, to see some researches incorporated which reject or only marginally support the Triandis model. Of course, many may not exist given the predominance of American theories and models applied in other cultures. The evidence exists however in relation to leadership and motivation theories which are central to the study of personal and group processes. Of course to do good cross-cultural research one must have a cross cultural personality, which Triandis amply demonstrates.

The volume as a whole makes interesting reading, and should be useful to students and researchers in social and cross cultural psychology, sociology, law, management, and even health and educational sciences. It is however, a little overpriced for individual possession for those in developing countries as new researches discount the value of old data. ■

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IN THE LINE OF DUTY: A SOLDIER REMEMBERS

By Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Harbaksh Singh

Lancer, 2000, pp. 440, Rs. 595.00

In The Line of Duty: A Soldier Remembers, an autobiography, published posthumously, depicts one of the most outstanding generals of the Indian Army, Lt. Gen. Harbaksh Singh's life history. 'Hairbrush' as jocularly remembered and nicknamed by a French lady, stood the test of time, but very often destiny brushed him off from what he deserved most. Harbaksh begins his life's story with his humble origin and narrates his journey from his school days through the Indian Military Academy, the Second World War, the first Indo-Pak War of 1947, the border war with China, Indo-Pak war of 1965, and his retirement from the Armed Forces. The most interesting part of the book is his depiction of events during his prisoner of war days in Malaya and the first Indo-Pak war. During his POW days, though suffering from Beri Beri, a malnutrition disease he worked for his fellow men in camp. He led many expeditions on the pursuance of his brother, who was then commandant of the POW camp, for clothes, medicine and food. Being a professional soldier, he did not succumb to the pressure of Mohan Singh to join the Indian National Army. Harbaksh and his brother till the end resisted and rightly observed that not a single Indian leader (especially, Gandhi and Nehru) supported this breakaway group openly.

During the crises of 1947 the role played by the author and Brigadier L.P. Sen were widely acknowledged in military and political circles. Harbaksh rightly observed the lack of chemistry between Raja Hari Singh and Jawahar Lal Nehru during his tenure at Sri Nagar Garrison as Commander. He wrote, "Panditji greeted Sheikh Abdullah with warmth, but cut the Maharaja cold with a limp handshake", and noticed during the luncheon at Royal Palace that he hardly spoke to Maharaja. Nehru did not like Hari Singh. The fact was that Hari Singh ruled the state with little regard to his subjects and once he put Nehru in jail briefly and then escorted him from the state when he wanted to help Abdullah in his troubles in 1946. The other factor was Hari Singh's moral character. He was a playboy and once he even paid

£50,000 for a foreign dancer (R. Brines, *Indo-Pakistani Conflict*, Pall Mall, 1968, pp. 66-67).

With the recent release of the official history of 1965 War, the chief architect of Indian victory, Harbaksh, then GOC-in-C Western Command, came to limelight. Much before the release he came out with some of the truth in his *War Dispatches: Indo-Pak Conflict* (Lancer, 1991). The assessment of 15 Division Commander, Major General Niranjana Prasad and then COAS, General J.N. Choudhury by Harbaksh in both of his work shows his bluntness. Though the official history accepts some of his truths (e.g. initial hiccups in Khem Karan and withdrawal behind the Beas), unlike Harbaksh, it does not reveal the names of persons responsible. The former DMO, Major General Palit has clearly mentioned how our army played havoc with Pakistan's Patton Tanks under the leadership of Harbaksh, which was one of the great tactical victories of the war. Niranjana Prasad did not have a good track record either. Earlier in 1962 he was removed from the command of 4 Division after the Namka Chu debacle and was reinstated when he appealed personally to the President (Maxwell, *India's China War*, p. 426). During the 1965 war the author found him in an inebriated condition with low morale. He even allowed his personal papers to fall into enemy hands. The author's depiction of the support our army got from the civil society, particularly at the war theatres proved the fact that army and civil society in India are in consensus about the security of our nation (p. 357).

At times Harbaksh Singh is vociferously critical about some of his fellow army personnel. He questioned their credibility during India's moment of crises (e.g. Bogey the Bogus, p. 207; General Kulwant Singh, p. 334; Cariappa, p. 386). He sometimes sounds frustrated with the system; at others plunges into self adulation which characterizes most of the autobiography. But the bluntness reveals some of the lacunae in our civil-military relations and favouritism in our political decision making. ■

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DICTIONARY OF MICROECONOMICS : A GLOSSARY OF TERMS FREQUENTLY FOUND IN DISCUSSIONS OF MICROECONOMICS

By A.R. Prasad

Reliance Publishing House, Delhi, 2000, pp. 308, Rs. 450.00

Reader, Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Dr. A.R. Prasad, has in this book put together various concepts of microeconomics with their definitions, explanations and when necessary, diagrams. The range of terms covered is vast, and the entire book, when read through, can serve as a textbook of microeconomic theory rather than a mere dictionary. In fact, the style of the book is in several places not that of the standard dictionary. The lexicographic style should provide a definition right at the beginning and if further explanation is required, that should follow the definition—also marked by an economy of words.

This book does not stick to this pattern. Consider the "labour" entry (p. 139). "The production of a commodity requires contributions from elements of production categorized into three categories. They are land, labour and capital. The labour category includes the mental and the physical efforts of human beings in productive activities. The supply of labour depends on the size of the population, which is affected by social and economic factors. Labour itself cannot (in a non-slave society) be bought and sold in the manner of capital goods, even though labour services can be hired." As the labour quote also exemplifies, entries could have been vastly improved. There are a number of omissions as well. "Capacity rate of plant"

(p. 17) has been included, but there is no reference to capacity utilization. "Value of the Marginal Physical Product" (p. 296) is included, but there is no reference to value itself. It also puts one off to find that the first three entries on the first page (absolute monopoly, absolute prices, absolute scarcity) state "see" and refer to entries that are at least 225 pages distant (pp. 192-253 in that order). Similarly, on page 10 there are seven axioms—completeness, continuity, convexity, dominance, preference, selection and transitivity. Each is listed separately, but you are asked to "see" an entry on laws of preference that is 142 pages away. This is quite apart from the fact that these axioms of choice should not be listed as laws of preference and that these axioms are incorrectly stated. This is true of completeness, transitivity and dominance. Moreover, the statement of continuity and convexity is not in terms of axioms at all, but has a graphical reference to indifference curves.

However, the book is likely to succeed in its "general aim" which is to "provide a companion to two sorts of users of economics"—first, the general reader who wants to follow economic discussions in the press or elsewhere, and second, university teachers and students. Since the latter are also mentioned, one wishes the entries had been better written and obvious printing mistakes corrected. For instance, "price affect shows the relation of the consumer to changes in the price of a good" (p. 207). One should however mention that the diagrams are well executed and explanations are reader friendly, even if they sometimes tend to be somewhat inaccurate. ■

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CULTURE STUDIES

The Contradictions of Culture: Cities, Culture, Women by Elizebeth Wilson broaches question that go to the heart of the study of contemporary culture. Sage Publications, London, 2001, pp. 167, £ 15.99

The Cultural Economy of Cities by Allen J. Scott explains the economic logic and structure of the modern cultural industries. Sage Publications in association with Theory, Culture & Society (TCS), 2000, pp. 245, £ 18.99

Occidentalism: Modernity and Subjectivity by Couze Venn critically addresses the "becoming West" of Europe and investigates the "becoming modern of the world". Sage Publications, London, 2000, pp. 256, £ 19.99

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

The Unorganized Sector: Work Security and editors Renana Jhabvala and R.K.A. Subrahmanya provides various alternatives which can help extend social security coverage to worker in the unorganized sector. Sage Publications, 2000, pp. 191, Rs. 195.00

GENDER STUDIES

Same Sex Domestic Violence: Strategies for Change edited by Beth Leventhal, Sandra E. Lundy argues that partner abuse is as common and severe among same-sex couples and is a social and public health issue. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1999, pp. 251, \$24.95

Women and Development: The Indian Experience by Mira Seth is a comprehensive and analytical account of women's development programme since India's independence. Sage Publications, 2001, pp. 283, Rs.

Reconstructing Gender towards Collaboration by Uma Ramaswamy, Bhanumathy Vasudevan, Anuradha Prasad, Gagan Sethi and Sulagna Sengupta explores the context in which women's development has occurred in India and argues that beyond a certain threshold, gender has to be seen in a wholistic and not fragmented way. Books for Change, Bangalore, 2000, pp. 72, Rs. 95.00

Masculinities, Violence and Culture by Suzanne E Hatry offers a post-modern analysis linking the contemporary social crisis of masculine subjectivity with the law-and-order crisis over escalating violence. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 2000, pp. 224, \$ 26.95

Building Violence: How America's Rush to Incarcerate Creates more Violence edited by John P. May and Khalid R. Pitts urges readers to rethink incarceration policy. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 2000, pp. 188, \$ 27.95

LAW

Law of Domestic Violence: A User's Manual for Women

edited by Indira Jaising is a guide to the legal remedies available to women facing violence at home. Universal Publishing Co., 2001, pp. 262, Rs. 225.00

LITERATURE

My Friend My Enemy: Essays, Reminiscences, Portraits, Ismat Chughtai translated and introduced by Tahira Naqvi gives a good idea to the reader of the artistic, political and social mores of her times. Kali for Women, 2001, pp. 284, Rs. 350.00

Kumaon: Jewel of the Himalayas by S. Ramesh and Brinda Ramesh introduces the reader to one of the most attractive regions of the Himalayas. UPSBD, 2001, pp. 160, Rs. 275.00

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Power in Contemporary Politics: Theories, Practices, Globalizations Edited by Henri Goverde, Philip G. Cerney, Mark Hauggard and Howard Lentner offers a current state of the art overview of the theory and practice of the most central concept in political science, power. Sage Publications, London, 2000, pp. 243, £ 16.99

PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology in India Revisited: Developments in the Discipline, Volume 2: Personality and Health Psychology Edited by Janak Pandey locates psychological research in its socio-cultural context. Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 502, Rs. 325.00

SOCIOLOGY

Living in Indian Slums: A Case Study of Bangalore edited by Hans Schenk offers profound analyses and understanding of life in Bangalore slums in 1990s. Manohar, Delhi, 2001, pp. 311, Rs. 600.00

ECONOMICS/DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Weakening Welfare: The Public Distribution of Food in India by Madhura Swaminathan is an indictment of food policies in the liberalization era. Leftword Books, 2000, pp. 140, Rs. 275.00 (hardcover) & Rs. 95.00

A New Institutional Approach to Economic Development edited by Satu Kahkonen and Mancur Olson illustrates the intellectual advances in the area of theoretical integration of all the social services and the influence modern economics has had on the thinking in the diverse disciplines. Sage, Vistaar Publications, New Delhi, pp. 353, Rs. 595.00

Entry Strategies And Growth in Foreign Markets: Texts and Cases in the Indian Context by Shekhar Chaudhuri and Ranjan Das brings together management concepts that focus on entry options for business firms seeking to expand their business across countries. Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 250, Rs. 495.00

Social Power and Everyday Class Relations: Agrarian Transformation in North Bihar by Anand Chakravarty documents in detail the exploitation of labour by the maliks in rural Bihar and examines

the nature of power in rural India where class and social power are conditioned by caste and where poverty is inextricably linked with notions of hierarchy.

Sage Publications, 2001, pp. 311, Rs. 525.00

Buddhism in the Western Himalaya: A Study of the Tabo Monastery by Laxman Thakur is a multidisciplinary study covering a period of a 1000 years of the evolution of Buddhism against the backdrop of the economy and culture of the region. Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 333, Rs. 695.00

FICTION

Walking from the Gallows by Krishna Datta is a novel which is also a social document. Shrishti Publishers & Distributors, 2001, pp. 397, Rs. 295.00

Dawn of Dreams by Abdus Samad, translated from the Urdu by Mehru Afshan Farooqi is the story of patriotism and idealism in confrontation with a power-hungry materialistic society in which families are fragmented.

Macmillan (The Modern Indian Novels in Translation), 2001, pp. 309, Rs. 175.00

Breaking Ties by Sara Aboobacker, translated from the Kannada by Vanamala Vishwanatha is an autobiographical account critiquing Muslim patriarchy. Macmillan (The Modern Indian Novels in Translation), 2001, pp. 105, Rs. 86.00

The Escapist by Manoj Das translated from the Oriya by the author is a novel of a mystic call which closely resembles escapism. Macmillan (The Modern Indian Novels in Translation), 2001, pp. 150, Rs. 114.00

Ponniyin Selvan: The Killer Sword by Kalki, translated by C.V. Karthik Narayanan is Part III of the centenary volume in the Macmillan series. Macmillan, 2001, pp. 311, Rs. 250.00

A Storehouse of Tales: Contemporary Indian Women Writers edited by Jehanara Wasi captures the diversity of a nation which refuses to be defined by any consistent image. Shrishti Publishers, 2001, pp. 200, Rs. 195.00

No Moorings by Ganesh S. Pai is the story of the protagonist Acharya who is transported from a traditional Hindu family set-up to the carefree culture of the West. IJCP Publications, 2001, pp. 212, Rs. 175.00

Bombay Wallah by Shiv Sharma is the story of Chetan Grover, a dexterous photographer and romantic dreamer who goes to Bombay in search of a dream little knowing that in that city there are no 'free lunches'. Minerva Press, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 221, Rs. 160.00

Really Your Highness by Jyoti Jafa, the author of the best-selling Nurjahan, casts a satirical yet benign eye on the royal world of India's princely families. Roli Books, 2000, pp. 432, Rs. 250.00

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Pleasure and the Nation
The History, Politics and Consumption of Public Culture in India
 Edited by Rachel Dwyer and Christopher Pinney

This volume of ten essays, by a number of eminent South Asian scholars including Ravi Vasudevan, Patricia Uberoi, Sara Dickey, Nicholas Dirks, and Ashis Nandy, breaks new ground by exploring the relationship between pleasure, and the construction of the nation in India. A substantial introduction positions individual contributions in relation to debates about 'popular' culture, 'public' culture, and subalternity. The subjects covered range from nineteenth-century popular mythological tracts, to Hindi and Tamil films, and the fan clubs and gossip magazines that sustain this hugely important aspect of Indian life. The chapters combine historical perspectives with studies of public culture in 1990s India and place a particular emphasis on the ethnography of consumption. This volume contains three important themes: the historical depth of the circulation of imagery and its political appropriation; the necessity of substantive ethnographic approaches that reflect the sociological reality of Indian society; and the role of pleasure in sustaining these cultural norms.

0195650905 2001
 215 x 140 mm 372 pp. Rs 595



A European Experience of the Mughal orient
The I'jaz-i Arsalani (Persian Letters, 1773-1779) of Antoine-Henri Polier
 Translated and with an Introduction by Muzaffar Alam and Seema Alavi

The complex network of cultural interaction between Europeans and Indians in the eighteenth century generated a range of literature in both European as well as Indian languages, including Persian which had long been the language of the political and cultural elite in India. While some of the European texts have been linked to larger issues of knowledge generation and the establishment of European rule, the Persian literature has remained relatively unintegrated. This has left the debate on the orientalist constructions of India skewed, if not incomplete.

This volume will go a long way in correcting this imbalance. It offers a free English translation of the first volume of one such Persian text, a set of letters—between a Franco-Swiss military officer in the service of the English East India Company, Major Polier and a range of Indians, from the emperor and the nobles at court to ordinary trade agents and artisans in the bazaar—written in the wake of critical transitions in north India. Also included in the volume are his personal letters written to his Indian wives,

children and domestic servants, as well as letters to European and Company officials stationed in India.

An extensive discursive introduction analyses the text and locates it in the larger social and cultural world of the period. When read along with Polier's English letters to Warren Hastings, William Jones, Joseph Banks and other high-ranking British administrators, the text adds a refreshing European perspective to the largely English colonialism-centred debate on orientalism in the Indian context. It reveals sensitivity towards the complex syncretic Indo-Persian culture which had been nurtured over two hundred years of Mughal rule and which was under threat of being torn apart on caste and religious lines by the eighteenth-century British orientalist scholar-administrators.

019564980X 2001
 215 x 140 mm 436 pp. Rs 750



Famine, Philanthropy and the Colonial State
North India in the Early Nineteenth Century
 Sanjay Sharma

Famine, Philanthropy and the Colonial State examines some of the lesser-known aspects of the colonial state and the indigenous society through the lens of numerous scarcities and famines which affected north India in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It situates famine in the process of colonization and argues that political, ideological and economic shifts in the early

nineteenth century rendered north Indian society more vulnerable to droughts and famines. As a consequence, north India experienced the most severe famine of the colonial period in 1837-8, which this study analyses at length.

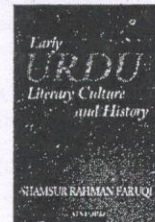
The book argues that the experience of famine was intertwined with the quest for the legitimacy of rule by the colonial state. Although the state progressively advocated *laissez faire*, its humanitarian and pragmatic concerns resulted in a series of interventionist policies. The famine situations contributed to the expansion and consolidation of the ideological underpinnings and physical infrastructure of the colonial state. By claiming to be the desirable and most effective source of philanthropy, the colonial state sought to transform rival indigenous notions of charity. The rhetoric of benevolence and patronage implied new responsibilities for the state which was increasingly called upon and obliged to act for the welfare of its subjects. However, the limits of colonial welfarism and 'modernity' were apparent as the state neglected its responsibilities towards the amelioration of the growing structural poverty. Aspects of these have persisted in independent India.

0195653866 2001
 215 x 140 mm 276 pp. Rs 550

Early Urdu Literary Culture and History
 Shamsur Rahman Faruqi

Early Urdu Literary Culture and History is a pathbreaking work which raises some new questions about Urdu literary culture, and the origins and development of Urdu literature.

It challenges a number of established myths built around this theme over the past 200 years. For example, this book successfully challenges the



notion that Urdu developed as a result of the interaction between Muslim 'invading armies' and the local populace. It also destroys the myth of Delhi's hegemonic role in the development of Urdu literature. Instead, it gives due credit to Gujarat, the Deccan, and other areas where Urdu literature developed earlier than in Delhi. In doing so, it restates the Urdu literary canon and places in their proper place all the groups which had been marginalized by earlier

historians. It raises and answers questions about the nature of Urdu literary thought, tracing its development from circa 1300 to 1850. In the process, it proves that Urdu literary thought owes much more to Sanskrit and indigenous sources than is generally believed. This book also presents solutions to certain problems which have evaded solution so far. For example, why did the Ustad-Shagird institution develop in Delhi in the eighteenth century, and not elsewhere at another time? And how did the language, whose original names were Hindi, Hindvi, Gujri, Rekhta, and Dakani at various times and places, come to be known as Urdu from around the second half of the eighteenth century?

This book is an important intervention in the debate on issues relating to the origin and development of Urdu and modern Hindi, and places them both firmly in the Indian context as vital components of the Indian creative mind.

0195652010 2001
 215 x 140 mm 226 pp. Rs 395

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OXFORD
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

PHO - 01/29/2001