

The work under review contains two Griffith Memorial Lectures delivered (in Sanskrit) by Professor G.C. Pande, at Sampurnanand Sanskrit University. It evaluates various approaches to religion—philological, sociological, anthropological and psychological and makes assessment of comparative and historical methods adopted by them. It succinctly explains views of the great thinkers like Augustine, Barth, Hobbes, Hume, Hegel, Marx, Max Weber, Freud Kierkegaard etc. It examines the role played by observation, reason and intuition (*pratibhā*) in understanding religion critically.

The first lecture deals with the object of the lectures: meaning of the term 'dharma', transcendental unity of all religions, activities aiming at this unity and their varieties. The second lecture explains the stages of spiritual experience, method of their critical examination, value of the conviction of the inevitability of death, importance of the theory of *karma* and rebirth in spiritual living, religion of the performance of duties, and religion of the renunciation of all activities.

While discussing the term *dharma*, Pande refers to its well-known definition namely 'that which sustains society or keeps men together is *dharma*'. The term 'religion' too suggests the meaning of bond. While searching for the condition of the usage of the term *dharma* we find that persons having faith in temple, *caitya*, church or mosque, in Vasudeva, Buddha, Christ or Muhammad, in Veda, Tripitaka, Bible or Koran are regarded as practising religion. So this faith associated with glory, divine grace and devotion is the condition of our usage of the term *dharma*.

Hindus regard their religion as characterized by the final authority of the Vedas as also by the duties determined in accordance with social classes and life stages. But it is noticed that Hinduism consists of different groups having different sets of rituals, different ways of life, different religious marks/symbols, different gods, different ascetic emblems, etc. Some Western scholars find no one religion common to them all. Again, among several tribes like *niṣāda* which are regarded Hindu, there is no concern for the Vedic tradition as their religion consists of only rituals performed to appease Gods through the priests. Moreover, in Hinduism there do exist certain yogis and ascetics like Shantinatha who do not believe in any supernatural being or supernatural power or any rituals but who simply remain engaged in doing good to others. They are not outside Hindu religion. So, what is the essence

Ekam Sad Viprāh Bahuda Vadanti

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1997, pp. 96, Rs. 80/- (Sanskrit)

of Hindu religion that runs through all these heterogeneous groups and binds them together?

The treatment of types, classification, aspects and stages of religion is indeed very interesting. There are two types of religion—one leading to prosperity and the other leading to the highest spiritual Good. Again, the fourfold classification is presented. One class is formed by religions based on and shrouded in tribal culture, the second by those based on eternal authorless strictures (*āgama*), the third those basic scriptures propounded by prophets, and the fourth by eternal universal (*sanātana*) religion of yogis who have conquered lower self, are permeated with universal love and have no attachment or selfish motives. Tribal religions are critically studied by the science of comparative religion. There are two types of comparative methods: one depending on philology and the other on observation. Religions based on the eternal basic scriptures are studied by the method of observation and their tradition is studied by history. Religions based on words of prophets are examined by methods of social sciences as also with reasoning. The eternal universal (*sanātana*) religion of yogis is examined with the spiritual experiences manifested in words and actions of spiritual practitioners as also with critical reasoning; and psychologists and scholars of spiritual science conduct their examination of it in various ways. Pande maintains that every religion passes through three stages. The first stage is that of basic scripture—either eternal or propounded by a prophet. At this stage there is nothing but faith. The second stage is of the auxiliary scriptures, i.e. *śāstras*, which interpret and expound the meaning of the *āgama*. At this stage understanding unites with faith. And the different interpretations give rise to different sects/schools which controvert one another. The third stage is of the philosophical system building. The philosophical works are composed. They rationally corroborate the *śāstras*, examine them, correct them, and formulate theories. These three stages together form a particular religion. Again, religion has two aspects—internal and external. The old traditional thinkers emphasise the internal or spiritual aspect which is of

the nature of knowledge. On the other hand, many modern thinkers, who have no faith in religion, emphasise the external or action aspect approved by social customs. They find the essence of religion in social activities, not in philosophical spiritual or metaphysical doctrines. But the author suggests that the wisdom lies in the balanced synthesis of the two.

Pande informs us that both the Indian and non-Indian thinkers have noticed eternal universal (*sanātana*) religion pervading all forms, stages, sects or traditions or religions. It is the object of intuition (*pratibhā*), while its manifestations, modes or forms are the objects of articulate speech (*vaikharī*) finding their expressions differently in different basic scriptures written in different languages. The basic scripture yields two meanings—one for the novice and the other for the advanced.

The concept of eternal universal (*sanātana*) religions requires clarification and elaboration. We are told that it is the religion of yogis, that is, it is nothing but yogic spiritual experiences. So it is an object of intuition or realisation. It is beyond mind and speech. It is transcendental. How, can it be regarded as a 'substance' of which different religious sects, forms, stages and traditions are made? In fact, it is the highest spiritual stage or mode itself. Again it being transcendental has no use or meaning for common man; it can never serve as the common bond of all religious sects, forms, stages or traditions. We should seek common binding thread elsewhere in ethics or morality, in categorical imperatives, in 'oughts', in prime virtues. Patanjala yoga declares that five *yamas* (prime virtues) are *sārvabhāuma* (present in all the stages of spiritual life, and we may add that they are present in all religions). So these or similar virtues can very well serve as the common bond, they can become the common minimum ethical programme. No transcendental spiritual experience, nor the ontological or metaphysical Truth can effectively and practically serve as the common binding thread. In spite of metaphysical or theological divergence ethical convergence or unity is quite possible.

In the Age of Enlightenment in Europe new ideals arose and they influenced thinkers in other parts of the world. Hume's positivism and

Darwin's theory of evolution urged thinkers to investigate the original source and gradual development of cultures and religions. This led to the origination of science of comparative religion, which shook to their roots the ancient forms of faith. This science has given out many branches; the one founded by Max Müller closely resembles comparative philology. Other branches fall under various social sciences. History of religion pervades all these branches.

The hunger for knowledge of Truth or Essence of religion gradually became intense and new Age dawned. No thinker was satisfied with the study of *āgamas* or *śāstras* alone. In all religions there flourished some intelligent wise men who, though having firm faith in their religions, recognised in other religions too the possibility of the realization of Truth. Traditional scholars of *śāstras* desired to face and refute the rational criticism. They were forced to stop mutual fight and effect truce among themselves in order to combat the common enemy, and engaged themselves in finding out new arguments to establish religion. If religion is appearance or illusion, the contingency of *āgamas*, *śāstras* and *darśanas* being false will arise. Thus, both the theists and atheists exerted themselves to know the essence of religion. As a result, philosophy of religion, having abandoned the shelter of traditional *śāstras*, sought shelter of historical, scientific and comparative methods.

Pande rightly observes that though the study of religion initiated by Max Mueller was called scientific, it was not dispassionate, impartial and free. It was vitiated by the preconceived notion of the supremacy of Christianity. For him and other Christian scholars, Christianity was the perfect religion, while all other religions were imperfect. Though they recognised truth in every religion under the influence of German liberal theology, they put all non-Christian religions in lower scale of evolution. In doing so they were influenced by Hegel's philosophy of religion. Hegel's dialectic recognised non-Christian religions at lower stages in the dialectical process of evolution and regarded Christianity as the highest and perfect evolute at the top of the process. Maybe, this gave rise to the idea of fulfillment. Some Christian scholars declare that all religions wait for their fulfillment in Christianity. Farquhar declared: 'This is the attitude of Jesus to all other religions also. Each contains a partial revelation of God's will, but each is incomplete; and He comes to fulfil them all'.

Hobbes' positivism maintains that

all knowledge is rooted in sense perception. Concepts like God, heaven, sin, soul which are not grounded in and controlled by sense perception are false. Hume's interpretation of positivism yields the sense that secular knowledge derived from secular sciences is of the nature of probability while the spiritual knowledge is of nature of doubt. The later thinkers took a step forward and outrightly rejected the non-perceptual objects which did not have even a remote connection with sense perception. On the rejection of God, heaven, sin, etc., religion is reduced to a mere code of secular conduct and social restraints. Social sciences conduct their comparative study of religion from this standpoint. While dealing with the sociological approach, Pande refers to the belief in animism (Jacobi found animism in Jainism, which points to the remote antiquity) and animatism. Frazer contends that religious rituals and concepts of God are nothing but an illusory magic show which will certainly disappear with the advancement of science. Thus the scientific spirit, strengthened by the observation of natural processes, began to treat religion as a human matter, and to subject it to critical examination.

'That which sustains society or keeps men together is religion'—this definition of religion is favoured by anthropologists. What is it that binds the members of a tribe together? Sacraments, festivals, rituals, etc., bind them together. God is nothing but tribal group itself. There is nothing other worldly or spiritual which binds the members together.

According to Max Weber human activity is mainly of two types one impelled by tradition and the other by individual desire which is in consonance with reason. The former is predominant in ancient societies and primarily noticed in religious conduct. Whereas the latter is predominant in comparatively later societies and primarily noticed in economic conduct. The relation of the two is the object of investigation for the history of religion.

The importance of economic conduct in religion, propounded by the predecessors, was led to its climax by Karl Marx. Economic system is the cause of waxing and waning of religion. Marx established his new materialism having turned upside down the Hegelian dialectic. Matter, the ultimate real, undergoes progressive transformation due to inner conflict and assumes unprecedented novel forms, man being the highest one. Even human society

firmly founded on economic system transforms itself into progressive novel forms on account of inner conflict. Religion is dependent on society and social institution. Following the economic system the structure of society undergoes revolution and fosters and influences religious thought and system and their close associate the class possessed of power and the illusory spirit. Man survives on account of his skill and labour, whereas religion tries to push him into the whirling waters of illusory and imaginary future happiness in heaven. According to Marx human freedom is possible when man knows his dependence or bondage. Pande presents a critique, though briefly but forcefully of Marx. How can the insentient material elements transform themselves into man? And how can the social changes dependent on economic system lead to the future happiness of man? It should not be assumed that economic motives are the only ones which govern human behaviour. Marx's view that the evolution of forms of society is a process of natural history and that the changes in social stratification proceed from one to the other in the manner of a dialectical process are strange. For Hegel intelligence was the defining characteristic of man, and he maintained that the evolution of man is caused by the development of spiritual knowledge and not by the material process. Some contend that religious intellect or God's will favouring religion governs history. This view finds support from Augustine, Toynbee and Indian theory of incarnation (*avatāravāda*). In their view religion is not contained in history but it is history that is contained in religion. History and its instruments have their own limitations.

In modern times many thinkers totally disregard history. Barth's dialectical theology and Kierkegaard's existentialism, and phenomenology are the instances in point. According to Barth religion is not a part of culture, it is the natural relation of God and man. Its knowledge, therefore, can never be gained through history. Man is absolutely different from God. God is infinite, while man is finite and insignificant. Having realized his insignificance, man attains God. God's word is *āgama* which acts as a door to His grace. And through his grace man experience His presence. Thus word of God is the only raft with which man can cross the ocean of difference between him and God. Intense spiritual craving, detachment and faith lead to fervent devotion and total surrendering, and with them man

comes in direct contact with God who is otherwise transcendent. The question, however, arises as to how there can be any relation between God and man who are absolutely different from each other.

Theistic existentialism puts forward ideas of man's difference from natural objects, his morality, his realisation of freedom, his causeless faith in and fervent devotion to God. With logical reasons and discursive intellect it is impossible for man to have faith in the existence of God. On the other hand, even in the absence of knowledge, God can be attained through mind with firm determination. Impelled by the knowledge of his own existence man attains God by the force of freedom.

Some psychologists neglect the higher aspirations of man. For them man cannot do more than set his original instinctual impulses in motion—his self-preservative instinct, his love of aggression, his need for love, and his impulse to attain pleasure and avoid pain. Some other psychologists include religion or its essence in its material cause (*apādāna*), *citta* or mind. It is like regarding a mudborn lotus as of the nature of mud or regarding a reflection in a mirror as of the nature of glass. This is nothing but an illusion, a gross fallacy. According to Freud, desire (particularly sex desire) is the prime source of all types of human activities including even religious ones. Desire either attains its object and is satisfied or cannot attain its object and remains unsatisfied. Unsatisfied desires in the form of impressions, remain deeply buried in the subconscious mind and generate various disorders—bodily and mental—and even impel man to undertake varied activities, religious and creative. Pande rightly points out that desire is recognized as the first and foremost force even in the Vedas, but that it can choose either of the two courses—one of the sensual pleasure and the other of spiritual perfection and bliss. Following the first course, man becomes miserable, while following the other he becomes pure and attains bliss. For Freud desire means uncontrolled desire. It is hostile to all reason, understanding, knowledge, blind to its own limitations, and its purification impossible. Psychoanalysts do not recognize soul or pure consciousness. Nor do they (in contrast to the Buddhist) recognize *citta* as naturally pure, and defilements like desire, etc., as adventitious. For them conquest of desire is impossible and the attainment of pure and pristine state of soul or *citta* too is impossible. Pande observes

that those psychologists who regard yogic experience as a state of self-hypnosis do not really understand what Yoga means.

There are three stages of the philosophy of religion—the stage of interpretation of an *āgama*, that of examination of an interpretation, formulation of theories and rise of different schools even in one tradition; and that of mutual criticism by the philosophical thinkers of different traditions. Though these stages are successive, in later days they are found simultaneous. An instance of the first stage is provided by Aurobindo's interpretation of the Vedas; that of the second stage by the *bhāṣya* commentaries on the *Vedāntasūtra*, and that of the third stage by Udayana's examination of Buddhist philosophy in his *Ātmatattvaviveka* or *Śāntaraksita's* refutation of non-Buddhist philosophies in his *Tattvasaṅgraha*. Thus there are conflicting philosophies. On the basis of comparative method social sciences maintain that these differences are due to concepts not rooted in sense perception. Pande observes that reason is incapable of deciding which philosophy is ultimately true. Reason points out new possibilities, suggests new hypotheses, gives rise to novel views, unprecedented arguments and even innumerable logical flaws. It leads to no final decision. Realising limitations of reason Mādhyamika Buddhists and Advaitins like Harṣa consider all philosophical views to be false. The ultimate Truth transcends reason or logic. Words of *āgamas* are not rational but symbolical, suggestive of spiritual experience. They indicate the means and suggest the spiritual feelings. They do not express facts or define varieties, nor do they propound rational doctrines. They are for gaining the knowledge of spiritual means, while the ultimate Truth is to be realized by oneself in the innermost recesses of one's own heart. It is not that without this or that *āgama* like Veda, Bible or Koran one cannot attain the highest Truth. In fact, *āgama* is a word of an *āpta* (a reliable person in spiritual matter). And *āptas* are available everywhere and at all times, provided one has intense spiritual craving and is dispassionate and sincere in one's search for Truth. Arjuna found an *āpta* in his charioteer, *Āsuri* in Kapila, and Vivekānanda in Rāmakoṣṭha.

Dharma means sincere and whole-hearted search for the highest spiritual Good. And this search differs from aspirant to aspirant due to the difference in their states and means. The inner conflict or contradiction

noticed in the words of an *āpta*: is attributed to their falsity by the scholars of comparative philosophy. But according to Indian tradition it is due to the difference in the state of aspirants to whom they are addressed. The same is the reason why preaching of the great sages exhibit diversity. But the ultimate Truth is the same. One Truth manifests differently under different conditions.

While dealing with man's spiritual development, Pande observes that man is endowed with power to reflect over merits and demerits of things, which enables him to attain what is beneficial and avoid what is harmful. Thus this discriminatory power of intellect governs his behaviour. On reflection, he finds that pleasure derived from the enjoyment of worldly objects is always mixed with much misery; it being dependent on external objects is transitory and it also clouds or perverts his intellect. On the other hand, the spiritual bliss is not attended with misery, not dependent on external object and hence eternal, and purifies and enhances the faculty of knowledge. Having been disillusioned by the enjoyment of sense pleasure, he wholeheartedly undertakes his search for the highest spiritual Bliss or Good and resorts to spiritual discipline which spiritually uplifts him and leads him to the highest spiritual Good.

Pande contends that spiritual experience is not the object of psychology, nor is it an object of logic and reason. It is the object of direct realization. It reveals itself to the spiritual practitioner. It is self-luminous; it requires no other means. It is the state of unruffled and unagitated, peaceful and calm, intellect, achieved through yogic meditation, and called *prajñā*, which reveals to the aspirant the spiritual Good/Bliss/Truth.

Pande observes that there are two types of truth—empirical and transcendental—recognized by both Buddhism and Vedanta, and correspondingly two types of religion—one characterised by activity and the other by renunciation of all activity. Religion of the nature of activity cannot stand without the empirical truth while religion of the nature of renunciation of all activity, if really different from escapism, cannot stand without transcendental Truth. It transcends all duality of activity—agent and reveals the ultimate non-dual Truth which is beyond the ken of mind and speech.

The conviction of the inevitability of death makes man inclined towards the spiritual path. Pande refers to two extreme views. According to thinkers like Kierkegaard, feelings of fear,

aloneness and helplessness, generated by the conviction of inevitability of death, are the causal conditions that impel man to adopt the course of religion or spiritual Good. On the other hand, some other thinkers, having observed people perform religious activities out of fear of death, conclude that religion is nothing but figment generated by Fear. The author does recognize its importance and substantiates his point by instances of Ramaṇa Mahārṣi and Naciketās, an Upanisadic character. He, however, accepts that not in the case of all aspirants the conviction of the inevitability of death works as a cause of their turning towards religion or spirituality.

Closely connected with it are the ideas of rebirth and *karma*, which play important role in the spiritual living of man. Prof. Pande's discussion of these two ideas is very illuminating. Almost all religions believe that soul is not destroyed by death and its next birth is determined by the nature of its past *karmas*. Though they believe in soul, they differ with regard to its nature because its nature can never be grasped by reason, and philosophies are primarily of the nature of reason.

The scholar informs that non-attachment (*vairāgya*) and its importance in religio-spiritual practice were not recognised in ancient Egyptian, Semitic and Chinese religions. They were first recognised by the *śramaṇa* religions like Buddhism and Jainism as also by the Mahābhārata. It is only in the Middle Ages that the ascetic religion and conduct rooted in non-attachment were accepted by Christianity and even by some sects of Islam.

With all his stupendous erudition, power of acute analysis and deep understanding of history and culture, Pande critically expounds all the aspects of religion while presenting a masterly survey of the study of religion conducted by various branches of learning in modern times. Concepts and views referred to are always explained along with criticism to which they are subjected. This excellent, compact, critical and authentic exposition of religious traditions of the East and the West and approaches to them is certainly a welcome addition to the modern scientific literature available in Sanskrit language. It does merit translation in Hindi and other Indian languages.

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History is the visualization of the past by the historian. The past is not available to him for direct perception. It is seen through the facts that come down to him. The historian cannot claim to have the past in its totality for reconstruction. His picture has always to be conditioned by the evidence that he can collect. In any historical research of hoary past archaeology enjoys a prestigious position on account of its scientific basis and methods. The coordination between archaeology and tradition is unquestionably highly desirable. But the real question is the extent to which it is feasible. We have to find out whether, in the context of the realities of the situation of India's past, such an effort is expected to yield rewarding dividends. It is heartening to find that scholars have not been deterred by the difficulties involved in the task. Some archaeologists and historians alike have sought synthesis between archaeology and tradition in India. Keeping their eyes open to the limitations of the available evidence, they have traced parallels. It will not be fair to the literary tradition to expect a complete representation in archaeology. One has to be clear about the nature of archaeological confirmation of tradition that is expected in such cases. Naturally, it cannot be hoped that all the specific objects associated with any person or event will be forthcoming. If such objects were made of perishable materials the chances of such a recovery becomes still dimmer. The grounds of corroboration in many cases have to be circumstantial. If one part of the narrative receives confirmation, it becomes likely that the tradition has elements of historicity. Even with our most fervent wish, we cannot expect to get confirmation of all the details mentioned in the text.

Schliemann was probably the first archaeologist who tried to identify the Greek tradition in its archaeological remains in the eighth decade of the last century. In spite of the scholastic jeers of the contemporary academics, Schliemann continued his search and identified the 'Golden Mycenaea' of Homer and had a 'gaze upon the face of Agamemnon' in 1876. Thereafter Sir Arthur Evans identified the Place of Minos in 1900 at Knossos and Sir Leonard Wooley could discover the 'Royal Tombs of Ur' in 1926. Many other excavations in Lebanon, Palestine and Syria were carried out with a specific mission of locating the Biblical cities or sites leading to appreciable results (Albright, 1966).

In India such an effort started quite late. B.B. Lal was probably the first archaeologist to embark on the adventure of testing Indian tradition on the crucible of archaeology, although Pargiter, a great proponent of the value of historical traditions, had

India as the Cradle of Civilization?

D.N. TRIPATHI

In search of the cradle of civilization:
New Light on Ancient India

George Feuerstein, Subhash Kak and David Frawley

Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Pvt Ltd, New Delhi
xx+341 pp. illus. ISBN: 81-208-1626-9, Rs. 395

asserted in 1922 'the general trustworthiness of the tradition, ...whenever it has been possible to test tradition by results of discoveries and excavations' (Pargiter, 1972, p. 6). The process once started by Lal has been carried out by other historians and archaeologists in India and *Puratattva* no. 8 is very largely devoted to the discussion on the theme 'Archaeology and Tradition'.

Ever since the reviewer's book *Archaeology and Tradition* (Tripathi, 1988) was published, where it has been argued, on the basis of archaeological data, that the Vedic civilization is an indigenous phenomenon, a number of important publications have appeared arguing on the same line (K.D. Sethna, 1992, 1997; S.R. Rao, 1993; Bhagawan Singh, 1995; S.P. Gupta, 1996). Most of these publications suggest that the dichotomy between the Indus and the Vedic cultures suggested by Western scholars and followed by some Indian scholars is now no more tenable in view of the latest researches and archaeological findings. The book under review, an Indian edition of the 1995 U.S.A. publication, is a welcome addition to this series. The authors claim that 'though (it) is written for a non-specialist audience' it will entice the scholars as well to look at the available evidence anew (p. 7).

The book is divided into two parts. Part one, consisting of the first nine chapters, is written with notions which may look as preconceived and hence carry many statements and conclusions based upon interpretations of Vedic texts and archaeological evidences that are bound to prove controversial. Some archaeologists may even question their validity. In the second part of the book (Chapters 10-14) the authors have tried to highlight the importance of the spiritual heritage of Ancient India and the importance of Vedas as a source of perennial wisdom and birth of science in its rituals. Here also many assumptions not based on irrefutable fact or logic have been put forward to substantiate their conclusion that India was the source of knowledge for the rest of the world. Most of the scholars working in India and abroad may agree with some of the conclusions that "India

being the oldest known continuous civilization on Earth" or "In our quest for the cradle of civilization, we must properly grasp India's place in the scheme of things" (p. 12). But they would certainly hesitate to agree with such hyperbole as "India is the giant that looms behind these early urban cultures (Mesopotamia and Egypt)" (p. xviii).

The authors have successfully tried to analyse the Indo-European problems and have agreed with Colin Renfrew's view about the origin of language with the introduction of agriculture in the Neolithic period but have suggested N.W. India and Central Asia, rather than Anatolia, as the homeland of proto-Indo-European language on the basis of the evidence of agricultural activities at Mehargarh in the seventh millennium BC (pp. 262-63). Furthermore, on the basis of some twenty Dravidian "loan words" in the *R̥gveda* and some fifty per cent (Aryan) Sanskrit vocabulary "borrowed" in the Dravidian language, the authors have tried to argue that there is no schism between the two and that both of them belong to a greater Nostratic family of languages (pp. 141-42). The authors are of the view that, scientifically speaking, there is no such thing as 'an Aryan and Dravidian race' and that 'the so-called Aryans and so-called Dravidians are the members of the same Mediterranean branch of the Caucasian race'. One finds it a little disconcerting that, despite the authors familiarity with the current historical linguistic, they appear to be oblivious of the fact that the very theory of race/races is unacceptable now in view of the latest researches in the field of genetics (Cavalli-Sforza et al. 1994); no one would say that both (Aryan and Dravidian) were of different races.

Scholars working in India have largely come to realise that the Indus and the Vedic civilizations 'were one and the same' and that the Indus-Saraswati civilization was not pre-Aryan but essentially Vedic' and 'sacred hymns (of the Vedas) were the product of the religious genius of the people who created the urban civilization of the Land of Seven Rivers' (p. 125). However, various arguments put forward by the authors

in this regard are somewhat off the mark. I cannot deal with all of them but will discuss only some:

1. Learned authors have derived the word *puruṣa* as *pur+vas* (to dwell) meaning thereby that *puruṣa* is one who lives in the town (p. 153). This etymology to my mind is not only far-fetched but also grammatically wrong. According to their interpretation this *samās-vigraha* of *puruṣa* will be like this:

Puri uṣyate anena.

Uṣyate or *uṣita* is the passive (*karmani*) form of the root *vas* (to dwell), but the question is how the letter *va* is changed into *u* (*samprasāraṇa*), because *va* in *vas* becomes *u* only when there is a *kit* suffix (*vachiswapiyajādnamkiti*). Here there is no any *kit* *pratyaya*. If it means dweller of the city, the *vigraha* should have been *puri vasati* and the formation would have been like this:

Purovaṣaḥ by adding *ac pratyaya* or *purovaḥ* by adding *kvip kartari*; but the words *purovaṣaḥ* and *purovaḥ* are not found anywhere; hence they are not acceptable.

Yaska has derived this word *puruṣa* in many ways but no where it means 'dweller of the town' and no where in the Vedic text it is used in that sense. In case we accept the author's meaning, then, the meaning of the different *suktas* where it occurs will stand vitiated.

Yaska's derivation of this word is as follows:

'*Puruṣaḥ* 'puriśādaḥ / purishayāḥ/ puryatervā (Nirukta II/1/5)

Another derivation of the word *puruṣa* can be:

Purishet iti puruṣaḥ

In the *Shatapatha Brahmana* (13.6.2.1.) the meaning of the word *puruṣa* is:

Nānā imevai lokāḥ pūḥ / ayameva puruṣaḥ yoayam pavate / soasyām puri shete tasmāt puruṣaḥ (Upadhyaya, 1955, Vol. 2 pp. 942-43).

Nowhere the word *puruṣa* has been taken to mean the 'dweller of the city'.

2. The authors have tried to argue that the Great Bath of Mohenjodaro and the granary of Harappa were the part of the monumental sacred buildings rather than the secular palace or citadel architecture. They have drawn a parallel of these monumental buildings with that of the Minoan Crete which Nanno Marinatos has considered as sacred buildings. It is very difficult to agree with the authors on this point. Any body who has seen the Minoan Palace will never agree with Marinatos's identification. Neither the excavator of Knossos, Sir Arthur Evans, nor any archaeologist working in Greece has ever given such a fanciful identification. So far as the Great Bath and granaries of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, respectively, are

concerned there is hardly any doubt about their possible nature and use.

3. The identification of the copper figurine of "dancing girl" from Mohenjodaro as a "prostitute" on the basis of medieval Indian *devadasi*, "servants of God" system and thus tracing 'the remarkable continuity of style between the Indus-Sarasvati civilization and the later Hinduism demands too much credulity (pp. 69-70). Likewise, on the basis of a 'controversial artifact that has been dated to the fourth millennium BC' (carbon-14 tests were performed on the deposits from inside the hollow head) from an unknown provenance in India and kept with the Hick Foundation for Cultural Preservation in San Francisco and compared with a strikingly similar head from Maharashtra, housed in the Heras Institute in Bombay, perhaps belonging to a period between 1200 to 1400 AD, given the name of "Vasishtha Head", the authors have tried to suggest indirectly that this may be an actual representation of sage Vasistha of the Vedas. He was the chief priest of king Sudas, who defeated a coalition of ten kings in the battles on the banks of the Parushni (modern Ravi) and Yamuna rivers, which mark "the region of the Sarasvati River between them" (pp. 70-1, fig. 17). Historical methodology would not be able to swallow such an interpretation.

4. So far as the date of *Rgveda* is concerned the authors place it in the period ranging from 2000 BC to 6000 BC on the basis of astronomical configurations occurring in the Vedas (p. 105). But on p. 107 the authors say that 'the *Rg Veda* mentions a stellar configuration that corresponds to a date from 6000-7000 BC—the astronomical Ashvini era—must not be merely denied but properly explained. Again, on the same page, they argue that the *Rg-Veda* precedes the abandonment of the Indus and Sarasvati towns and villages' and that 'many of the hymns may go back to the fourth millennium BC' whereas on pp. 104-5 they decide 'the lower limit for the composition of the *Rg-Veda*' as 2000 BC. Thus, the range suggested by them must be a period ranging from 7000 BC to 2000 BC—a period of 5000 years has been assigned for the composition of the *Rg-Veda*! The existing text of the *Rg Veda* would not be able to defend this time span either linguistically or culturally.

5. The authors (pp. 264-6, fig. 47) have tried to identify the symbolism of a scene from the pictorial representation ('a bare-breasted Goddess and a horned figure seated in Yoga-like posture, holding a snake in one hand and surrounded by animals of the wild') on a large silver bowl found at Gundestrup in a peat bog near the Danish hamlet in 1891, said to have been executed by Thracian silver-

smiths around 150 BC, with those found on the Indus seal. They have come to the conclusion that 'both the Thracian artists and the Celtic sponsors drew from the same well of archetypal symbolism within their subconscious' and that there could have been 'similarities in social structure and belief systems between the Indic peoples and their European cousins'. It is too big a conclusion to draw from a single piece of possible parallelism.

6. The authors are of the opinion that 'one can safely say that Brahmi is derived from Indus-Sarasvati' script (p. 138). They have tried to fortify their conclusion by referring to a later Indic tradition which represents Sarasvati as the Goddess of learning and the etymology of the term *Brahmi*, applied to the script. They rightly say that 'in Hindu theogony, Brahmi is the daughter of God Brahma and Goddess Sarasvati.' Besides many other scholars quoted in the book who have been arguing for the origin of Brahmi from the Indus script, one more name of a German Scholar, Egbert Richter-Ushanas, (1999) may be added to the list. He has tried to read the script with the help of Brahmi and Sumerian scripts and claims to have decoded over 1000 of the 3500 seals unearthed from the archaeological sites associated with the Indus Valley Civilization. He finds a near identical verse in the *Rgveda* to arrive at a more accurate meaning of the inscriptions. According to him, it is impossible to arrive at a translation of an Indus inscription without the *Rgveda* for comparison, and that all the Indus signs on the seals, including the number signs, were originally names of gods. However, the script still remains undeciphered and the later Indic tradition or the etymology of the term *Brahmi* cannot prove its relationship with the Indus script simply because it was found from the dried bed of river Sarasvati.

For the successful decipherment of any script the following conditions are necessary:

- A known language that is encoded by the script, preferably reconstructed in phonology, grammar, and syntax to the period in which the script was in use.
- One or more bilingual texts, one member of which is in an already deciphered or otherwise readable script.
- A large and well-published database: there should be many texts, and most of these should encode complete sentences.

Unfortunately, the texts available are so brief that they are not likely to express complete sentence. Also, there is a total absence of a bilingual text and the majority of signs are quite

abstract, though many of them being pictographic, at least in origin. In addition, verbs cannot be identified and word order cannot be determined, either. We shall therefore have to wait for the satisfactory decipherment of the Indus script. Probably some day an Indus-cuneiform bilingual might turn up and the problem may stand solved.

The list can be extended but the lack of space refrains me from doing so. The authors are of the opinion that 'all historical reconstruction is simplification, and all we can do is to be on our guard against over-simplification' (p. 59). All serious historian may not agree with this view. Some of the author's conclusions seem to have been produced by such a theoretical formulation. To quote only some of them:

- The Egyptians 'owed a great debt to the learned men and sages of India'. (p. 23)
- The Gangetic urbanization, representing the fourth phase in India's urban adventure, brings us to the beginning of "historical" times. The first phase is said to be represented by the Neolithic town of Mehargarh, the second comprising of the towns like Balakot and Arri (4000-2000 BC), and the third phase being represented by Mohenjodaro and Harappa (pp. 97-8).
- The authors have argued on p. 147 that, keeping into view the large number of burials found at Mehargarh, it can be surmised that it was 'not a mere village but... a town... Mehargarh might even qualify as a city'. Students of archaeology and world civilization, however, believe that besides population, there are many other characteristics, e.g., language, trade and commerce, monumental buildings etc., which are required to determine the status of a site to be called a city.

It is true that many worth while, popularizing books in archaeology and history have been written by non-specialists; and this is one of them. In spite of certain hyperbole, oversimplifications and over enthusiastic interpretations, it makes a nice reading.

The above criticism is not aimed at detracting from the merits of the book. The text is an exercise in the construction of meaningful hypotheses to assist a problem-oriented research based upon multi-disciplinary approach. I enjoyed the book immensely and this review copy is welcome addition to my library. The book is decidedly user-friendly as well. The narrative is succinct without being cryptic. The text is well integrated; coverage of a topic in one section is cross-referenced whenever the subject

appears in another chapter. The thorough index is laudable and the notes at the end of each chapter and bibliography at the end of the text are quite helpful. The most apparent glory of this book is its graphics. Of particular value are many diagrams and schematics used to illuminate the narrative. The student (or keen-eyed connoisseurs of Indian history, culture and archaeology, as well as of World Civilization) who diligently reads every paragraph in this text will enjoy some of the novel, though enigmatic, approaches of the book.

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The study of language and its understanding attracted the attention of Indian scholarship from Vedic age down to the modern days. Yāska's *Nirukta* and Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, followed by scores of philosophical formulations with regard to language and its understanding bear testimony to the interest and perseverance of Indian scholarship in unraveling the mysteries surrounding language. Accepting the difference between the *śabda-śāstra* (treatises like grammar and lexicon) and the *vākya-śāstra* (treatises like Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya), the Mīmāṃsakas conducted sustained enquiry into the nature, scope and behaviour of the language and meaning, which resulted in the thematisation of various theories in philosophy. In integrating the language theories into Vedic exegesis and practices, Mīmāṃsā played the pioneering role, followed by other schools which led to the building up of the Indian hermeneutics.

I

The recent attempts of a few modern scholars in this direction have triggered much interest in the study of language and its different themes. K.K. Raja's *Indian Theories of Meaning* (1977), *The Philosophy of Word and Meaning* by Gaurinath Sastri (1959), and B.K. Matilal's *Word and the World* (1990) deserve special mention as these texts embody critical analysis of language, meaning, reality and their interrelation. The present book *Semantic Powers: Meaning and the Means of Knowing in Indian Philosophy* by Jonardon Ganeri is a solemn attempt in this direction aimed at an in depth exploration of the concept of meaning and related tenets with special focus on Navya-Nyāya dialectics.

Besides Introduction, the book is divided into seven chapters. The Introduction provides a brief outline of the work defending the Navya-Nyāya realism and focuses mainly on the Gadādhara Bhaṭṭācārya's contention of "modes of thought" in the context of "theory of meaning." More importantly, the Introduction includes a short but impressive biography of Gadādhara Bhaṭṭācārya which gives a glimpse of Navya-Nyāya tradition in sixteenth-seventeenth century Bengal. Chapter I entitled "The Nature of Language" deals with the epistemic dimension of meaning and its extension in the idea of understanding as a source of knowledge. Jonardon juxtaposes the ideas of modern Western thinkers like McDowell, Strawson, Frege and others with the ideas of Navya-Naiyāyikas with regard to intellectualisation and acquisition of language understanding. He discusses the relational aspect of the

Prisming the Tradition in a Foreign Mirror

G. Mishra

SEMANTIC POWERS

Meaning and the Means of Knowing in Indian Philosophy

by Jonardon Ganeri

Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999

words in a sentence as depicted by Gadādhara in his *Śakti-vāda* and argues that Gadādhara favours a molecular theory rather than the atomistic one which would go to say that the word becomes meaningful in terms of its association with the sentential sense. As to the meaning pattern of a public language, the Naiyāyika formulates a peculiar theory according to which the meaning of the words in a sentence is mandatory (*iśvarecchā*). Jonardon examines this aspect and shows how the Naiyāyika reduces the semantic properties of the language components to intentional ones. In this he draws upon the observations of J.N. Mohanty who has given a critique of this idea by referring to Kripke's "baptism." (p. 40) In explicating the normativity of language usage, Jonardon presents an imaginary linguistic community which introduces fresh elements into the day to day usage of the language and discusses the earlier structure of the language understanding. As for the structure of the language of a sentence, he suggests a solution saying that explanatory structure is a necessary condition for knowledge transmission in linguistic communities where revisions to beliefs about meanings are significantly common.

Chapter II, "Instruments of Knowledge", discusses the semantic significance of the terms used in the language. First, the grammarian's standpoint is explored followed by that of Navya-Nyāya which minutely dissects the terms to pinpoint the meaning of a sentence structure so that the meaning becomes the most apt one and the relations among the words are demarcated to give the correct *śabda-bodha*. Jonardon traces the usages of the term "*pramāṇa*" from the *Upaniṣads* and Buddhist literature. He later undertakes a systematic analysis of the term as attempted by the Nyāya schools and critically examines the idea of knowledge as the culmination of the epistemic exercise. He substantiates his arguments by referring to Platina and Gettier. He goes on to analyse the idea of testimony with its conditions (like *ākāṅkṣā*, etc.) as given in the Nyāya systems, and concludes that the theory of testimony goes well with the epistemological position the Nyāya school holds for the acquisition of

sentence meaning. Even though all the conditions have their respective roles to play in accomplishing the meaning for the hearer, Gaṅgeśa seems to have given more importance to "the intention of the speaker" in this regard. Jonardon has dealt with this chapter critically substantiating his views by references to continental philosophers like Gadamer and others. However, his analysis lacks a holistic picture of the Nyāya school itself as the author has failed to integrate the different standpoints of various thinkers within the Nyāya school with regard to the idea of the "intention of the speaker."

II

Chapter III deals with the "Meaning Relata" and discusses the realist theory of meaning. One has to keep in mind that the Nyāya is a realistic school, and the limbs of realism in Nyāya include *jāti* and *vyakti*; and as such these two ideas are integrated into all the aspects of this school. Even while dealing with the concept of meaning, one has to see how Nyāya is very specific about this point. Jonardon invokes the grammarians like Patañjali and Kātyāyana to deal with the idea of meaning as properties, and goes on to deal with Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics, which has distinct contribution to language understanding. Significantly, he analyses the contribution made by Uddyotakara and Jayantabhaṭṭa, who support the view that both the particular and the universal can have different meaning relata and can be changed in different usages. Jonardon shows how they have satisfied the epistemological needs of the earlier Naiyāyikas and move to the logical climax in the writings of the later Nyāya scholars. Chapter IV takes up the meaning relation (*śakti*), which is the important concept discussed in this book. Reference has been made to Vyādi, one of the pre-Pāṇinian grammarians who upheld the view that it is the mutual exclusion of the word meaning that constitutes the sentence meaning, though he advocated the view of the grammarian as far as the word meaning goes. Jonardon makes a critical analysis of "Complex Descriptions and Reference Failure" on the line of Udayana, and refers to descriptions which lack

meaning relatum' and meaningful description which fail to have a referent like rabbit's horn. Chapter V entitled "Meaning and Modes of Thought" discusses Vardhamāna Upādhyāya's views that the property which delimits the extension of the term is itself a meaning relatum (*vācya*) of that term. Reference has been made to the Nyāya theory of error, which the author calls "mislocation theory" and shows how it is similar to the view of Russell. The Naiyāyika's idea of "modes" is compared with the Fregean concept of "sense" and "meaning" Gadādhara's meaning theory and Raghunātha Śiromaṇi's austere theory are discussed in the context of modes of thought. Chapter VI entitled "Stipulation" deals with the idea of introducing new terms into the language and their division into several semantic groups. Here the author deals with the analysis of Praśastapāda who singles out space, time and *ākāśa* as distinct from the usual names which are understood on the basis of the property of the object. The views of Udayana and Raghunātha Śiromaṇi are corroborated to explicate the ideas. Chapter VII deals with indexicality which analyses the demonstrative indexicals like 'this', 'that', personal pronouns like 'I' and 'You' and temporal indexicals like 'here' and 'now'. Jonardon demonstrates the syntactic relation of the terms of a sentence through a syntactic tree by assimilating the tenets of modern linguistics and Nyāya, and shows how such an exercise is useful to understand the intention of the speaker in the anaphoric and suggestive instances.

III

The book definitely embodies a scholarly endeavour in presenting the Eastern and Western epistemologies relating to language. Frequent comparisons of Navya-Nyāya concepts with similar concepts enunciated by contemporary Western philosophers sometimes tend to blur and distract the main thesis and affect the flow of the argument. Instead of such repeated criss-crossing between Navya-Nyāya and Western positions, it could have been better to present Navya-Nyāya theories independently and later provide a coherent and integrated comparative account. Such a presentation would have made a more facile reading. To use the expression of Nyāya, comparison made at *vākyaṛthajñāna* level would have been more informative and illuminating than a series of detailed comparisons at *padārtha* level. The work gives an impression that it is more of a free style and diffused debate than a structured and focused one with the relevant *samayabandha*

(defined structure of the debate) [refer pp. 28, 33, 70]. One also comes across the śāstraic terms being translated in an unusual way, for example *karman*—patient, *sampradāna*—target, *īsvarecchā*—mandate and the like. These translations may not be inappropriate, but they point to the need for standardising the technical words (developing some *paribhāṣā* in English), which facilitates easy understanding.

The author, however, displays his deep understanding of the nuances of Navya-Nyāya and comes up with insightful observations from time to time. For example, in page 23 he says "the Nyāya, in fact, is much more preoccupied with the search for principles which are necessary for testimony than with ones which are sufficient." His discussion of the distinction between the grammatical form and the deeper structure and its connection with the *vyutpatti-vāda* indicate the depth of his analysis.

It is really a rewarding experience to go through this book which incorporates a lot of śāstraic elements quoted from the original Sanskrit sources along with the translations often provided by the author himself. Jonardon deserves special compliments for his scholarly endeavour to bridge the existing gap between Western and Indian epistemologies. However, in this process, he tends to become obscure at many places. This may be because of his temptation to exhibit his understanding of both the traditions within the compass of a book of this size. Also, the book is intelligible only to those readers who are conversant with Nyāya and Western logic and epistemology, thus restricting the audience. However, the author cannot be entirely faulted for this, as these texts are designed to cater to a select group of readers. In this context, I am tempted to quote Bhaṭṭ, who says:

*dīpatulyaḥ prabandho'yam śabda-lakṣaṇacakṣuṣām
hastādarśa ivāndhānām bhaved-
vyākaraṇādrte*

(This work serves as an illuminating lamp to those equipped with grammatical insight. But for those lacking such an insight, it is as useful as a mirror is to a blind man.)

This book follows the good tradition pioneered by scholars like Sibajiban Bhattacharya, B.K. Matilal, J.N. Mohanty, who promoted meaningful cross philosophical interactions.

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This work under review emerged out of the author's Ph.D thesis completed at the Cambridge University in the early 1990s. The publication of this volume is a very significant and valuable contribution to the historiography of Indian labour history. In fact it may not be an exaggeration to suggest that it is a pioneering work on the history of woman labour in the jute industry in eastern India. There are published works on women labourers in jute industry in eastern India but their focus is more on the contemporary period.

The author argues, rightly so, that the issues of gender have eluded most of the Indian labour historians. Perhaps the fact that the character of the industrial work force is predominantly male, and the numbers of women labourers employed are small, are responsible for such exclusion from the works on Indian labour history. However this argument may not find favour with the author as the same trend is visible even in the studies of plantation labour in India where women workers were employed in far greater numbers. One reason for this, it is asserted, is that Indian labour historians have sustained their arguments about 'class' by narrowly focusing on 'organised' industrial workers. And since the majority of industrial workers were men and usually 'single' migrants, it has been assumed that 'working class women' have no specific relevance to 'class'. Then there is the notion of rural/urban connection of the Indian working class in most popular and academic parlance, which excludes women from any analyses of labour process. Rejecting these arguments the author asserts that the issue of gender is crucial to the very constitutions of labour process. She points out to the fact that the industrial working class was reproduced, generationally and socially, through the intensification of women's and children's labour in the rural economy. This was particularly so in the case of the jute mill workers who, from the turn of the twentieth century, were mostly single and upcountry migrant who had families back in their villages and with whom they maintained regular links. Hence the reproductive role of 'rural connection'. The question that needs to be asked is how and why the industrial working class became overwhelmingly male. The Bengal jute industry's increasing employment of male labour, the author argues, offers an interesting case of women's 'exclusion'. Given the 'smallness' of numbers of women labour employed in the jute industry and the generally assumed paucity of source material, taking up the study of the history of women in jute labour

Descrimination of Women in Labour Force

RANA P. BEHAL

Women and Labour in Late Colonial India:

The Bengal Jute Industry

by Samita Sen

Cambridge University Press, UK.,

1999, pp. 265, price Rs. 750.

must be considered a courageous decision indeed.

One of the major themes which runs through the book repeatedly is the process of social and cultural marginalisation of women labour in the urban labour market as well as in the larger society in eastern India from the late nineteenth century onwards. Within the larger and extremely hierarchical world of Calcutta and its industrial suburbs dominated by jute mills, the status of woman labour was pushed down to the lowest levels. Numerically small in numbers as compared to male labour employed in jute mills, their strength was further retrenched over the years. At the turn of the twentieth century women constituted about 20 per cent of the total work force which was reduced to 12 per cent by 1950. In the early years women were employed in a variety of jobs in different departments. When the industry expanded rapidly during the 1890s migrant men replaced these women in many departments and women were relegated to a few unskilled and low-paid jobs. Thus began a process of marginalisation at the work place. The jobs were segregated into hierarchies of skilled and unskilled suitable for men and women respectively by the employers. This ideological construction of skill and suitability allowed men to lay exclusive claims on better-paid jobs in the mills. The low wages paid were often justified both by the employers as well as the colonial state as supplementary income for the family, being good enough for sustenance.

Women labourers in the jute industry during the early years of industry came from local or surrounding areas. Many of these women were destitute—often widows and deserted wives forced to work for hire when they were deprived of familial resources. Many of these women working in jute mills, however, suffered disadvantages by the flux of migrant men who were now being increasingly employed. They were invariably relegated to casual, intermittent and lowly paid employment, which came to be labeled as marginal and supplementary.

This study shows that many of the women who came to the city in search of livelihood were single and forced to migrate in order to escape social and familial harassment. Many came because of the loss of traditional independent occupations in the villages—spinning, husking and food processing—as these were taken over by the mills. This process of modernisation made women vulnerable and deprived of their status in rural economy. Many incidences of deprivation, like widowhood, desertions by husbands or casting off by families for a variety of reasons, were the major factors for their migration to the city. In the cities these women's employment as labourers was concentrated mostly in the lower-paid end of the wage market.

During the periods of financial and production crises in the industry women labourers' status was further marginalised. The burden of retrenchment and rationalisation during the 1930s fell far more heavily on women as compared to the male labourers. Some of the labour intensive jobs predominantly employing women labour became susceptible to mechanisation threatening their jobs more than those of men. A myth of women's inability to handle sophisticated mechanised jobs was invented. Faced by the increasing prospects of retrenchment, it is asserted, the male workers and the trade unions encouraged this myth. It is the author's contention that a variety of negative perceptions about gendering of work within the factory were shared by employers, male workers and the trade unions and that they collaborated amongst themselves to replace women by men. The gender segregation of jobs on the shopfloor in turn adversely affected women's roles and position outside the mill gates, within the household and in the neighborhood.

Outside and within the workplace the process of the social marginalisation of woman labour was further perpetuated through the use of the elitist ideological perspective of domesticity and motherhood. The author argues that the gendering of workforce affected social and cultural

attitudes to women's work and negatively affected the status of urban women labour. The low skills, poor conditions of women's work combined with lower wages in turn affirmed the ideology of domesticity and seclusion and further devalued women's contribution towards family sustenance. The emphasis on domesticity and motherhood devalued women's role as earners. During the 1930s period of heavy retrenchment the employers found this emphasis on family and mothering very useful in delegitimising women's factory employment.

Within the social and cultural sphere the author shows that the decline in the practice of bride price, increase in the practice of dowry and increasing emphasis on purdah along with the seclusion from better paid jobs in the urban labour market perpetuated an ideology of women's inferiority to men within the working classes. In this context she argues that "social and economic devaluation of women's work must be seen within the configuration of social and cultural perceptions of gender and the close correlation between work, status and purdah".

Amongst the least written subjects in the Indian labour historiography is the sexual and marital history of the working class. Lack of source material is perceived as the constraining factor. In the volume under review the problem is sought to be circumvented by using the information generated by the elite discourse about the working class morality. A wide range of elite middle class men—doctors, journalists, novelists, mill owners, reformers, managers, government officials and trade unionists etc.—concerned themselves with what they perceived as morally subversive and irresponsible behaviour of working classes, both men and women, in and around the Calcutta jute mills. Their concerns were reflected in the proliferating discourses on deviant sexuality—prostitution, concubinage, 'temporary' marriages, extra-marital relations, divorce, desertion, adultery and polygamy—amongst the *basti* dwellers in the working class areas, a kind of history of working class sexuality as told by the contemporary Calcutta *bhadralok*. In these proliferating discourses the women labourers became symbols of infamy and deprivation. Such perceptions by the middle class elite grew out of their current obsession with women's chastity and sexual purity.

The author argues that the elite discourse and its perceptions completely ignored the fact of continuities of marriage practices among the low caste peasants, artisans and tribal communities who constituted most of the working class. Many of their

practices did not conform to the high-caste middle class Hindu ideal of womanhood. The relative freedom and autonomy enjoyed by women among some of the lower caste poor outraged Indian and British moralists. The upper caste brahmanical values and the concerns about the control of women's sexuality were increasingly being institutionalised under the colonial legal framework. The middle class values of marriage, notions of harmonious family under male supremacy were considered ideals to be followed by lower classes. Practices not conforming to these norms were considered illegitimate and deviant.

The final theme in the book deals with the working class politics and women's role in it. The author argues that even in the realm of politics, women labourers and their role was totally marginalised. They were considered too small in numbers to be of any significance in the Bengal labour politics. The contemporary trade unions as well as the historians of industrial labour in Bengal shared this perception. Descriptions of any form of labour movement are generally silent on women's participation. Women's presence in demonstrations, public meetings, strikes was subsumed as part of 'crowds' or 'mobs'. If and when women did receive attention their role was considered to be negative. The trade unions accepted the employers' construction of the image of women as 'docile' and tractable and left out of any effort of their mobilisation. As a result women were excluded from the records of trade unions. From the relative absence of women in the records the labour historians, in turn, concluded that their role was not relevant in the working-class struggles.

Critical of these 'silences' the author asserts that it is possible to reconstruct women workers' political role by a careful scrutiny of the existing recorded information on working class political activities in Bengal. There are references to women's militancy and violent acts during the strikes. Their active participation in protest actions earned them a special reputation for militancy. In fact, it is argued, there are very strong and enduring memories of both strike militancy and strike breaking. As far as the question of women's participation in the organised trade unions is concerned they remained mostly outside. Despite their militancy prominently displayed during the strikes they rarely registered as members of the trade unions. The unions in turn attempted to control their impulsive acts of direct protests.

There are explanations for women's reputation as strike breakers. The author shows that during the period

of labour unrest women often found that their ascribed gender role—as housewife and mother—conflicted with their idealised solidaristic 'class' role. Hardships of economy due to wage cuts, shortages or even total deprivation of daily essentials like housing and water supply in the *basti*, often resorted to by the employers during the strikes, made it extremely difficult for them to fulfil their roles as mothers and housewives. Apart from these distressing consequences of strikes there were also instances of women becoming direct targets of managerial violence. Poverty, multiple pregnancies, high child mortality, strains of double work—in the mills and in the households—were factors which led to severe stress and alienation of women from organised trade unions and activities. Trade unions in turn often showed indifference to the specific interests of women.

Some of the limitations in the book may well be due to constraints imposed by the nature of sources available. For example, the distinction, if any, between the single women and women running households is not reflected in any detail. Second, most of the construction of social and cultural life story of women labourers is on the basis of how the middle-class elite perceived them. The impression given in the elite accounts is one of widely prevalent practices of sexual transgression and deviant behaviour among jute mill labour women. What is not clear to the reader is whether this perceived sexual and moral transgression was a widely practiced phenomenon among working class men and women or was it merely a highly exaggerated account in the elite discourse?

There is also an underline assumption of mutuality of interests between male employers, male trade unionists and male workers which is inherently in conflict with those of women workers in the jute mills. Such an assumption is problematic. While the conflict with employers and alienation from trade unionist is demonstrated with reference to documentary evidence the relationship between men and women workers has remained unexplored to assert such an assumption.

On the whole it is a very well written and well-argued account of the forgotten history of working class women in the Calcutta jute industry and a very valuable and welcome contribution to the growing literature which recognizes the significance of the role of gender in Indian history.

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2000 236 pp. Rs. 300 ISBN: 81-85952-73-6

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This brief monograph of a little over a hundred pages manages to say a great deal. The author in his preface defines his effort as a collage and indeed it is a most interesting one. A Jain studying the Jain community as an anthropologist, the author brings to this effort both the insider and outsider perspectives. The adoption of the collage technique is one that draws inspiration from Clifford's own methodology defined in his essay 'On Ethnographic Surrealism' (1981).

The title is somewhat grandiose for so brief a study. According to R.K. Jain, this present study is the obverse of a book published in 1991 titled, *The Assembly of Listeners: Jains in Society*. The Jain notion of *samavasarana* is turned around by the author to incorporate the external view point in the context of metaphor and community among the Jains. He explores primarily the situation among the Digambar Jains of Bundelkhand and Baraut. The internal tensions and schisms within the Digambar Jains is examined in the penultimate piece on the Kanji Swami Panth of Kathiawar in Gujarat.

Cosmology has a symbiotic relationship with the Jain concept of *samavasarana* since it is stated that the original sermon by the Tirthankar was in the form of 'an unintelligible sound celestial' which was interpreted for the benefit of a diverse audience by the *ganadhar* or primary disciples. Enlightenment came through the 'divya vani'. The author quotes the definition provided by another ethnographer Marcus Banks, "...in doctrinal Jainism there is no distinction made between the mundane and the transcendental; the universe, and everything in it, is knowable and classifiable; even the experience of omniscience and emancipation is described and documented. This is the source and centre of Jain 'atheism'..."

Jainism has two predominant aspects to it: the 'lay' and the 'monastic'. In this monograph the author has explored the inter-connections between the two and the ways in which the *tirthankaras* (literally, ford-makers), teachers '*vidvan*' and the monks called variably as '*muni*' or '*jinakalpi*' reached out to the *sravaka* or lay Jains. The term *sravaka* literally means 'the listener' and refers, therefore, to the audience which validates the life and teachings of Jain monastic organisations.

The perceptible reflection of Jain beliefs, as embodied by lay followers, is in their daily worship (*puja*) of the image of the *tirthankara* and the *jin*s. It is claimed by the author that this kind of image worship is substantially different from what is perceived in other religions in that the *devapuja* of the Jains is of a meditational nature. *Puja* involves the offering up of eight substances, each of which symbolizes a particular quality of the *Jina*: Water

The Anthropologist's Reconstruction of Jain Community

VIJAYA RAMASWAMY

THE UNIVERSE AS AUDIENCE

Metaphor and Community among the Jains of North India

by Ravindra K. Jain

Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla

1999 122 pp. Rs. 160

for the attainment of cleanliness; sandalwood paste for the attainment of purity; uncooked rice for the attainment of immortality; flowers or white coconut kernel for attainment of contentment; a lamp or camphor flame for the attainment of omniscience; incense for the attainment of great fame; and fruit (*phala* meaning fruit of one's actions) for attaining the fruit of liberation (*moksha*). It is recognised and accepted in doctrinal terms that the pursuit of salvation brought about by *nivritti* (withdrawal from worldly actions) is suitable only for monks and that the path of the lay disciples was bound up with *pravritti* (involvement in worldly affairs).

Even within the spiritual realm of Jainism, two different paths have been perceived. One is defined as instrumentalism in which the spiritual practitioner attempts to change the environment in order to express his enlightenment and this path seems to tie in with the Buddhist path of active compassion. Sapientalism, on the other hand, proposes to bring about changes within the self rather than turning outwards and this appears to result in the aseptic attitude of piety and non-violence towards all living beings which we usually identify as a significant characteristic of Jainism. The latter position also accounts for what is perceived as 'rigidity', 'difficulty' and 'austerity' in the life-style of the Jain renunciate (p. 17).

The next piece of the collage is a brief look at medieval Jain texts. This is juxtaposed against ethnographic studies. *The Adi Purana* was authored by Jinasena in the ninth century AD (the author ascribes it to a period earlier than the eighth century which is unacceptable) under the patronage of Rashtrakuta king, Amoghavarsha I. The text gets linked to the grand narrative of Jain cosmology by the author stating that it was first recited by Rishabhadeva the first *tirthankara*, to his son Bharata. His chief disciple passed it down through generations of *ganadharas* till it reached Gautama, the disciple of Mahavira, who narrated it for the benefit of the king of Magadha. Here, Jinasena is providing a clever link between Rashtrakuta kingship and the Jain teachers who are meant to provide the moral/ethical foundations of kingship. The notion of the 'universe as audience' occurs in

the *Adi Purana* in the context of the first sermon of the *tirthankara* Rishabhadeva where the listeners are the sentient beings of the cosmos.

The militaristic support to the so called heterodox faiths of Buddhism and Jainism can also be seen in the Kalabra interregnum in South Indian polity where the militant Kalabra chiefs patronised them while attacking the Pallavas and their Brahmanical support-base.

The other text, very briefly referred to by the author, is the *Yasatilakacampu* of Somadeva Suri composed in the mid tenth century. The common plot in both texts seems to be the stories of kings culminating their careers in renunciation and the narrative runs through the transformation of kings in the course of several births of profligacy into monks in their final birth. An even more interesting work in the same genre is the *Jivakachintamani* of Tiruttakkadevar (also a tenth century text) which the author could have used with greater effect because of its presentation of Jain metaphysics foregrounding the lusty culture of the Tamils.

The next chapter looks at the Digambar-Svetambar split in terms of continuity and change among the Jain communities. The author essentially speaks from within the Digambar Jain tradition which he belongs to. He provides tantalizing glimpses of the complex weave of ideas, ideological dissension and schisms within and among Jain religious sects. For instance, the Dravida Sangha, the Kashtha Sangha and the Mathura Sangha were all regarded as deviant by the Digambara monks of the Moola Sangha which is supposed to come down directly from Mahavira through the great Acharya Kundakunda. The deviance could be major such as the abandonment of mendicancy and earning one's livelihood from the produce and sale of farm products (Dravida Sangha) to the substituting of the peacock feather whisk by one made of cow's tail hair (Kashtha Sangha). While the monks moved in the sphere of the doctrinal and the metaphysical, the Bhattarakas (celibate but non-initiated clerics) or Munis and teachers connected closely with the lay followers. The account of the Shvetambar church constitutes the companion chapter. Without going

into the doctrinal differences between the two beginning with the nakedness of the Digambara as opposed to the clothed state of the Shvetambara monks, the writer points out that, while the former followed the paradigmatic lifestyle of Mahavira, the latter replicated the social structure of lay life inclusive of 'caste' and 'family'. The chapter also points to the fluidity and accommodation between status groups in Jainism and Hinduism, a prime example being the close connection between the Oswal Jains and the Vaishnavite Hindus in Gujarat.

Moving to the collage of ethnographic material, the author studies closely the autobiography of 'ksullak' (a junior monk) Ganeshprasad Varni written in the nineteenth century. This fascinating account brings out clearly the nexus that exists between the Jain monks/teachers-*dhanik* (the rich patrons) and the *samanya janata* who constituted the target audience. He refers to pardon of sins and social transgressions by individuals through the making of big donations to Jain organisations and schools, a practice that brings to this reviewer's mind the sale of papal indulgences in sixteenth century Europe. The contribution of the multi-crore Sahu Jain Business House towards furthering the cause of the Kanji Swami Panth is brought out towards the end of this monograph. This marriage of convenience makes the writer speak pejoratively of the "Panditai, Sethai and Sadhushahi" i.e. the combined regime of scholar, wealthy people and monks (p. 75).

A gratifying aspect of Ravindra K. Jain's book is the spontaneous inclusion of women, both lay and monastic within it, as a part and parcel of the mainstream discourse. While women are conspicuous by their absence within most Hindu monastic orders, Kanji Swami was succeeded by Champabehan Mataji who led a vigorous campaign for the acceptance of the *panth* among the Digambar Jain community and the veneration of Kanji Swami as a *tirthankara*, depicted as such in the iconography of the Sonagadh temple. Interestingly, the major opposition to her was led by Gyanavati Mataji who was responsible for the construction of Jain cosmography in Hastinapur significantly excluding Kanji Swami.

The Universe as Audience is a thought-provoking book opening up myriad dimensions of 'Metaphor and Community' among the Jains. The only possible grouse that the readers or this reviewer could have against the author is that of excessive brevity which might be the soul of wit but surely not of such sound scholarship.

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Gandhi is such an incredible figure that writing a novel on him is about as daunting a task as, say, writing one about Jesus. How do you weave a dramatic, human narrative around someone whose mindset, habits of the heart and terms of discourse are all so utterly unlike the norm? Of course, in Indian English writing there certainly exist several Gandhi novels, but invariably they 'tether' him to one authorial hobbyhorse or another! Such hobby horses—whether psychological or pauranic—are interesting sometimes, but they invariably reduce, if not ruin, Gandhi.

Pehla Girmitiya (The Foremost Girmitiya) is perhaps the first significant attempt in Hindi to try Gandhi as a fictional hero. Although for its action it confines itself to the twenty one years Gandhi spent in South Africa, it not only freely rings in both his years in India and England but also takes care to show how his Satyagraha and Long March in South Africa were a rehearsal for what was awaiting him back home.

Everything is epic about the novel. Such is its scale and depth that it easily surpasses all Gandhi novels in English. Giriraj Kishore spent years researching Gandhi in South Africa, England and India. Such is his grasp of details and facts that the novel comes close to being a non-fiction fiction. Even more importantly, the novel does not cast any ideological shades over Gandhi's twentyone-year-long stay in South Africa. Kishore's Gandhi is an ordinary human being experimenting with his life in such radical ways and with such passionate convictions that soon enough his efforts to become like the lowest of the low turn him into quite a Mahatma!

Years ago, an Indian English novelist complained that he hadn't been able to find out how 'tall' Gandhi was. Well, Giriraj Kishore has the answer. Gandhi measured 5' 5". Not only that, Kishore knows all about the first Girmitiya cargo that landed at Durban in November 1860. He knows their number, their names, ages, origins, castes, and so on. *Pehla Girmitiya* is a meticulously researched novel. There are places where the temptation to parade its breathtaking haul of data—the kind that in a thesis would be dumped in the footnotes or bibliography—proves irresistible for the novelist, places where instead of significant metonymies we get long descriptions and catalogues. Yet on the whole it is likely to earn the gratitude even of the devout Gandhian scholar by offering him or her a wealth

of little-known details.

In spite of a 'non-fiction fiction' air blowing all through the novel, the novelist's imagination also finds sufficient space to flower in. What remain just figures or names in the actual records of indentured labour in South Africa are turned into detailed, poignant life-stories in the novel. Similarly, things which receive just passing mention in Gandhi's *Autobiography* and *Satyagraha in South Africa* are here interpreted and elaborated. Sheikh Mehtab is a case in point. In Gandhi's writing, we notice a definite evasiveness about him. He is not even named. The novel does not go as far as, say, Erik Erikson, but it nevertheless turns him into a plausible rogue, embarrassingly intimate with Gandhi, his 'double' almost.

Kasturba is similarly given many intense, human moments in the novel. She submits to Gandhi's 'fads' but at heart remains a deeply discontented woman, and there is no way we can dismiss her, instinctive distaste for Sheikh Mehtab or her gut feeling that since Gandhi himself received English education, he has really no justification for denying it to his children. Giriraj Kishore never turns loud in highlighting Gandhi's own contradictions, and yet the narrative quietly allows us to see how the same man who is so communicative with other, especially European women should be simply unwilling to discuss things with his own wife.

I was particularly touched by Kishore's introduction of two Indian porters at the Pietermaritzburg railway station, where Gandhi was shoved out of the first class compartment. Having been a witness to that traumatic episode in Gandhi's career, these humble souls convey one of the most profound truths about poverty by spreading their blanket over him during that biting cold night. The poor can be trusted when a Dada Abdullah or a Rustamji cannot be: Gandhi never forgot the lesson. Gandhi continues to be killed by us day in, day out, because we have completely brushed aside that core lesson under the spell of Americanism, IMF and World Bank.

The Path Not Taken

JAIDEV

PEHLA GIRMITIYA (Hindi Novel)

by Giriraj Kishore

New Delhi; Bhartiya Jnanpith,

1999; pp. 904; Rs. 350

The novel organizes its myriad details around the motif of dream. This motif places the various kinds of dream—racial, economic, moral, political, and domestic—along a continuum marked not only by tension and clash but also by a rich dialectic. Some fantastic ironies accompany Gandhi's dreams. Beginning as a self-conscious 'foreign-returned' barrister, overly touchy, and frequently demanding a superior treatment, as he gets close to realizing his dream of becoming another Pherozechah Mehta, he dismisses it as mere vanity and fashions out a higher dream: that of identifying, becoming one with the lowest of the low. In dreaming of becoming utterly ordinary, he becomes truly extraordinary. "Our ambition," Gandhi wrote about his experiments with voluntary poverty at Tolstoy Farm, "was to live the life of the poorest people." *Pehla Girmitiya* is eminently successful in dramatizing the various stages in Gandhi's long, breathtaking journey towards that Mahatmahood whose texture defies all definition.

The greatest invention in the novel is a French character called Marcel. Gandhi never mentions him, but Giriraj Kishore's research led him to a vicious biography of Gandhi written by this French trader. Using this clue, Kishore has created this villain around Gandhi for heightening narrative conflict. However, the most beautiful imaginative scenes in the novel have at their centre the early Girmitiyas in South Africa, their bitter disillusionment with this 'golden land', their constant nostalgia for the home left behind, and their cultural strategies of survival like folk songs and the *Ramayana*.

Style is one of the major strengths of the novel. Giriraj Kishore has never fetishized the issue of linguistic purity. If Hindi is alive and rich, it is because it does not stick to any rigid boundaries. It is as receptive to Sanskrit as it is to Persian and Arabic vocabulary. If in spite of its length, *Pehla Girmitiya* reads as well as any fast-pace narrative, this is largely due to the fact that it is written in Hindusthani, a living, throbbing language, not in that pure Hindi

which, for all its pure, sacred connections, lacks life and power. The novel is written in the kind of Hindi that would have received three cheers from Gandhi himself!

Pehla Girmitiya is certainly a landmark in the history of the Hindi novel. However, two things about it have caused me some unease. The first relates to the novelist's perspective on South Africa. This perspective is of Gandhi's time rather than our own. In Gandhi's time, the history of South Africa was largely an ensemble of colonial/western stereotypes. I am not an expert but presume this to be the case because in *Satyagraha in South Africa* Gandhi too does not question these stereotypes. The blacks were projected as 'aliens' in Africa, as people whose ancestors belonged to North America—so that the Europeans' claim on the area was not questioned! Unfortunately, the same distorted history is let into the novel as well. The result is that when Giriraj Kishore refers to 1857, he refers to it as a crucial year in Indian history, ignoring an even more crucial fact that it was in that very year that over 30,000 Xhosa people had virtually destroyed themselves due to their naive faith in a religious chief's grand 'prophecy'! Another perspective-related difficulty underlies the novel's occasional simplification of the racial scene in South Africa. The Boers and the English are sometimes collapsed into one unproblematic category; the 'coloured' group is all but totally erased. Finally, the relatively limited perspective on South Africa results in a somewhat flattened characterization of Botha, Smuts and Kruger: they are projected as nothing more than a pack of villains vis-a-vis Gandhi.

Secondly, I was sorry to note that even a prestigious publishing house like Bhartiya Jnanpith should have failed to get the manuscript copyedited by a professional editor. Such an important novel shouldn't have been carelessly rushed to the press. As it is, it contains any number of bad chronological muddles as well as typos.

Such avoidable pimples notwithstanding, *Pehla Girmitiya* is not only a major work of art but also a timely reminder to the nation to rethink its route to the century ahead. Ignoring Gandhi's path does not mean that this massively poor nation can ever become another Europe or America; if anything, it only means that getting back to that only valid, viable path is going to become so much more difficult.

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Colonialism, Tradition and Reform (CTR) has been again brought out in this revised edition in 1999, that is, ten years since its first publication. Bhikhu Parekh is Professor of Political Science at the University of Hull. He is one of the distinguished scholars on Gandhiana, with a positive understanding and creative analysis about Gandhi in the modern context.

In the Preface to the revised edition of *CTR*, the author makes two points, one, that most of the revisions are minor but, two, a few changes that he has made are substantive. The substantive changes, he explains, were necessitated on account of the works on Gandhi that appeared after the first edition of *CTR*. A new chapter dealing with Marxist discourse, entitled "Gandhi and the Bourgeoisie" evaluates Gandhi's politics and the gaps therein from a Marxist angle. Bhikhu Parekh has singled out some of the books on Gandhi in terms of importance: Dennis Dalton's *Mahatma Gandhi: Non-Violent Power Action*, Richard Cox's *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, Partha Chatterjee's *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, and Judith Brown's *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope*. Parekh has also given his reasons for not dealing directly with Dalton's, Brown's and Chatterjee's books. But he specially refers to Cox's book and observes that although Cox's general approach to Gandhi and his wider theory of the individual's relation to culture "are highly suggestive, I have some difficulty with Cox's general approach to Gandhi" (p. 326). At the same time, in the Preface he offers another argument: "Since I agree with much of what he says on the subject, I refer to but do not discuss him at length" (p. 9). The two statements are of no help to the reader. In fact, according to the author, Cox has much to say about why the "Gandhians failed to consolidate and build on their master's legacy." It does not matter who their master was, Gandhi or any other leader of a similar stature, the followers had actually routinized their master. Cox's observation on Gandhi and Gandhians merited discussion by Parekh, for that would have uncovered many hidden faces and angles.

Besides an introductory first chapter, *CTR* has eight chapters: 'Hindu Response to British Rule', 'Gandhi and Yugadharma', 'Theory of Non-Violence', 'Dialogue with the Terrorists', 'Sex, Energy and Politics', 'Discourse on Untouchability', 'Indianisation of Autobiography' and 'Gandhi and the Bourgeoisie'. Except the Preface and the last chapter, all other chapters existed in the first edition. *CTR* is a widely read and cited book on Gandhi. Space does not allow me to deal with all the chapters in this review. I want to refer to the first, introductory chapter in some detail since it contains Parekh's own views on Gandhi. Parekh here argues that Gandhi made *sevadharma* the essence of Hindu culture and insisted that this was the only path to *moksha* in the modern politics-dominated age. It is useful to juxtapose this position with Cox's observation that Gandhians failed to consolidate and build on their master's legacy. During Gandhi's

Gandhi and His People

GIRIRAJ KISHORE

Colonialism, Tradition and Reform:
An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse

by Bhikhu Parekh

New Delhi; Sage, 1999 rev. edn., pp. 360, Rs. 295.

lifetime itself, the *sevadharma* had become alien for his followers. Parekh observes in *CTR* that Gandhi knew "how to tap and mobilize the regenerative resources of tradition" (p. 16). But he does not clarify what tradition signifies. Gandhi had more than one field for his activities and each area, whether it was religion or politics or service, had different connotations of tradition. In national politics, he inherited no firm tradition; rather, he had to carve out one in his own way. Parekh further observes that it was Gandhi's "identification with and devotion to their [the countrymen's] *seva* that constituted the source of his very considerable moral authority which he suitably converted into political authority" (pp. 16-17). In the same paragraph he further adds, "The fact that he was for many years the unquestioned leader of the independence struggle and best equipped to judge which of their beliefs and practices helped or hindered it gave him a unique political authority which he skilfully translated into moral authority" (p. 17).

At both places the nature of the word "authority" remains unexplained. Authority as such, in the hands of a dictator, becomes absolute and in the hands of a democrat it decentralizes, whereas the authority gets restricted when it is enforced through moral authority. Gandhi's influence on his people was not the outcome of political authority, it was his love, *ahimsa* and truth which formed one single segment in the realm of his activities and thought. When I was working on my novel *Pehla Girmitya* based on Gandhi's experience in South Africa, I found that he declined even to touch political authority extended to him by the most powerful empire of the time. He was badly assaulted by white hooligans while coming out from S.S. Courland at Durban Port in 1897. At the instance of Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Escombe, the Attorney-General of Durban, approached him with the request to identify the miscreants so that they could be punished. Gandhi stood his moral ground and refused to do so. Similarly, during the Chauri-Chaura debacle he did not budge an inch from his moral stand, though political power was tilting in favour of Congress' demands. The above observation of Parekh may be brilliant and impressive; however, it is confusing as far as Gandhi's moral authority vis-a-vis political authority is concerned. It always remained moral authority and never sought to convert itself into political authority.

Parekh, while dealing with untouchability, has correctly observed

that "it is doubtful that without his efforts, independent India would have had the confidence to abolish untouchability at a stroke and to embark upon a policy of massive compensatory discrimination. The *Sanatanists* were right to see him as their most deadly enemy, and Ambedkar was wrong to question his commitment and enormous contribution" (p. 266). The episode regarding Gandhi's visit to Vaikkam with a hope to convert the Brahmans in favour of *satyagrahi* untouchables explains the Brahmans' attitude towards him. They charged that "a man who had lived abroad for so long and confessed profound reverence for Christianity was hardly equipped to understand the spirit of his own religion" (p. 242). But Gandhi had emphatically questioned the hegemony of Brahmans when he said, "I call myself a *Sanatanist* Hindu because I believe in the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, the *Puranas*, and the writings left by the holy reformers. This belief does not require me to accept as authentic everything that passes as *Shastras*. I am not required to accept in the *ipse dixit* or the interpretations of Pundits" (p. 247). Parekh has not touched upon Gandhi's childhood experience, i.e. his friendly love with Ukka, a dalit, that made him oppose his beloved mother. This issue of friendship with a dalit later on contributed substantially to his strategy in his struggle with untouchability.

According to Parekh, Gandhi began to stress the political dangers of untouchability "far more strongly than he had done during his non-cooperation movement....As usual Gandhi appealed both to [the caste Hindus'] guilt and fears, self-respect and self-interest, and moral arguments in tandem" (p. 262). Parekh does not say it in so many words that Gandhi is a most misunderstood person on this particular issue, since he concentrated on caste Hindus rather than Harijans, and mobilized their feelings of shame and guilt. In fact, he wanted to treat the cause of the malady first, that cause being the caste Hindus. However, Parekh's observation is worth considering: Gandhi's single-handed efforts in this direction "gave the *harijans* dignity but not honour, moral and, to some extent, social but not political and economic equality..." (p. 271). In the long run this made the dalits drift away from the caste Hindus and claim a separate culture, if not also a separate religion, for themselves.

In this new edition of *CTR*, Bhikhu Parekh has added a new, rather innovative chapter entitled "Gandhi

and the Bourgeoisie." Before touching upon this chapter I would like to take the liberty to quote from Parekh's other book *Gandhi's Political Philosophy*:

... for Gandhi, human existence was characterized by two fundamental features. First, each individual was uniquely constituted and had a right to live by the truth as he saw it. Second, all men were one; what united them was far more important than what divided them and there were no differences that could not be resolved or lived with in the spirit of charity and good-will (p. 215).

This fact has to be kept in mind if we want to understand Gandhi's political philosophy or to analyze his views on *ahimsa* or any other value.

It was Gandhi who was termed reactionary by M.N. Roy, a renowned Marxist critic. While ostracizing Gandhi, Roy, could not afford to deny the genuineness of Gandhi's concern for the poor. Parekh also notes that "Lenin had also agreed that since Gandhi had inspired and led a mass movement, he was a political revolutionary or had at least prepared the ground for revolutionary politics" (p. 295). But M.N. Roy differed and argued that "violence was central to revolution and a rejection or even a strong moral disapproval of it symbolized political conservatism..." (p. 295). The author is in disagreement with Roy's position on the role of violence on two counts: First, it misrepresents Marx's view on the role of violence in social change, and second he "misunderstood the aggressive thrust of Gandhi's non-violence as well as his willingness to condone certain types of violence."

Though Gandhi was branded as "a police agent of British imperialism in India", the Marxists later on acknowledged their error and argued that the Congress represented the united front of the Indian people in the national struggle. Gandhi, therefore, was called "a great nationalist leader who had played a 'progressive role' in turning the Congress into an anti-imperialist movement" (p. 296).

Undoubtedly Gandhi was not a Marxist. A. R. Desai in his classic *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* took a more subtle view of Gandhi: "Gandhi was bourgeois only in the sense that he sincerely believed in the validity of the existing society based on capitalist property system, alternative to which he saw social chaos. Gandhi recognized and denounced in burning words the barbarity of capitalist exploitation. Later, Marxist commentators, as Parekh puts it, such as Hiren Mukerji, E.M.S. Namboodiripad and B.T. Ranadive broadly endorsed the view of Desai.

However, Bhikhu Parekh has in this book closely examined Gandhi with utmost objectivity. The last chapter, being an addition, is well reasoned and well documented. This book will be an eye opener for those who read Gandhi with closed mind.

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The phenomenon of violence constitutes one of the most disturbing aspects of human society. Birinder Pal Singh takes upon himself to present a systematic overview of the existing literature on this theme, with the aim of contributing eventually to the creation of a nonviolent society, which he believes is "the ultimate goal of being human" (p.20). Though inspired by this ambition, the author delineates his own task as the modest one of compiling (though summarising is a more appropriate term for what he has done) works of philosophers and scholars, without any claim to originality beyond the thematisation of the problem. This thematisation is achieved by dividing the book into chapters on 'Revolutionary Violence' (Chapter I), 'Theorisation of Violence' (Chapter II), 'Religious Theories of Violence' (Chapter III), and 'Violence in Science and Society' (Chapter IV). The last chapter, called 'And Nonviolence' (Chapter V), is a brief complement to the rest of the book, highlighting the place of violence in theories of non-violence, with special reference to Gandhi's thought.

Notwithstanding his heavy reliance on quotations, deliberately resorted in order "to maintain originality of thought as articulated specifically and precisely by a given philosopher" (p. 22), Birinder Pal Singh's own proclivities and interpretations are perhaps an inevitable part of the baggage the book carries. Deeming the occurrence of violence as endemic, he counterposes its rising levels in modern society to the virtual blackout of the concept of violence in philosophical and social science literature till recently. He attributes the former to the burgeoning of capitalism and the latter to the strength of the functional paradigm in sociology. The two converge within the developmental model of modernization theory that views conflict as a positive value only if it is tamed to energize processes of development within a liberal framework and is not allowed to erupt into a system-destroying violence. However, the resurgence of analyses of violence in recent times is somewhat confusedly portrayed as being a product both of the critique of Enlightenment thought as well as of the Enlightenment itself. This basic ambiguity shows up the author's inability to grapple coherently with what otherwise is an admirable framework integrating a wide spectrum of studies.

The difficult issue of defining violence has been handled more creatively. Noting its dictionary

The Anatomy of Violence

SHEENA JAIN

Problem of Violence: Themes in Literature

by Birinder Pal Singh

Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla

1999; 189 pp.; Rs. 350

meanings that range from its mild form as an outrage to its strong sense as unlawful exercise of force, as well as the much wider view of Raymond Williams, for whom it subsumes the use of physical force as well as unruly behaviour, Birinder Pal Singh argues for using the term in its extended sense. He reasons that, far from denuding its descriptive force, this enables a perception of violence even in its relatively elusive forms. At the same time, in order to maintain a focus, he limits his own work to writings on violence in the social and political domains, thereby clearly excluding individualistic violence. That the type of violence discussed is mainly physical violence: though reference is made to the notion of economic violence; of the violence of state power used as coercion without basis in consent, to violence as the violation of the right to make one's own decisions; to the heart of violence being the dis-empowering of people; to 'democratic violence', to Descartes' violent extinction of the unusual or immeasurable other in the interests of surveillance and control; to the violence of global pollution, poverty and hunger; to epistemological violence; and to Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence: seems indicative of the limits of the substantive content of the literature available, rather than of the author's own views.

The chapter on revolutionary violence introduces the argument that finds itself reiterated in subsequent chapters dealing with other contexts, and is voiced by the author himself in his conclusion. This is the view that violence may be justified as the last resort for the creation of a just and free society. That the specific terminology used for characterising such violence and the precise arguments used to justify it, vary from one scholar to another, and form one kind of discourse to another, is painstakingly communicated via the author's summary of various arguments. However, there seems to be an element of steamrolling towards a conclusion that finds his favour. This is reflected, for instance, in the inconclusive fading out of Hannah Arendt's voice as the work progresses, and in the conspicuous

absence of a discussion of Buddhism in the chapter on religious theories. More positively, the finer points of Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence are succinctly presented in the last chapter, and are particularly enlightening given Gandhi's popular image as one who made no allowance for a resort to violence in any context whatsoever.

An aspect of the overall conceptualisation of the book that could have done with more rigour is the transition from one domain of discourse to another. To compare statements from philosophical, theological, and social scientific texts on the basis of commonly phrased articulations regarding violence seems too simplistic a method for arriving at conclusions, specially from a sociological point of view. There is, in fact, an unevenness in the author's effort to locate ideas in their social context—so that, for example, while there is useful information in the book regarding the emergence of liberation theology in the West in the chapter on religious theories of violence, there is no attempt to relate more recent developments in Islam and other religions to their socio-historical moorings. Thus, the closing statement of the chapter, namely, that the rise of religious nationalism at the end of the twentieth century in all parts

of the world may be explained in the context of the significance in religious theories, of violence as a means to achieve the welfare of all, makes for depressing reading, though fortunately for us (and unfortunately for the book) not much thought seems to have gone into making it.

The chapter on violence in science and society begins with an accent on the contribution of contemporary Indian scholars, Ashish Nandy, Veena Das, Vandana Shiva, and Claude Alvares. Interspersed with summaries of their views are Foucault's comments on science, power and knowledge, which, incidentally, occur in other chapters as well, and which are evidently in consonance with the views of the author of the book. From this he moves on to a survey of varied writings on the theme, including family violence and violence against women, and finally draws within his purview certain anthropological studies commencing with Levi-Strauss' corrective to the ethnocentrism of earlier Western scholars with regard to 'primitive societies.' Though by now the load of scholarship taken on board borders on the unmanageable, Birinder Pal Singh does succeed in introducing some very engrossing ideas. However, in all this, and right through, one wishes he had used a more grammatical and lucid style of writing. This would have made it a more accessible and useful reference book on a subject of great contemporary relevance and concern.

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DECLARATION

Title of the newspaper	Summerhill IAS Review
Periodicity	Biannual
Name of the Publisher	N.K. Maini
Nationality	Indian
Address	Indian Institute of Advanced Study Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla-171005
Editor's name	Ramashray Roy
Nationality	Indian
Address	Indian Institute of Advanced Study Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla-171005
Name of the Printing Press where printing is conducted	Replika Press Pvt. Ltd. Narela Industrial Park Delhi-1100041

I, N.K. Maini, son of Hem Raj Maini, declare that I am the printer and publisher of newspaper entitled *Summerhill IAS Review* and that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd./ N.K. Maini

Bhargavi Davar's book, *Mental Health of Indian Women: A Feminist Agenda*, brought out by Sage in 1998, will probably rate as one of the more significant books I have read this year. Approaching the question of women's mental health through the perspectives of philosophy of (social) science as well as that of feminism, its approach is fundamentally theoretical while its politics are explicitly feminist. It is a rare combination, indeed, and singularly well accomplished, especially given the size and scope of the work she has undertaken.

The book is divided into five solid chapters through which is provided, as the blurb claims, "an interrogative review of data and documented material covering four broad areas: theory, research, clinical practice, and policy." The introductory chapter deals with women, mental illness and epidemiology, and the concluding chapter is on planning for mental health policies for women. The three remaining chapters deal with gender and aetiology, the mental services and women, and the female self, morality and mental illness.

Well-known and publicly popular positions (from Freud to Kakar) are critiqued, and sometimes discarded, while constantly engaging with literature concerning research done in the West and in India, as well as for the general population (read male), children and women. Davar is certainly an accomplished scholar and writer, for nowhere does the book read like a literature review, which is often the case with academic publications today. A large part of this is due to the strong grasp she has on concepts and theory, both of which she never lets go.

Davar does not make assumptions. She begins by examining cultural, sociological and metaphorical interpretations of mental illness, each of which she refutes after exposing the theoretical implications of each position. She makes a case for mental illness as a valid concept, "based on valid human experiences of mental distress," rather than seeing it as metaphor (Szasz), narrative/discourse (Foucault) or a symptom of late capitalism (Deleuze and Guattari). Some of the latter approaches, she feels, may, for instance, look for cultural validations for illness and frequently lead to a neglect of the person. This is an important shift, for it reveals the phenomenological side of Davar's work. It also draws attention to the persistent trend among the general population, and not a few clinicians, which focus on such "culturally relative" explanations and approaches to health. For example, "possession" by spirits is often explained as a culturally accepted way of coping with distress. But while these may be cathartic and give some relief from distress, make life tolerable, more

Reclaiming Women from the Psychiatrists' Couch

DHANWANTINAYAK

Mental Health of Indian Women: A Feminist Agenda

by Bhargavi Davar

New Delhi: Sage, 1998, Rs 375.

exciting even, such positions have low negotiating power and hence offer little possibility of change for the sufferer. Further, cultural psychology can sometimes be so uncritical of the socio-political implications of its own language that they may fuel and sustain prevailing oppressions of gender relations.

The second approach to dealing with mental health in our country is holism as seen in traditional healing systems. These have the advantage of involving the family and community in ways that western systems do not. Thus, the sufferer has the advantage of constantly being reassured that people in his/her immediate environment care as they involve themselves in his/her situation. However, Davar points out, as ideal as such approaches appear in principle, it has been seen that in practice, in the Indian context, such caring oftentimes occurs in the case of male sufferers, whereas women sufferers are often sent home to their natal family. Thus, with regard to women, the idea of suffering is inextricably linked with shame and family dishonour, while with men it is a source of sadness and grief.

Having established illness as a valid category, Davar argues that much of the mental health (or lack of it) for women would be more appropriately looked at from the point of view of "distress" rather than "illness". This distinction forms the basis for the plea she makes for a conceptual shift from (a psychiatry of) illness to (a psycho-sociology of) distress. It also forms the basis for gender sensitive planning for better mental health for women "by weighting academic and institutional practices in favour of the sociality of distress experiences."

Distress, according to Davar, focuses on the subjective experiences of women and it also comes with less baggage than do the terms disorder or illness. Illness is an abstracted term, a medical construct which does not reflect the experiences more common among women, that may, in fact, be closely tied to socio-political realities rather than biological and/or cognitive ones of the illness category. The distinction does not deny the prevalence of severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, mental retardation and psychoses among women. These fall under the illness category and the lack of gender differences within such illnesses, as is commonly pointed out by "mainstream" researchers, is also

explained by an "illness model". However, common disorders such as major depression and neuroses where there is a gender bias in favour of women, can be better explained by a "distress model", especially when firm conclusions about specific biological or genetic causes are not established.

Davar deals with specific problems that lead to deterioration of mental health among women, such as, child abuse, rape, and other kinds of violence, and points out that such violence, even when not committed by men (as in the case of mothers-in-law burning brides), are essentially patriarchal in nature, i.e. they serve the interests of the male sex. Davar also deals with distress among women even outside of such specific experiences, and it is here that her analysis becomes more fundamental. She thus brings in the qualitative difference in the behaviour of men and women: men aggress while women feel guilt. It is necessary to note that these are not "essential" differences but learned ones.

It is through these ideas that Davar finally brings in what is the most powerful section of her book—an analysis of the social origins of mental distress among women. She introduces the ethics of care, and the concept of justice. This is where she strides into her own and makes a forceful case for the separation of the philosophy of care from the justice perspective for, she says, "they are qualitatively different ways of being engaged with the world and with people." She ties this in with the question of identity for women.

There has always been a section of feminists, both female and male, who have emphasized the life-affirming and, therefore, Other-affirming role(s) of women and projected it as an essential female worldview and/or a universal feminist value. Very rightly, Davar points out that the philosophy of care must be problematized first for its psycho-politics. That is, feminists must evaluate "who benefits from, and under what circumstances and consequences, the women who practice care." She agrees that to care is essentially good, but since we live in a society where caring functions are differentially allocated, it is important to look at the degree of negotiability that the philosophy of caring would allow. In other words, what are the ethics of care? While the philosophy of care may be an experientially and

morally superior alternative, adhering to it for women may be at the cost of a 'rights' orientation implying low negotiability, and therefore be psychologically taxing.

Thus, Davar questions whether the philosophy of care, as part of women's identity formation, maintains or subtracts from women's mental health: "Is caring a strength, keeping women positive and mentally healthy, or is it a liability, causing feelings of moral inferiority and self doubt?" This is a difficult question for any one to answer, and a more difficult decision for women to make as we acknowledge the swing that adopting a philosophy of care makes—from resilience to vulnerability. Thus, the philosophy of care may actually be an unsustainable one for women to adopt, with detrimental consequences for women's mental health, as long as conditions of social inequality prevail between the sexes.

What kind of identity is sustainable then? Davar supports the concept of androgyny in identity formation. This is constitutive of a democratic, bisexual identity that is a combination of a "men's" morality of Justice and "women's" morality of Care. Such an identity is composed of a mix of personality traits that have been labelled masculine and feminine. They personify healthy human characteristics regardless of sexual identity, and, Davar points out, people who possess this blend are better able to adapt to situational demands than sex-typed individuals, since gender identity is negotiable in ways that sexual identity is not. I found this to be the weakest part of Davar's book for it is debatable whether "androgynous women" would actually be mentally healthier than their sex-typed brethren when they live and function, and, therefore, negotiate with, a world that prefers the latter or is at least more familiar with them. When negotiating becomes a constant process for androgynous women, then surely there will be psychological distress of its own kind that is generated.

This book will be a benchmark in Indian feminism for its success in drawing from multiple disciplines and cultures across a wide time period, with great clarity and incisiveness. At each point, the question of women's mental health is addressed. At one point, Davar says, "It seems that despite at least three decades of Indian feminist thinking and the now available impressive data on the social life of women and its trials, psychoanalysis in India still functions with an amazing indifference to the women's question." If more clinicians and researchers today were to peruse Davar's book, perhaps it would be one step towards correcting this massive indifference.

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Recognition versus Redistribution

JAGDISH LAL DAWAR

Dynamics of Identity and Intergroup Relations
in North-East India

Edited by Kailash S. Aggarwal

Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla
1999, 265 pp. Rs. 350

The dominant forms of resistance movement in post-colonial North-East India have been derived from ideologies of 'identity', 'difference', 'ethnicity', 'recognition' and so on. But varieties of identity politics have not been an end in themselves. They have been synergized with struggles for social and economic justice. In fact, these two forms of struggles are usually inter-imbricated so as to reinforce one another dialectically. The contributors to the volume under review have weaved this dialectics succinctly in their narratives.

The volume is the product of a seminar held on 'Dynamics of Identity and Inter-group Relations in North-East India' held at the IAS, Shimla. The basic issues of the seminar as stated by Kailash S. Aggarwal in the introductory chapter 'In lieu of an Introduction: An Emancipatory Approach to the North-East Crisis' were: (1) questions of identity, in relation to ethnicity, language and religion; (2) inter-group relations; and (3) directions for the future.

North-East India is not a homogeneous region. It consists of seven states: Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh. All these regions consist of multilingual, multiscriptural, multicultural and multiethnic communities. This heterogeneity is the result of geographical diversity and ethnic intermingling through a historical process. B.S. Mipun and Debendra K. Nayak in their essay 'A Geographical Background to Peopling of North-East India: A Study in the Dynamics of Identity and Inter-group Relations,' have dealt with this theme. But this essay suffers from certain sweeping generalizations without ascertaining any authentic primary or secondary source. For example: "The Gallongs and the Minyongs of Arunachal Pradesh are still paleolithic in cultural terms, depending on the primitive occupations of hunting and food gathering. The Daflas, Abors and Mishmis all inhabit inaccessible forest-clad mountains subject to an extremely high rainfall". The Gallongs and Minyongs are the sub-tribes of Abors (now known as Adis) and they, in fact, are one of the most advanced communities economically, education-

ally in Arunachal Pradesh. It seems the authors have consulted some memoirs or records of 19th century British administrators or explorers.

For developing 'a better understanding of the so-called North-East' says Sujit Chaudhury in the essay "The North-East: A Concept Re-examined", 'it is imperative to abandon the practice of accepting the term as a single and undifferentiated category' and each cultural group of the different regions must be studied in its specificity.

Certain maladies which are affecting the inter-ethnic relationships today in some parts of North-East are the result of colonial policies introduced during British Rule. Thus, Lal Dena in 'The Kuki-Naga Conflict: Juxtaposed in the Colonial Context' ascribes the conflicting interests between Kukis and Nagas in Manipur over the control of land and resources to the colonial policy of divide and rule (Kuki against a Naga or a Naga against a Kuki). Den observes that this policy is being continued by the Indian State.

The model of development introduced in the post-colonial North-East has disturbed the social and cultural ecology of the tribes of this region and has provided a social base for the movements for cultural identity and autonomy. Therefore, Mohammad Asif in his essay 'Development Initiative and the Concomitant Issues of Displacement and Improvement in the North-East States' provides a critique of the existing paradigm of development. By applying the 'reparian doctrine' on the exploitation of natural resources of the North-East, he argues how it is leading to the exhaustion of the overall resources and to the displacement of the people from their land. Therefore, the development initiative in the region is impoverishing the people. A statement by the author about the people of North-East, that "The population's lack of awareness and concern for development induced displacement will make their displacement easier" is very difficult to digest. A study of women's movement in Nagaland and Manipur reveals that they have been opposing many of the development projects (like construction of big dams) precisely for this reason, that is, fear of displacement.

There was a proposal to construct a big dam on Siang river in Arunachal Pradesh but the indigenous people (the Adis of this area) opposed it for fear of displacement and, as a result, the project had to be cancelled.

Amar Yumnam in 'Ethnic and Intergroup Tensions in Manipur: An Institutional Perspective' takes up another dimension of development and argues that, in spite of 45 years of planning, the economy of Manipur is stagnant, and the infrastructure of the state very backward and poor. In such a 'non-growing economy', a neo-rich class has emerged which has attained prosperity by two means: (a) by swindling public money, and (b) indulging in the clandestine smuggling through Moreh-Tamu region in India-Myanmar border. This class lacks any 'appropriate education and aptitude' and is retrogressive and obstructing progressive forces. It is one of the examples of the 'collapse of the institutions' in the state and the result is the emergence of the present Naga-Kuki conflict in the hill areas 'from the efforts of each group to have exclusive control over the Moreh-Tamu trade.' Another result of the collapse of the institutions is that in the Valley these new rich individuals are 'suddenly' emerging as champions of 'tradition and social coherence.' There is an institutional collapse in the sphere of property rights system too. Three categories of property rights system are prevailing in Manipur, two in the hills and one in the valley. In the hills, both Nagas and Kukis are governed by customary laws of system of communal land ownership within which, in the former, the individual enjoys higher rights while in the latter the chief exercises greater power. In the valley, the private property system has been established. All the three systems are facing a crisis. Among the Nagas and Kukis, a landless class is emerging while the elite among these tribes prefer to invest their resources in the Valley. In the Valley, the legitimacy and legality are being eroded by the new-rich class with the connivance of the revenue officials and also 'organising groups and causing physical damage to many and individuals' property'. The author concludes, "it is piracy which pays in the state and the kind of social learning going on is naturally about piracy," leading thereby to ethnic and inter-group tensions.

C. Lima Imchen in his essay 'Politics of Tribal Identity and Interpretative Monopolies' argues that the tribal organisational principles, in general, are antithetical to democracy which the state represents. "The terms of the protection and preservation of the tribal heritage" in the hegemonistic democratic state "are couched in the cultural logic of the dominant society." The author explores the complex

relationship between the Indian state and the tribes of Nagaland within this paradigm. He points out that the Nagas never "consented to a party-based electoral politics replacing the traditionally grounded governance." They have always linked the retention of their inherent rights with self-determination. But, for the author, self-determination does not amount to separation from India. It means that tribals must be allowed to decide for themselves the "dimensions and forms of their political, economic and cultural conditions."

Pradip Phanjoubam in his thought-provoking essay 'Ethnic Identity and Community Relationship in the North-East' provides a scathing critique of the existing parameter of Indian nation, state and Indian nationalism. The foundation of this nationalism, according to him, is based on the Indian 'mainstream' which he traces from Indus Valley civilisation flowing down 'the open Gangetic Plains and emptied into the Bay of Bengal'. Its influence covered the entire sub-continent. The consciousness of "being part of this historical stream is what is broadly the 'mainstream' in the Indian context. History text-books prescribed in schools and colleges bear testimony to this. In this "great Indian mainstream", the author feels, "the historical sub-streams of the North-East are hardly, if at all, reflected." The appeals of 'joining the main-stream' is, therefore, a call for the negation of region's own history, myths, its national heroes and collective memories. The various ethnic groups' revival of their cultural traditions, myths is a symbolic resistance against the 'mainstream'. It is an expression of assertion of a separate identity. The alternative that Pradip suggests is writing 'history from below' instead of 'history from above' and the rejection of the classical model of the nation-state, which is "too rigid to accommodate the tremendously wide spectrum of extremely varying interests." The sub-streams may be equally treated as 'mainstreams' and the Constitution may be amended to make India truly a federal one.

But some of the statements pronounced by Pradip require rethinking. First, to quote him, "Hardly any of the district headquarters and the major settlement pockets of the state are linked by road." It does not seem to be borne by facts. Second, Nishis and Apatanis (which he cites as examples) are still retaining their traditional cultural practices. About Apatanis, he generalizes: "the state administration has hardly left any mark. Tribal court, Tribal values, Tribal economy are still intact and no one is unhappier for it." The author should have gone through Nehru-Elwin policy introduced in this area during the fifties which sought to

protect the customary laws and develop them according to their genius. In spite of gradual abandonment of this policy in the post-Indo-China War, the spirit of Nehru-Elwin policy continues to be invoked in the official discourse. Third, he foresees 'violence' in Arunachal as opposed to the current 'peaceful isolation'. He predicts that the tribes of this state would also follow the same path as their brethren in other North-Eastern states and would take to violence in the near future. It seems to be a teleological way of explaining a phenomenon. At times, Pradip's argument implicitly borders on essentialism and takes identity as fixed.

Identity formation, as pointed out by M. N. Karna in his essay "Ethnic identity and socio-economic process in North-Eastern India", is a complex process and multiple factors "come together to give rise to identity consciousness." It is a historical process the character of which is determined by time and place. Karna has provided a theoretical formulation of identity in his essay and applied it in the context of North-East India. In general, he does so without taking any case study of a specific group.

However, this task is performed by Udyon Mishra in his essay "Identity Transformation and the Assamese Community: Illusion and Reality." He has provided a lucid account of the process of identity formation in Assam and its changing forms from the Ahom rule to the contemporary times. He has discussed three factors contributing to Assamese nationalism in colonial Assam: (1) "Raj Mels" or people's Assemblies which were revived during the peasant movements of the eighteen eighties and nineties. Both the tribal and non-tribal Assamese population under the leadership of the rural elite provided a common front against the colonial administration; (2) the struggle to regain the status of the Assamese language under the leadership of Assamese middle class; and (3) the increasing pressure on land as a result of continued immigration from neighbouring East Bengal during the later part of the 19th century.

Resentment against the Assamese middle class hegemony over the tribals which had remained dormant during anti-imperialist struggle started surfacing in the post-colonial Assam as a result of two important factors: (a) unabated immigration from East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) resulting into pressure on land and consequent plain tribals' alienation from their land; and (b) the emergence of small middle class among the tribal communities.

The alienation of the plain tribes was further accentuated when the Assamese language received the

official stamp (1960) and then as the medium of instruction (1972). Assertion of separate identities and later on demands for autonomy from Assam started emanating from the tribals. On the other hand, the immigrant Muslims who had distinctive linguistic cultural heritage and had come to be identified as an Assamiya or new Assamese, took a decision of declaring themselves as Assamese at the time of the census enumeration in the early part of the 1970's, thereby identifying themselves with Assamese nationality.

But the continued influx of Bengali-speaking Muslims in Assam has transformed the demographic character in Assam; it has created an identity crisis for the Assamese Hindus who fear to be gradually reduced to minority. It is also creating an identity crisis for the Assamese Muslims. The latter are the descendants of the Muslims who came and settled in Assam from 13th to 15th centuries and got assimilated into the Assamese society in the "background of a tolerant and integrative Vaishnava movement launched by Sankardeva, the great saint and literary figure of Assam." Though these indigeneous Muslims of Assam had actively participated in the anti-foreigners stirred by All Assam Students' Union, yet they faced humiliations during the riots. Now, the Assamese Muslim community "sees itself not only as a segment of the broader Assamese nationality but also in relation to the other Muslims of the State." Udyon Mishra envisions that this phenomena is "bound to bring about far-reaching changes in the culture and civilisation of the Assamese people as a whole."

Morning Lyngdoh in the essay "Ethnicity, Religion and Language: A Case Study of the Khasis of Meghalaya" discusses the various identities based on ethnicity, religion and language in Meghalaya and various groups' efforts at peaceful co-existence. Among Khasis, there are two groups: one following the indigenous religion and the other followers of Christianity. Earlier, these two identities were in conflict because the Christian converts used to condemn the indigenous faith and practices. As a result, some Khasi non-Christian young men formed an association, Seng Khasi Association (SKA), to defend their traditional faith and forge unity among various groups of the Khasis. However, the tension now has subsided and the Khasi Christians are also making efforts to revive the indigenous Khasi cultural heritage and believe in preserving many of their traditional cultural practices. However, the relationship between indigenous people and outsiders is marked by conflict. In Jaintia hills, there is marked absence of tension between the locals and the

outsiders since the economy is in the hands of the natives and they live in peaceful co-existence. The nature of the relationship between the indigenous and the outsiders in Shillong is marked by tension since the economy is controlled by the outsiders. The conflictual nature of this relationship has led to the formation of insurgent groups like the 'Khasi Students' Union', the 'Federation of the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo people' etc.

Chawngliethang Changsen in his essay "The Chin-Kuki-Ethnic Dilemma: Search for an Appropriate Identity" traces the common ancestry, history of migration and common cultural practices of Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes scattered all over the North-Eastern region; Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura and Assam as well as the bordering states of Bangladesh and Myanmar. These tribes valiantly fought against British imperialism and also joined hands with Indian National Army under the leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose.

In the post-Independence period, many political parties were formed, and all of them 'were seized with the questions of ethnic identity' and to create single administrative and political unit of these scattered units. Some intellectuals in Mizoram have made a proposal to coin a new ethnic name, that is, CHIKUM (Chin, Kuki, Mizo). However, a new dimension was added to this identity recently when some historians tried to connect the history of the Chin-Kuki-Mizo people with that of Jews; this led the migration of some families to Israel which created "ethnic dilemma within the group."

Most of the contributors in this volume have referred to the role of security forces in the North-East but only three of them deal with this question at length. V.K. Nuh in his essay "North-East India: Sharing Personal Convictions" has argued that, in the name of development, modernisation and national integration, the indigeneous peoples' land resources in the North-East have been exploited and their struggle to protect their resources and also identity has been variously branded as extremist, militant, terrorist, insurgent, etc. and these have been countered by State terrorism.

Kamal Mitra Chenoy has further developed this theme and has provided a 'cultural and ideological basis' to Indian militarism in the essay "Militarism, Civil Society and Inter-groups Relations in North-East India". He critiques the nationalist discourse of 'composite culture' which has a homogenising tendency and is further extended by the rise of 'Hindutva' ideology and 'cultural elitism', forms an important aspect of it. Subordination of minority cultural assertions is implicit in this agenda. The move-

ments for autonomy are branded as anti-national, terrorists and these become law and order problems. Therefore, repressive laws are introduced to suppress these movements. The Armed Forces (Special Power) Act 1958 (as amended in 1972) conferring special powers upon members of the Armed Forces in disturbed areas of the North-East is the naked example of this. It provides "the legal power for the militarisation of the North-East and the consequent authoritarian control of civil society." The military wing of the Indian State is continuing with the colonial policy of 'divide and rule', thus militarising the civil society.

Monirul Hussain in "Fear of Being Killed, Violated and Displaced: An Incomplete Dossier of Terrorism in Post-Colonial Assam" applies the theme of 'state terrorism' and 'inter-ethnic terrorism' in the case of post-colonial Assam. He cites the examples of ethnic as well as state violence: 1960, 1972, Assam movement, ULFA, Bodo movement. He concludes that society in Assam has become 'notoriously violent' and a fear psychosis has been generated among many social groups of "being killed, tortured, injured, violated and displaced from their present living space."

To sum up, various solutions have been offered by the contributors: cultural autonomy, genuine federalism and self-determination. But these have to be allied with socialism as Lal Bhadur Varma in his essay in "Indians' in North-East India: Misfit Mayangs in Manipur" pertinently remarks and points out that it alone has succeeded in bringing about economic, political and cultural justice, at least better than any other experiment in human history."

The volume suffers from certain limitations that are technical in nature. It seems the final draft of the manuscript was not proof-read since it is full of mistakes. In fact, at every page there are spelling mistakes. This makes reading a very difficult one. At times in a single sentence there are so many mistakes that it becomes incomprehensible. Secondly, some of the references have not been cross-checked. For example, in the first article itself at p.17 (the main text) in the first line a word is used: Panikkar (1955) but in the end notes at p.28 it is mentioned: K.N. Panikkar (1995). It should not be K.N. Panikkar, but rather K.M. Panikkar, and not 1995 as the year of publication but 1955.

This volume has enriched our understanding of ethnic movements in the North-East and deserves to be read not only by the academicians but by activists as well.

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Mapping Gender Relations

SATISH C. AIKANT

From Myths to Markets: Essays on Gender

Kumkum Sangari and Uma Chakravarti (eds.)

Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla

1999 xxx + 393 pp Rs. 700

The germinal insight of feminist thought was the discovery that 'women' is a social category, one that has subordination at its core. Gender studies, inspired by the feminist movement through its various phases, seeks to establish an even ground for gender performance. Thus, it has a distinctive historiography; integral to this is feminist politics and its earlier *avatar*, women's studies. The diverse disciplinary perspectives and the divisions of the world in which Third World women have been the least privileged category, have lent a variety to gender relations, but the apprehensions of an essentialist reductionism have not altogether disappeared. Theories of gender tend to focus either on one-to-one relationship between people or on society as a whole. The intermediate levels of social organization are often skipped in the zeal to legitimate or delegitimize the overarching patterns and ideologies. As the structure of the family has remained the centre-piece of the sociological analysis of sex roles, it has allowed other institutions to be analysed as if gender were of no account at all, which, in effect, marginalized sex and gender from the classic theories of economic policy, urbanisation, migration and modernization. *From Myths to Markets* is an attempt to present the larger picture, a picture that goes a long way to revise the current views on gender, in relation to the institutions like household, work place, media and market.

In their introduction, the editors, Kumkum Sangari and Uma Chakravarti, point to the persistence of patriarchal structures as the basic problem with the result that even now it is 'difficult to draw either a spatial or a temporal map of patriarchal structures on the subcontinent' (p.xi). However, there are methodological problems involved here. Coming across from several disciplines, Women's studies have their flip side since such preoccupations exemplify the characteristic disciplinary boundaries, which often detract from a focus on woman. The editors give the example of periodisation of history. The periodisation of history in ancient, medieval and modern, with the tacit

assumption of their correspondence with Hindu, Muslim and British pre-eminence respectively, has helped constitute a patriarchal ideology that overrides historical evidence. And despite the questioning of such ideological assumptions from various quarters including that from feminists themselves, the periodisation itself has not been given up. Such rigidities provide a ready ground on which patriarchal structures have rested and persisted in the subcontinent. Perhaps the editors could also have taken note of 'biological foundationalism' which, combined with a rigid periodisation, is a sure recipe for subverting gender performance.

Pankaj K. Singh and Jaidev, directly address this issue in their essay and find it untenable that social constancies cannot be transformed. Bhisam Sahni's play, *Madhavi*, which is the focus of the authors' critique, is remarkable for the reinterpretation of social history embedded in myth. Myth acts as a charter for a contemporary social order from which it can derive confirmation and legitimation of the pattern of its moral values, strengthen its tradition and endow it with a greater value and legitimacy, by tracing it back to a higher and super-natural order of events. Sahani presents Madhavi as a female body, the site of patriarchal power. The physical experience of the body is always modified by the social categories through which it is known, and the body does not disappear but becomes an historically specific variable whose import is recognized as potentially different in different historical contexts.

Personal and Political

Household is one of the most important institutions wherein gender relations are structured, experienced and contested. A reifying view of the mythical past can be traced to royal household, which Kumkum Roy explores in her essay. She looks into the *Sastric* tradition with reference to the institutions enshrined in the *Dharma Sastra*: the *Manusmriti*, the *Arthashastra* and the *Kamasutra*. All the three traditions were steeped in the

patriarchal notion. But even as the king defended the basic unit of the household, and prescribed punishment to the violator of its norms, the kingly household itself was not uniformly patriarchal. While Roy argues that patriarchal and non-patriarchal systems co-existed in early India, she does not elaborate why the royal household was held as a social model.

Kunal Chakrabarti invokes Berger's theory of legitimation to explain the resurgence of Brahmanism in the shape of Puranic religion, to reconstruct the social reality in Bengal, marked by anti-Vedic protest movements through which lower castes and women articulated their demand for the rights to religious worship and social participation. As is well known, the mother-goddess was a central mythological character in Bengal reflecting the exalted position of women in Bengal society. However, the various *Upapuranas* created a divine paradigm which encouraged a social order directly antithetical to the exalted position of women in society. The Brahmanas, taking up this misogynistic position, used the myth of Ganesa, with his celibate devotion to Parvati, to subtly undermine the position of the mother-goddess thereby downgrading the station of women and degrading the idea of womanhood.

That the personal is political stresses the psychological basis of patriarchal oppression, implying a direct relationship between sociality and subjectivity. As such, to know the politics of women's situation is to know women's personal lives. This is illustrated in Tanika Sarkar's sensitive reading of *Amar Jiban*, Rashasundari's autobiography in Bengali, one of the earliest works in the genre. The life of this extraordinary woman provides the context of the political economy of families in nineteenth-century Bengal. Rashasundari had experienced the sharp prejudices against women and women's education. However, she rose above her docile domesticity and, determined to transgress all her limits, she wrote, against all odds, her own story, acquiring, in the process, a decisive agency and a distinct identity of her own. Two other lives are the subject of Meera Kosambi's essay—Anandibai Joshi, the first woman from Western India to qualify as a medical doctor and Kashibai Kanitkar, the first major novelist in Marathi. Both believed that education created a redeeming space for women. Their world-view of solidarity across the boundaries of class and religion was indeed inspired by a consciousness of the 'sisterhood of women', a term that is self-consciously used in modern

feminism

Economic models of households are premised on the assumption that the members of a household have shared interests and decision making is organized around altruistic principles by the household head. But empirical realities reveal a rather skewed view of altruism, attributing it most strongly to benefit the male member, who monopolizes family assets. The legitimation that derives from the household economic structure is then projected on to the wider cultural matrix of society to reinforce patriarchal authority and values. Prem Chowdhry makes an interesting case study of the food allocation and consumption patterns in Haryana in the wake of green and white revolutions. He comes to the conclusion that, far from granting economic independence or self-assertion to women, the ideological and cultural hold of patriarchy has actually been strengthened by these revolutions. Since domestic domain is the primary site of most social relations, the signal achievement of the feminist theory has been to deconstruct the family as a natural unit and reconstruct it as a social unit. However, adequate theoretical framework has yet to develop that could be effectively used in analysing women's work under patriarchy, the basic force behind social and cultural construction of gender categories. Indeed, the inadequacy of applying western feminist paradigms to patriarchy in India arises from the belief that they represent universalistic concepts, and that they could be abstracted from all social practices through which men dominate women everywhere. Women's work and work experiences in India differ significantly from those of men, not because of their domestic responsibilities or lack of adequate skills or education, which is a neo-classical economist's explanation, but primarily because of the willful exclusion of women from the job market. Another important issue that is raised here by Nirmala Banerjee is the capitalism-patriarchy nexus. Hartmann and Walby have shown that the concrete forms of gender inequality cannot be theorised from macro-systems of patriarchy and capitalism. At times, state and society collude with patriarchy, which buttresses the view that social phenomenon cannot be analysed purely as an economic problem. The exclusion of women from the sphere of rationality is also the cause of their exclusion from the political sphere. Such biases are often articulated in cultural productions, as Vijaya Ramaswamy illustrates from Tamil folk songs.

The Myth of the Market

Jasodhara Bagchi charts the emergence of women as a distinctive category in development discourse, underlining the need to adopt a truly interdisciplinary approach to women's studies, since women's participation in the development process can only be understood, both qualitatively and quantitatively, by incorporating the culturalist framework. Bagchi notes that 'Indian women, currently, are under a dual siege: the one from the rhetoric of 'development' that tries to make them maximally available to the 'free air' of the market, apparently untrammelled by any regulation; the other from a model by which the empowered woman or *Shakti* becomes an identity marker of the dominant religious community in India' (p.368). Paradoxical as it may sound, both are presented ideologically as forms of empowerment. The paradigm shift from welfare to development, with the rhetoric of empowerment and structural adjustment of the global agencies, visualizes a homogeneous image of women already free from the oppressions of class and gender.

One needs to understand that, unless women are freed from these ideological burdens, and the traditional model of female power is not dismantled, the necessary empowerment cannot be brought about by the numerous structural adjustment models, sponsored and advocated by such agencies as the International Monetary Fund. No great purpose can be served by capitulating to market imperatives, succumbing to instrumental rationality, and seeking technocratic solutions to what are essentially human problems. There has to be more critical reflection on this issue in the social sciences. Even the dominant assumptions of psychology and anthropology (as the 'study of man') reflect perceptual asymmetry in the very description of social organization.

Are there any heuristic devices which one could use against the *praxis* of compliance? Unfortunately, no ingenious model exists, for no social system is self-regulating. The present volume, with its eclectic concerns, does, however, offer valuable inputs from a cross-section of activist and academic viewpoints.

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Nirad Chaudhuri through Looking Glass

PRADEEP TRIKHA

Writers of the Indian Diaspora

by R.K. Kaul

Rawat Publications, Jaipur 1998 Rs. 350

Nirad C. Chaudhuri has remained unacknowledged in India till date. Interestingly, R.K. Kaul's book is comprehensive as well as critical and intended to complement existing studies of Nirad C. Chaudhuri in his centenary year. Bernard Shaw once said, "I have nothing to declare but my genius"; Chaudhuri could say that of himself. The University of Oxford and other foreign universities have acknowledged Chaudhuri's contribution, but not his *alma mater*, Calcutta University. That Indian scholars feel Chaudhuri is prejudiced against India, its way of living and religious beliefs, does not require any attention. The book under review focuses on Chaudhuri as a Renaissance man, as a Victorian with compact imagination. Other books on Chaudhuri have focused on him as a social critic or a literary figure or as something else. Kaul, however, looks at him from a different perspective, that is, someone who has Victorian manners, renaissance temperament and imagination *par excellence*.

Chaudhuri's knowledge of history and Hinduism has led him to accept a self-imposed moral responsibility to comment on the decadence of society. Like Edward Gibbon, an English historian, Chaudhuri, too, is a chronicler of decline. Jasbir Jain (Series Editor, *Writers of the Indian Diaspora*) points out in the preface of the book that Kaul has justifiably placed Chaudhuri in the past, a man who, despite his analytical abilities, is lost in the illusions of a past reality (p. 15). But the facts are contrary to this. For, writing in the twentieth century with a true historian's insight, Chaudhuri finds it impossible not to notice or remain unaffected by the unmistakable signs of all round decline in Bengali/Indian life and culture. He was also deeply disturbed during his first visit to England in early fifties by the declining British life, particularly the decimation of the middle class.

The book contains essays which acclaim the interdependence of a creative artist like Chaudhuri. The present monograph's thought provoking information invites multiple readings. At times, indulgence in negatives creates an atmosphere of awe and mystery, subsequently

leading to (un)intended flattery of the centenarian:

Even in a genius paranoia is deplorable....Chaudhuri is sophisticated enough to avoid these traps... There is consequently no need for self-justification... He does not congratulate himself on his achievements; he merely states facts and expects to be applauded, quite justly. (p. 34)

Kaul at times adopts Chestertonian attitude, for Chaudhuri is self-professed prophet. In an article written in *Times of India* (1980), he reminded his readers about the prophecy he made about the future in 1946, but no body paid any heed to him. Like any other Victorian, he too felt English were the custodian of a superior civilization, while Indian on the lower rungs of the social ladder did not aspire to such distinction. Chaudhuri was not lucky enough to be born in a well-to-do family who could send him to England for studies. This subdued desire to some extent was compensated when he was invited in Oxford University. Thus, "Chaudhuri obviously was one of those who remodeled his character and outlook in the image of an ideal 'Englishman'" (p. 57). In *A Passage to England*, he however, records the decline of British greatness.

Kaul traces and tries to define Chaudhuri's distinctive observations on nature which he has noted down with the painter's eye. Like Wordsworth, he first outlines with a broad brush and then, like Hardy, fills in the details with a smaller one. Chaudhuri was fascinated by English landscape painters like Turner and Constable. "The suddenness of his emotional response at the sight of the most ordinary sight is the nearest he gets to a mystical vision" (p. 85). Kaul feels that Chaudhuri has imbibed the habit of minute observation but his response is very personal and intimate, he takes the reader into his confidence before whispering what he wants to. 'He records the flight of pigeons in Calcutta with a delicacy worthy of the poet Thomson' (p. 86). In *Thy Hand Great Anarch!*, Chaudhuri confesses that it was a general habit of the English educated Indians to admire the beauties of nature in terms of

English landscape. The impact of Turner and Constable, Kaul states, is more visible in *A Passage to England* than in any other book. As far as sensitivity and sensibility are concerned, Chaudhuri is no less than any of the romantic poets. He acknowledges his indebtedness to several descriptive poets from Ben Jonson to W.H. Davies including Collins, John Clare, Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson and Hardy.

Chaudhuri's descriptive art extends far beyond the domain of the poet and the painter. At times, there is drama as well as suspense of a thriller though not morbid or macabre. The details furnished are so accurate that it appears to be a graphic picture moving like the reel of a film taken from a slow moving cinema projector. By quoting from *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian (Autobiography)* Kaul illustrates a memorable account of the earthquake on 9 July 1918 at Kishoreganj:

At about four in the afternoon, I was reading in bed... (it) began to quiver violently... I jumped down on the floor, which I felt creeping under me... There was a low all pervading rumble, but it seemed to be a part of a vast preter-natural and unconquerable silence by which that familiar and reassuring source of sound, the human voice, had been wholly stifled (*Autobiography* 327-28).

The description arrests the reader's attention at the very outset and for deciphering the conclusion one reads attentively till the end.

Kaul highlights several periods of transformation of a Chaudhuri the writer. In each chapter of the present book, he conscientiously includes excerpts from primary sources to authenticate his arguments and appreciation of the writer. Chaudhuri, though an Indian, defends the British rule in India and compares it with Roman empire. The Roman rulers offered assimilation to the people they had conquered. He (Chaudhuri) is '... an apologist of the English people, their morals', (116) Like Churchill, he, too, believes that the English could rule over India because Indians wanted them to. Chapter 5 is devoted to Chaudhuri's views on Hinduism and Hindu society. There are two books on the subject viz. *The Continent of Circe* (1965) (*Continent*). Chaudhuri draws sharp distinction between the Aryas who composed the Vedas and the Epics and contemporary Hindus. Kaul draws a parallel between the Western orientalist like William Jones and Chaudhuri. It is interesting to note that Kaul's preceding research is: *Studies in William Jones: An Interpreter of Oriental*

Literature (1995); perhaps here in the present book he banks upon his earlier study. The common ground between Jones and Chaudhuri is Calcutta. Jones was a judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta during the last decade of the eighteenth century. But to say that Chaudhuri and Jones share several common denominators or points of convergence is to go a bit obtuse. Chaudhuri has always distinguished himself by his sharp contempt for Hindus, decline of classical age, has criticised religious beliefs of Hindus. However, English orientalist like Jones, Colebrook (1965-1837), Wilson (1786-186) and Princep (1799-1840) do not have identical view points. Four strange characteristics of Hindus are: the sanctity of the Vedas, respect for the rivers, admiration for the fair complexion and respect for cattle. Kaul suggests that the third characteristic does play a vital role in the choice of brides, but it cannot be considered as a religious belief.

Appropriately, Kaul points to Chaudhuri's attack on the Laws of Manu. He comments, "No social system has had a greater volume of feeble didactic nonsense thrown at itself" (*Continent*). But, instead of further attacking Hindu xenophobia, he defends the caste system and gives the zoological analogy in order to prove his point. Kaul with tongue in his cheek remarks:

He should thank his stars for not being born in a sweeper family in Tamilnadu. He would then have had to announce his arrival from a distance. Upper caste Hindus would then have ensured that his shadow did not fall on them. The fear of pollution was so great that a Brahmin had to bathe in holy water to purify himself every time the shadow of an untouchable fell on him' (pp. 127-28).

The writer here directs his critical cannons on Chaudhuri for his unsympathetic attitude towards Hindus. For Bengalis, Chaudhuri harbours strong prejudices; he refers to the negative virtues of his fellow Bengalis: they have unique characteristics of falsehood, chicanery, perjury and forgery (*Thy Hand Great Anarch!*). He is consistently hostile even towards the Muslims. He regarded Pan-Islamic movement as a danger to Indian unity. He is also critical about Gandhi and Nehru, their political ideology of non-violence. At the same time, he has high regards for Subhash Chandra Bose's militarism. He suggests that, if Richard Attenborough can make a film on Gandhi, he should try to make a similar film on Hitler. At times,

Chaudhuri becomes pontifical. He draws a striking parallel between Krishna and Christ. Although the writer mentions it, the argument becomes unsustainable. He says, "Chaudhuri like other exponents of Hinduism, should ask himself why the service of destitute ... should be confined to the Christian missionaries alone... Has any Hindu priest or religious leader given any thought to such people...(p. 146).

The triptych of analyses is devoted to Travel writings of Chaudhuri—*A Passage to England* and its sequel *The Three Horsemen of the New Apocalypse*. The theme that links the two is that of the decadence of English society and culture. According to Chaudhuri, decadence is due to the disintegration of the old institutions such as the aristocracy, the family and the church. Hiroshima explosion gives Chaudhuri enough reason to criticise America and Americans for their contribution to scientific development. But this is a lopsided view highlighting both prejudice and ignorance. It is incorrect to declaim American society for its achievement, in areas ranging from astronomy to space research.

In the "Epilogue", Kaul argues that Chaudhuri's ... statement of his personal creed is a mere patchwork of discordant ideas picked up at random from heterogeneous sources. They form an incoherent whole' (p. 163). One of the major assets of Kaul's book is its lucid style. The author tells his readers exactly what he wants to do and how he wants to achieve his aims. Several quotations from Chaudhuri's works, newspaper articles, letters written to his friends help considerably to illustrate his (Kaul's) analysis, although the reader would wish for some more explanations of them. He cleverly relegates much additional information to the notes. However, his emphasis on certain points in time makes it difficult for him to find smooth transition from one chapter to the next. But at no place in the book does the reader get the impression that Kaul's choice of topics is an arbitrary one, because in each chapter he points out how this particular segment mirror's the problems of Nirad C. Chaudhuri's works as a whole.

The book is a good study of Chaudhuri and can safely be recommended to all readers who want comprehensive and thorough understanding of a brilliant centenarian.

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Yug Badal Gia by Sohan Singh Seetal, translated into English as *Time Has Taken a Turn* by Tejwant Singh Gill, presents a comprehensive picture of life on a small canvas. Set in a village of undivided Punjab (the time becomes clear only towards the end) and revolving around Lakha Singh and his household, the novel provides an account incorporating an impressive range of human experiences.

There are the landlords-cum-money-lenders like Lakha Singh, Dhare Shah and Samund Singh, who must enhance their power, pelf and pleasure at any cost, and who are experts in grabbing from the poor in the garb of being their friends, relatives and well-wishers. There are menial workers like Kathu and Sube, whose single shift of work may stretch unto thirty-six hours at times, who slave all their life for two square meals, and who are trapped in eternal debt from the time of their marriage, thus sentencing their progeny to the same fate.

And there are those further on the margins of these margins like Dada who is deprived of even a single meal from his own home. Security of getting food when hungry transforms him into an efficient, useful and loyal worker who pledges himself to Lakha Singh for life and sacrifices his life retrieving silver coins for the master at the time of Partition, without ever becoming emotional about his own life.

There are sensitive portraits of another class of victims as well, those who are advised to "bear all silently", as their love or hatred is of no

consequences namely, the three women married and used by Lakha Singh

But it is much more than merely an array of centralities and marginalities. It is a narrative of ironies, of tragedies, of bruises given by life; of obsessions and regrets, of surrender and hatred, of helplessness and defiance, of triumphs and defeats, of joy and loveliness.

Despite their helplessness the three women emerge as strong assertive persons. Commanding respect and affection from everyone, Basant Kaur, Lakha Singh's first wife, mother of a son and a daughter, is yet forced to make the proposal of her husband's second marriage with her cousin. She still wishes for her husband's happiness and well-being, yet towering in her forbearance and silent suffering, she refuses to be shaken from her resolve of renouncing her husband physically for even after his second marriage, in spite of her husband's sincere apologies and pleadings.

Swarni, forced to marry Lakha Singh against her wishes, manages, out of revenge, to conceive her first

child from her lover and decides not to bear Lakha Singh a single child, even though it finally costs her life.

Rajo, the low-caste beauty, brought to the village as Dada's wife, haunts her involvement with Lakha Singh as her triumph and not infamy, and is alike to bargain for proper education and a job for her son, Jarnail, from Lakha Singh.

Deprived of Basant Kaur's true love as well as Swarni's, forced to bring up Swarni's son as his own, uprooted from his land and blackmailed by his illegitimate son Jarnail, the mighty Lakha Singh, ironically, feels no less cheated by life. The latter part of the novel seems rather hurried and one misses the detail and attention to character and event so effortlessly presented in the earlier parts of the novel.

Although engrossing in its portrayal of complexities of human nature and interaction, the novel ends rather abruptly and melodramatically. The expectations raised by the title of the novel and the remark, "The condition of the poor does not change with the change of borders and

governments. It improves with the transformation in the social and political systems" (p.217), stand defeated in the sudden conclusion. Partition, dealt with rather cursorily, gives Jarnail the power over Lakha Singh to make him agree to a regular marriage with Rajo and to publicly own Jarnail as a son—conditions Lakha Singh readily accepts as they suit him equally now after Basant Kaur and Swarni's death. One wonders where was the need to end up so neatly and simplify the matter treated all along with a fair amount of complexity.

The English translation, by and large, reads well though occasionally literal translation of some idiomatic expressions of Punjabi jars a little. One wishes the original date of publication of the novel in Punjabi was also mentioned. What is really frustrating is the profusion of printing errors, and numerous appearing on a single page. Ploughman Sube becomes Suba (p.46 onwards), 'Choochak' (p.2) is 'Chuchak' (p.26) and also 'choochak' (p.216); 'Murad ka Kot' (p.109) becomes Murda da Kot (p.110); 'cannot and 'infant' figure all over countless times, while other errors are even more serious and frequent. The printing is so dim at places that one seems to be reading a poor photocopy of a text. While the attempt of Punjabi University to make the novel accessible in English is laudable the indifference to its presentation is unpardonable.

Pankaj K. Singh teaches English at H.P. University, Shimla.

Panorama on a Small Canvas

PANKAJ . SINGH

Time has taken a Turn

(English Translation of *Yug Badal Gia* by Sohan Singh Seetal)

by Tejwant Singh Gill

Publication Bureau, Punjabi University Patiala, 1998

Summer School on WORKING OF MIND

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