

Book Reviews

Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, *Indo-Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, Delhi: Primus Books, 2010, pp. viii + 208, Rs 795.

The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate during the early thirteenth century constitutes a watershed in the history of South Asia. During this period, a predominantly Turkish ruling class conquered vast territories in northern India and erased the remnants of Rajput feudalism. With the aim of legitimizing its power, it sponsored a record of its achievements in the official language, Persian. We are familiar with some of these writings, as these have been employed by modern medievalists to reconstruct the history of the Delhi Sultanate. In the book under review, Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, a distinguished Aligarh-based historian and author of nearly a dozen books, analyses the writings of six historians who lived in northern India during the thirteenth century. At the outset, Siddiqui maps the evolution of historiography in Arabic during the ninth century when the writers assessed the authenticity of facts and eliminated romantic tales. With the beginning of official historiography in the eleventh century, the focus narrowed to the ruler and his court. Persian historiography, which developed in the hands of Gardezi and Baihaqi who documented the history of the Ghaznavids, exercised a strong influence on the Indo-Persian historiography of the thirteenth century.

Fakhr-i-Mudabbir is seen as a writer who carried forward the tradition of Arabic historiography and became a trend setter for Persian historiography in the Indian subcontinent. His family had been associated with latter Ghaznavid rulers, but migrated to Lahore in the wake of invasions of Ghuzz Turks in Ghazni. He began his literary journey with the compilation of *Shajra-ul-Ansab*, which contains 136 genealogical tables pertaining to Prophet Muhammad, caliphate and succeeding Muslim dynasties. To this, he added a prologue which became popular as *Tarikh-i-Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah* and

Tarikh-i-Fakhr-i-Mudabbir. After emphasizing the significance of monarchy, it describes the military success of Sultan Muizzuddin in Ghazni after the ouster of Ghuzz Turks. More importantly, it describes the political career of Qutbuddin Aibak from his appointment as commander of Kuhram and Samana in 1192. It also narrates post-1206 administrative arrangements of Aibak, with reference to the conciliation of local chiefs and management of land grants held by Muslim theologians. It throws interesting light on Turkish tribes of Central Asia, focusing on their social life and cultural mores. Fakhr-i-Mudabbir's second major work, *Adab-ul-Harb wa ash-Shujaa* (Ways of War and Chivalry) was dedicated to Sultan Iltutmish. Treating the Ghaznavid polity as a reference point, it uncovers the functions of state departments like public censor, intelligence, diplomacy, tributes and taxation. It devotes a large space to the modes of warfare and use of horses, including their diseases and cures.

Siddiqui places Ali Kufi's *Chachnama* in the cultural context of northern India during the early thirteenth century. At this juncture, Persian literature received a considerable impetus owing to two factors viz. the adoption of Persian culture by the Turkish ruling class and the migration of people from Persian speaking lands of Khurasan and Transoxiana. The need of the time was to translate Arabic classics into Persian, besides collecting information on the nature of Arab rule in Sind. Ali Kufi, who had been driven to Uch in adverse circumstances, decided to fill the second part of the need. During his search at Arur, he discovered a book on the Arab conquest of Sind, which had been written in the obsolete Hejazi Arabic dialect. He translated the text into Persian and, in the process, added information on the pre-Arab Brahmin dynasty which was based on popular legends. The elevation of the minister Chach to the throne was attributed to his liaison with the queen of Raja Sahasi. Similarly, the execution of Muhammad bin Qasim was attributed to the revenge by the two daughters of Raja Dahir who had been presented to the caliph. Despite these

weak points, Ali Kufi supplements the accounts of Arab writers on the subject. We learn that the migrant Ifafi Arabs served both Raja Dahir and the Arab conqueror. The Arab regime, which was committed to maintain the existing social hierarchy, was advised to adopt non-interference in religious affairs of the ruled.

A migrant from Nishapur, Hasan Nizami was commissioned by Qutbuddin Aibak to record his achievements in northern India. Opening his *Taj-ul-Maasir* with the second battle of Tarain, he provides details about the Jat rebellion at Hansi and Aibak's visit to Ghazni in 1193. He omits the events that occurred between 1197 and 1206 as well the administrative reforms of Aibak that were introduced after 1206. Nizami's lack of interest may be attributed to Aibak's sudden death. As he adopted Iltutmish as his new patron, he resumed the work and carried the chronicle to 1217. However, the exercise was marred by an overpowering desire to glorify the role of Iltutmish and lack of chronological sequence. While describing the events where Iltutmish was present along with Sultan Muizzuddin and Qutbuddin Aibak, Nizami magnifies the image of his patron to the extent of overshadowing his two masters. Not surprisingly, Nizami fails to perceive the enthronement of Iltutmish as usurpation. What is burdensome and irritating, Nizami's prose is extremely verbose and ornate, being loaded with needless similes and metaphors. Yet Nizami's effort is not without merit. The complete texts of royal orders, which were issued by Aibak and Iltutmish to their provincial governors, provide crucial insights into the process of state formation in the nascent Delhi Sultanate. Equally significant are references to the availability of luxury goods that were imported through long distance trade.

A native of Bukhara, Sadiduddin Muhammad Aufo travelled extensively in the different parts of the Islamic world. After serving as a preacher in Nishapur, he joined a group of merchants and took a ship for Cambay. During the course of a visit to Uch, he presented his *Lubab-ul-Albab* (Persian translation of an Arabic anthology on early Persian poets) to Nasiruddin Qubacha. It was at the instance of Qubacha that Aufo assumed the task of writing *Jawami-ul-Hikayat wa Lawami-ul-Rivaayat*. Spread across four volumes and encyclopedic in range, it dealt with the political traditions of various Muslim kingdoms and practices of early Muslim mystics. Prized by Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Ziauddin Barani, it served as a source of inspiration for the Delhi Sultans in matters of state policy. Its choice of historical episodes was aimed at underlining the significance of political sagacity, military strategies and spiritual values. Its account of early mystics – including Abu Ishaque Ibrahim bin

Adham, Abu Ali Fuzail bin Ayaz and Abu Saeed Abul Khair – served as a model of piety for subsequent generations of sufis in India. It notes the presence of Muslim merchants in the Chalukya kingdom of Gujarat as well as the Hindushahi kingdom of Punjab and Kabul. It demonstrates the superior military tactics of the Ghaznavids against their Indian opponents, but does not hesitate to expose the weaknesses of the Ghaznavid empire during the post-Mahmud period, as manifested in debased currency and internal conflict in the ruling class. Its anecdotes of the Shansbani rule in India and Khurasan provide insights into the political culture of the age. Though Aufo's first patron was Nasiruddin Qubacha, yet the former fails to provide adequate space to the latter's achievements as an autonomous ruler. In the wake of Qubacha's death (1228), Aufo shifted his loyalty to Nizamul Mulk Junaidi, the *wazir* of Iltutmish. That is why Aufo gives to Junaidi the credit for the political and administrative measures of Iltutmish. In Siddiqui's view, Aufo's account was not only supplementary and corroborative, but also served as a corrective to the histories of Ibn-i-Asir and Juzjani. It also became a model for latter writers like Maulana Fazlullah Binbani, Shaikh Rizkullah Mushtaqi, Abdul Qadir Badauni and Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dehalvi.

Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani, the author of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, is hailed for initiating the trend of writing dynastic history in the *tafaqat* (layers) genre. Juzjani, whose elders served the Ghurid rulers in Afghanistan and Central Asia, migrated to India in 1227. During the course of a long career in the service of the Delhi Sultanate, he held many judicial and ecclesiastical offices, besides headship of seminaries (*madrasas*). In his *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, which spreads across 23 chapters, he offers a comprehensive account of the Muslim dynasties of Iran, Central Asia and northern India. The opening account of prophets mentioned in the Quran is followed up by that of Prophet Muhammad, four pious caliphs and two major caliphal dynasties, Umayyads and Abbasids. As a digression, Juzjani delves into pre-Islamic Iran. Drawing from the classics of Firdausi, Tabari and Maqdisi, he praises the institution of kingship, besides economic and cultural developments. While reconstructing the history of the Muslim dynasties of Iran and Central Asia – Saffarid, Samanid and Buwahid – the focus is on conquests, public works and justice. The history of the Ghaznavids was largely based on the works of Utbi, Baihaqi and Imadi. The achievements of Sultan Mahmud are manifested in his great conquests, magnificent court, grand army and vast resources. The section on the Saljuqids, which is marred by factual errors and popular legends, seeks to glorify the rulers, Malik Shah and Sanjar, but fails to give

any credit to the famous *wazir* Nizamul Mulk Tusi.

The most significant portion of Juzjani's chronicle, comprising last eight chapters, has been devoted to the Khwarizm Shahs, Shansbanis and Mongols. We learn that the polity of Khwarizm was segmentary in structure, as the rulers distributed the territories among their sons who ruled as autonomous chiefs. The account of Shansbanis of Ghur was characterized by freshness and objectivity, though it was composed when there was no surviving ruler who could be flattered in the hope of reward. The achievements of Malikul Jahal and Alauddin Jahansoz are followed by those of the two brothers, Ghiasuddin Muhammad bin Sam and Muizzuddin Muhammad bin Sam. Attention has been paid to the Ghurid interest in monuments and learning, with particular reference to the revival of Ghazni. The description of Ghurid wars against Khwarizm Shah is more detailed than that of their expeditions in northern India. The account of Delhi Sultans, from Qutbuddin Aibak to Alauddin Masud Shah is brief and disappointing. Juzjani employs the technique of criticizing important rulers through subtle hints, because overt negative judgement was impossible. While praising his patrons (Iltutmish and Balban), Juzjani does not fail to appreciate the merits of their rivals. This enables us to revise the existing views on Qubacha, Yaloz, Qutlugh Khan and Imaduddin Raihan. Juzjani's account of the Mongols, with reference to Chingez Khan and his successors, is quite valuable as it is based on personal experience as well reports of merchants and immigrants.

Of all the historians dealt with in this volume, Amir Khusro was the only one to have been born in India. An aristocrat to the core, he was a product of the cultural efflorescence which was manifested in the Delhi Sultanate. He benefited from the scientific rationalism encouraged by the Khaljis, while imbibing a universal humanism owing to a close association with Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya. Though he acquired widespread fame as a Persian poet, he excelled himself in several literary genres and styles. His contribution to Persian historiography can be assessed on the basis of five historical *masnavis* and two prose works. Unlike his predecessors (Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, Hasan Nizami and Juzjani), Amir Khusro shifted focus to social and cultural life and, writing from an Indian perspective, displayed a strong sense of identity with India and Delhi Sultanate. His historical *masnavis* are devoted to political events like the conflict between Sultan Kaiqubad and Bughra Khan, the military campaigns of Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji and the rise of Ghazi Malik to power. They also illumine the cultural life of Delhi, artistic features of the fort of Jhain, techniques of warfare, progress of various sciences and Hindu religious practices. The first prose work, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, describes the administrative reforms and

military expeditions of Alauddin Khalji, besides the topography of towns. The significance of the second prose work, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, lies in specimens of documents – *farmans*, *fatehnamas* and *arzdashts* – offering advice to the ruling class on dealing with the Mongols, *zamindars* and traders. He lauds the measures for price control and advocates religious freedom for non-Muslims. Surprisingly, he disapproves the appointment of low born to public offices, caricatures the Afghans and indirectly criticizes the Deccan policy of the Khalji rulers. In Siddiqui's view, Amir Khusro had little interest in the past and excelled in describing contemporary conditions.

This book is an important contribution to the study of the Delhi Sultanate. It examines not only the content of the major historical writings of the thirteenth century, but also places them in their respective historical contexts. It identifies the outstanding aims and concerns of the writers, with reference to the prevailing system of patronage. It does not hesitate to caution us regarding the prejudices and limitations of the writers. It provides English translations of numerous passages from the original texts, so that we are able to understand their nature, style and importance. The book, while confirming the reputation of Siddiqui as one of the most prominent medievalists of South Asia, promises to illumine the path of students of medieval Indian history.

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B.V. Sreekantan, ed., *Science, Technology and Society*, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 2009. Pp. xiv+202, Rs. 350.

The book is a collection of papers presented at a three day national seminar on 'Science, Technology and Society' jointly organized by Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla and National Institute of Advanced Study, Bangalore during 26-28, March, 2006. The aim of the seminar, in the words of the editor "was to bring to focus the series of problems that the Indian Society is facing which are becoming more acute day by day which however can be solved or mitigated to a large extent by judicious and timely application of Science and Technology." The papers have succeeded in realizing this aim.

The area of 'Science, Technology and Society' studies is an established academic discipline in the western universities. The area concerns the interaction between scientific and technological ideas and practices, on the one hand, and the social factors and forces, on the other. Focusing on the Indian context such an undertaking can

be very stimulating and challenging due to the specificity and uniqueness of the issues to be addressed. Not surprisingly the area of 'Science, Technology and Society' studies in the Indian context has witnessed a steady growth of literature which is impressive in terms of the breadth of scholarship and depth of analysis. The book under review is a commendable addition to such a literature.

The impressive features of this collection are:

1. the wide canvas of the focal theme which includes almost all core domains of the Indian scientific and technological endeavour; in fact, the breadth of the canvas has compensated for the absence of thematic unity;
2. technically competent articulation of the achievements and challenges; and
3. clarity and lucidity of presentation that make an esoteric area accessible to a non-specialist. Moreover, the inclusion of papers on science and technology education has broadened the focus of the book. Before coming to some overall critical observations, a few words about some of the papers are in order.

Professor V.K. Atre in his paper lucidly brings out the nature and the promise of micro-system technology at the core of which lies the development of smart materials. He underscores the radical change in the nature of technology best exemplified by the success of miniaturizing the technological gadgets. Prof. Atre graphically describes the multifarious application of smart material technology whose scope is limited only by our imagination. India could not participate, for historical reasons, in the world transforming process we call 'Industrial Revolution.' In fact, we missed the silicon revolution too. However, we can more than compensate for the missed opportunities by taking up in a big way an initiative in ushering in the micro-system technology which is only a decade old and Indian technologists are working in that direction for the last five to six years. According to him, "If we miss this revolution also. . . we would have missed most of the main technological revolution". The significance of Professor Atre's contribution lies in pin pointing one of the directions which is promising in so far as the innovative possibilities of Indian science and technology are concerned. However, Professor Atre could have explored the factors that might possibly come in the way of utilizing this crucial opportunity.

Professor Sukumar Banerjee provides a graphic account of Indian achievements in nuclear technology. For a non-expert he has effectively portrayed its

application not only to energy sector but also to health care, Agriculture, Food processing and industry. While convincingly showing that the Indian scientists and technologists did strive for self-dependence in nuclear technology and are even capable of sharing certain important items of that field with others, he acknowledges that the real breakthrough in our endeavour comes only when we attain self – sufficiency in nuclear fuel – a possibility that can be realized only by building thorium based reactors. However, granting that it takes a few decades, how far are we in building at least a prototype of thorium-based reactor? Professor Banerjee could have dealt with the question whether our effort in that direction has matched the urgency. That the Indian space programme has been the most successful one is widely accepted. Professor Kasturirangan very ably substantiates such a view. But, more importantly, he deals with the question of deploying this new science and technology for societal development in a country with its specific geographic location, natural setting and resources. The author has striven to enlighten those of us for whom space programme is only about rocket launching not knowing what for. He has brought out the possibilities of its application to the problems concerning disasters, detection of mineral resources, management of natural wealth and more importantly, harnessing it for education and health care. After reading this paper one wonders whether our space programme can be a role model for the rest of our science and technology initiatives.

Professor Sukumar Devotta's paper confronts head - on the most urgent problem India is facing, viz, the environmental degradation. He has done justice to this gigantic challenge by taking into account all aspects of this crisis. In our over zeal for production our callousness towards environmental protection has cost us what we cannot even fathom accurately. The principle of 'Polluter pays' hardly works with us. Particularly instructive in this connection is the author's attempt to explode certain myths. For example, we believe that hydro power is safe, not knowing that dams produce as much methane as carbon-di-oxide. After drawing our attention to the fact that the future fuel will be hydrogen on which our work, surprisingly, is minimal, Professor Devotta makes a case for new industrial model wherein the waste from one is a raw material for another. The question remains whether we should have industries whose waste can not be raw material at all. This question indicates the need to initiate a new model of industrialization which is radical because it first involves substantial amount de-industrialization. The ushering in of the knowledge economy organically linked to globalization has provided India a challenge

and an opportunity. Professor Rama Rao and Prof. Anitha focus on this phenomenon and in doing so reflect on our higher education system in general and university education in particular. The institutes of higher education need to undergo drastic changes in order to be vehicles for India's transition to a knowledge intensive society. They need to be the resource base for scientifically trained manpower without which mere increase in the Raw & D expenditure will be inconsequential. Transforming enormous human resource, which India is sumptuously endowed with, into human power that creates wealth demands that university system increase its capacity for absorbing more persons and enhance the quality of education imparted to them. The authors are optimistic about the possibility of raising the number of Ph.Ds to the level of the US, though such an increase is not on the agenda of those who manage the higher education system in India. The paper is highly instructive regarding both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of higher education as it stands today. The authors should have discussed, apart from the emerging social ethos of the new middle class that has an antipathy towards 'hard' and non-remunerative options like pure science and high technology, the negative impact of the inadequate school education both in terms qualitative adequacy and quantitative spread. The brute fact that state-run schools are becoming dysfunctional and private schools are inaccessible to the overwhelming majority of our people makes a mockery of our educational planning. And equally importantly, the authors should have focused on the less than desirable conditions of college education which seems to be the weakest link in the whole chain of education.

Professor Mukunda's paper gives an account of the steps taken by bodies like Indian Academy of Science to provide a wholesome and effective science education by organizing workshops and refreshes courses and initiating new programmes like Integrated Master's programme and Integrated Ph.D. programmes. Such steps can be excellent supplements to a rigorous college education in science in whose absence those steps become inadequate, it not cosmetic, in stemming the rot. We all agree that human resource is to India what oil is to the middle eastern countries and the former, unlike the latter, is not exhaustible. But the state of our school education and college education hardly inspire any confidence in our endeavour to build a rich human resource base. The products of such a system are bound to put serious limits to whatever we do at the post-graduate and research level.

Professor Rama Rao and Prof. Anitha rightly underline the need for bridging the gap between universities and

agency laboratories as an important step for universities to become more than purveyors of knowledge and achieve the status of co-producers of knowledge. But this is an uphill task given the orientation that our universities have inherited. This would not have been so if research was not placed in the early years outside the agenda of university education. In his debate with Homi Bhabha, M.N. Saha insisted upon making universities the loci of both pedagogy and research. But the views of Bhabha prevailed. Along with education, health care stands as a pillar of a sustained development of human wealth. The crisis in health care is deeper than the one in education. No doubt we have been able to increase life expectancy, eradicate several deadly diseases and control epidemic disasters, as the 2006 report on the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health informs us. But such achievements are more than offset by the stagnation one witnesses in reducing malnutrition, infant and maternity deaths.

Professor M.S. Valiathan's remarkable paper hits the nail on our pretensions in health sector. Having 16.5% of the global population, India's share in the disease burden of the world is 20%. The main source of the crisis is poverty which "aggravates illness which in turn drives people into penury". Ill health is the surest way of transforming poverty into destitution.

Though technology is only one of the many factors in the health care system, the intensive and extensive application of technology has altered the system beyond recognition; India's achievement in coming to terms with the technological transformation of its health care system has not been even modest. As Professor Valiathan notes, "While India imports 45% of the total requirement for medical technologies, the percentage risen to 95% in the high technology segment". The reason is our pathetic performance in the field of medical instrumentation. No doubt innovations take place in the India based R and D laboratories owned by Multinational corporations. Such innovations are the results of the labour of Indian scientists and technologists. But such innovations are of no consequence to India itself since the labour of its scientists and technologists do not at all add to the indigenous knowledge capital. In fact, the MNCs raise the price of equipments by 70% for sale in the very developing countries where the equipments were innovated. The result is the phenomenon of five star hospitals for the wealthy while the less fortunate are left to their fate. Such polarisation can be a greater threat than any imaginable epidemic. Professor Valiathan draws our attention to Dr. Sikka committee report which analyzed this grave scenario. The committee recommended ways of mandatory participation of academia and industry in

all R and D projects pertaining to medical instrumentation. It also insisted upon a mission mode approach to overcome the bureaucratic hurdles which can set at naught a nascent industry.

On the whole the book provides a clear and delete candid account of the Indian endeavour in science and technology – the tasks achieved, challenges ahead, potential capabilities and countervailing factors. The fact that the views presented are based on experience and reflections of the insiders lends the work an added significance. It deserves to be read by the practitioners of science and technology in our context. Also, it is an indispensable text for a core course in 'Science, Technology and Society' Studies programmes in India. However, one feels the conspicuous absence of papers by historians of science and sociologists of science. There is hardly any critical discussion in the book on the historical factors, pre-colonial or colonial, that have a bearing on the current situation in Indian Science and Technology. Secondly, we do not have a well worked out response to the negative reception by grass- roots workers and some sections of our society to some of the technological applications to the domains like agriculture and health. Thirdly, one expects an informed position regarding the conditions under which the deployment of a technology becomes economically viable. For instance, one needs to know within what limits nuclear technology is economically viable and in what ways it needs to be supplemented by alternative energy sources like, say, solar energy, the research work on which should have been started long back. Fifthly, though none of the authors believe, we may be sure, in the naïve 'Use-abuse' theory of science and technology (i.e. the discredited view that science and technology are in themselves good though they might have been misused / abused by some vested interests), there is hardly any reflection on the lessons we have learnt from the western experience that shows how science and technology can be easily made to serve, with impunity?, the interests of the military – industrial complex that can undermine democratic ways of life, individual and collective. More surprising is the complete silence regarding how far science and technology in India have promoted the goal of national self – reliance which was top on the agenda of independent India. Even more importantly, the reader is not enlightened about the role of modern science and technology in India in delegitimising non-modern knowledge systems that still sustain the lives of the bulk of our people and which were so well anchored in the material and cultural practices of our people that even the imperialist onslaught could not decimate them. Finally, a reader interested in the theme expressed by

the title of the book has to look elsewhere to get some clues regarding the organic link between the kind of science and technology we promote and the kind of society we envisage. It is because of the issues such as these that questions about science and technology are too important to be left only to scientists and technologists. Is it not time that the potential members of science and technology profession in India be exposed to such seminal issues right from their graduate training?

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Jagdish N. Sinha, *Science, War and Imperialism: India in the Second World War*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008, Pp. iv + 278, \$ 79.00 (paperback)

"This is an extremely lucid and significant work, which elaborates certain aspects of "Organising for Science" in a new way. It focuses on the elaborate linkages between the colonial state and the appearance of elite cadres of scientists who established the paradigms of Science as an aspect of nation building. The new readings Jagdish Sinha provides us is with regard to the background to this endeavour, which is located around the questions of the significance of agriculture to the colonial government. The emphases on agriculture which Lord Curzon insisted on, was then replaced historically during the years of the Second World War, by the technological drive to a scientific domain which was seen to be consistent with modernism. It now made no distinction between peace and war in the quests of science as progress. The history of institutions is carefully mapped in this new book for new readers. The colonial government establishes links with dominant industrial families. "While these measures led to an unprecedented industrial growth and expansion, they did not necessarily imply any significant innovation and research," (p. 70). However, Ramaswamy Mudaliar realised the value of industrial research, and set up Board of Scientific and Industrial Research in 1940, under the department of commerce. J.N. Sinha tells the story in a detailed way, with many footnotes and references, each allowing the reader to follow up the complex trail for himself or herself. It may not be an original work, drawing on both well known classics in the Sociology and History of Science Policy, but it is a major work, where the art of splicing and configuring secondary as well as primary materials, leads us to important questions about the new canvas, that the Sociology of Science increasingly leads us to. Unfortunately Brill has overpriced the book, as a statement on the neocolonialism in academia and the

dissemination of materials, so an Indian publisher will have to come forward to take the book to the larger audience in third world countries where the intelligentsia of the local peoples in Paolo Freire's terms, will have to negotiate with the ways in which colonialism and science do not go away!

The subject of who is the intelligentsia of the people will always be of interest to the historian. In an interesting paragraph, J.N.Sinha writes,

After virtually maneuvering the removal of the Director of the Institute, Nobel Laureate, Sir C.V.Raman, the Government of India wanted to have a British as the new Director. The Council of the Institute however opposed the move and wanted to have an Indian instead. Knowing this, the government entered into a secret liaison, among others, with the Dewan of Mysore State, Sir Mirza Ismail – a Muslim who disliked Bengalis, the British Resident in Mysore, and the Tatas, the Tatas and Mysore State being the principal founding trustees of the Institute. While authorities received enthusiastic support from the Dewan and the British Resident, the Tatas declined to interfere with the decisions of the Council. The official maneuver failed as a result, and J.C. Ghosh, another Indian scientist of repute who espoused the cause of science for national reconstruction, was eventually appointed Director. This episode makes two points clear. First, the refusal of the Tatas to toe the official line proves how the Indian Industrialist, despite their association with the government and the global system of capitalism, had come closer to the local scientific leadership on the question of managing science in the interest of the country. Secondly the Indian Scientific leadership was no less concerned and jealous of their rights and independence than their counterparts in politics (p.50).

C.F. Andrews, as a former teacher of St Stephen's college, always believed that learning from History was important for reconnaissance with the present. When the scion of the Tata house embraces Narendra Modi to enhance a deal, which will statistically in terms of mobile-metal, clog up the roads, we know that the corollary of economic actions, which are for immediate personal gratification will cause intense disruption of the ecological system. Decades ago, Shiv Visvanathan argued that there is no such thing as peaceful use of nuclear energy, because the problem of waste and societal surveillance will always be larger than the problem of immediate energy gratification. Many social scientists and millions of grass roots activists have argued for the right of peasants to survival, so that ecology must be foregrounded as the natural right of local communities. Today, Bharat Jhunjoo, with his team, fights for the recognition of the Ganga as the right of the people to survive on her banks. Peoples' movements have always believed that the co-existence of industry and agriculture is possible. In fact the work of people like Uzamma and Laila Tyebji, of Dastkar, has set up the symbioses of traditional knowledge groups and artisans, and IIT trained activists

to recover indigo as an agricultural and craft commodity.

If we are to understand the impact of people's struggle to make sense of their environment in the new contexts of globalization, where the malls and the waste generated are the new idioms of imperialism in the 21st century, the recovery of these debates that Sinha brings to us are crucial. That Binayak Sen gets arrested and charged for sedition is the symptom of what is seen to be the real syndrome, thirty percent of India as the Ministers at the Centre says, is in the hands of Maoists. Why is it so? The PUCL and the PUDR will have a great deal of mobilization to do, before they too become banned. Hunger and poverty are very visible details of life, the wealth of the earth spills out spite of its commercialization, and when treated as the spoils of one group or community, the human context of life becomes decimated. Binayak Sen is very well loved in Vellore, where he trained as a Doctor, and where he came to recuperate when he was released on bail. If he spent his life working with the poor, then that is what he will be remembered for. Community Health has always depended on those who gave their time, so JNU scholars too will have a lot to say about new forms of hegemony!

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Ernst Furlinger, *The Touch of Sakti: A Study in Non-dualistic Trika Shaivism of Kashmir*, New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2009, Pp. 288, Rs. 690.

The so-called 'Kashmir Saivism', more correctly the non-dualistic Shaivism of Kashmir or Trika with its philosophy of Recognition or *Pratyabhijna*, has been studied in the last few decades in its various dimensions: philosophical, historical, Tantric exegesis, aesthetical, and the traditions and texts involved are so rich and varied that there is much scope for further detailed studies. The present study focuses on a very specific concept, or rather symbol, the Sanskrit word *sparsa*, 'touch', and more specifically *saktisparsa*, 'the touch of the divine energy'. Although it seems to refer to a limited area, this concept can be used as a key to the understanding of the spirituality of the school, as the author aptly shows.

Professor Andre Padoux, eminent scholar of Tantra and Kashmir Saivism, especially of *mantrasastra*, has contributed a very perceptive Foreword to the book *The Touch of Sakti: A Study in Non-dualistic Trika Shaivism of Kashmir* by Ernst Furlinger. The author in his Introduction gives a survey of the history and literature of Kashmir Saivism, mainly based on the extensive historical and

textual researches of Professor Alexis Sanderson. He then goes into the "different meanings of Sparsa in Indian tradition," as a necessary background for the specific meanings in non-dualistic Kashmir Saivism.

The second chapter is devoted to important hermeneutical reflections. Here he elaborates on the difficulty of translation, or rather on the untranslatability of certain terms of the Sanskrit philosophical terminology. He analyses the most central concept of practically all Indian philosophy, *cit* (with its synonyms *caitanya*, *samvit*): "Is Cit 'Consciousness'?" Although I agree with his posing the problem, the solution to leave such terms untranslated does not really serve the purpose of mediating between two traditions (and that is what every translation tries to do). He also addresses the important term *vimarsa* in the philosophy of *Pratyabhijna*. Whether or not one agrees with the conclusions arrived, the importance of this chapter is to make the reader aware of the hermeneutical implications while interpreting such terms and texts of another tradition. The sharpening of the awareness of difference is essential.

Chapter three is the centre of the study: "The Touch of Sakti (*Saktisparsa*)" which he analyses in selected texts of Trika. This chapter shows the fruitfulness of the approach of the author, because he takes into account not only the philosophical or sensual meanings of 'touch' but its many other implications: linguistic, spiritual, sexual etc. The first section analyses the term in the *Sivastotravali* of Utpaladeva, along with its commentary by Ksemaraja (foremost disciple of Abhinavagupta and a prolific commentator). Here the word *sparsa* (and synonyms) assumes the mystical connotation, as Utpaladeva again and again prays for the bliss arising from the touch of the lotus feet of the Divine, an image based on the widespread tradition of touching the feet of the guru or the *murti*. However, this devotional meaning is interpreted in a non-dualistic way, where the 'feet' are understood as the divine energies or Saktis. The poetic and mystical beauty of the *Sivastotravali* is particularly present in the verses connected with 'touch'. In this connection the author also makes an excursus on the term *samavesa*, 'absorption'. A major section of the study is devoted to the Tantraloka of Abhinavagupta and its various uses of the concept of *sparsa*. In this text the manifold meanings of the term unfold, particularly in the Tantric and yogic sense. This chapter is particularly rich.

In the conclusion the author reflects on "The question of the liberating and critical potential of Trika Saivism." To quote from his conclusion: "Focusing on our topic, 'the touch of Sakti', we have found different contexts and meanings in which the word *sparsa* occurs in connection with Sakti, the divine power, revered as the Goddess.

An interesting conclusion is how significant is this experience of touch in the context of *kundalini yoga*, associated with the experience of 'the touch of ants'! The most important result of our study is that we found that *sparsa* denotes one of the highest stages of the spiritual process, of the rise of *kundalini*, even above the experience of enlightenment (*vijnana*). . ." (p. 248) He shows that the importance of *sparsa* in the spiritual ascent is connected with the centrality of Sakti in non-dualistic Saivism. "And every moment it can happen that one is touched by the rays of the Power and one's true nature of supreme light and joy (*ananda*) unfolds. . ." (p. 250)

The importance of "the touch of Sakti" lies precisely in the connection between the sensual and the transcendental, a connection which Abhinavagupta has presented in the most rigorous and consistent way.

The author ends with some reflections on the present-day relevance of such a study. This relevance is obvious when considering the problems and tensions humankind is facing at this juncture. One of the insights of Trika is precisely: "At the core of this Tantric Advaita tradition is the conviction or the experience of the interconnectedness of reality. . ." (p. 254), a connectedness which is essential for modern man to re-discover.

The present book is part of a thesis submitted at the University of Vienna. Unfortunately the second part has not been translated, which deals with a comparison with Western mysticism (Heraclitus, Plotinus, Augustine), and the metaphor or experience of 'touch' in these authors. This part would throw much light on how spiritual-philosophical and mystical traditions, each one seen in its own light, can also enrich and enlighten each other.¹

Anyone interested in the Tantric and Saiva traditions will profit from reading this book, and also those who are interested in mysticism in a wider sense.

NOTE

1. The German publication contains the entire thesis: *Verstehen durch Berühren. Interreligiöse Hermeneutik am Beispiel des nichtdualistischen Sivaismus von Kashmir*, Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia, 2006.

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A. R. Kidwai, *Literary Orientalism: a companion*, New Delhi: Viva Books, 2009. Pp. xix + 374, Rs. 895.

Said did not treat Orientalism as "a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship or institutions; nor ... a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative

and expressive of some nefarious 'Western' imperialist plot to hold down the 'Oriental' world." (1979: 12). For him, it is the study of hegemonizing relations between West and East whose historical and social setting involves "a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world." (Said, 1979: 12) As a style of thought, based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between "the Orient" and "the Occident", it has allowed a whole range of writers to accept the basic distinction between East and West "as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient." (Said, 1979:2-3).

"Literary Orientalism" is a shade that emerges from this all encompassing perspective of Orientalism. It is accommodative because it can easily accommodate poets and writers from Chaucer (1343-1400) to Doris Lessing (1919-). Despite being fairly accommodative, Literary Orientalism is a rather unknown field of English studies. Readers are confronted with a host of questions regarding the genesis of the term "Literary Orientalism", its significance, present status, scope and relevance. Answering these questions is not simple. It poses a formidable challenge and, therefore, demands deft handling. The challenge assumes more significance because it is located in the backdrop of ecumenically accepted though much debated term "Orientalism", which has a historically problematized past and a controversial present. Prof. Kidwai is indeed not shy of facing this challenge. He takes upon himself the task of informing readers about "Literary Orientalism" and he does so in a manner which is both academic and informative. *Literary Orientalism: a companion* is an attempt towards finding answers to a host of uncomfortable questions by "way of listing and classifying relevant material," which comprises bibliographic details of more than 300 critical books, 900 articles, conference presentations and 400 dissertations. This *Companion* is the first of its kind that charts out the genesis of Literary Orientalism and brings into sharper focus the contributions of 45 select British men of letters to this strand of English studies.

The book is spread into six chapters. Chapter I titled "Samples of Literary Orientalism: Writers, Works and Critical Studies" starts with Joseph Addison (1672-1719) and ends with W. B. Yeats (1865-1939). Chapters II, V, and VI have been titled as "Critical Books on Literary Orientalism", "Role of the *Arabian Nights* in the Development of Literary Orientalism" and "Role of the Oriental Tales in the Development of Literary Orientalism", respectively. Inasmuch as Literary

Orientalism has gathered wider currency and scholarship, the remaining two chapters provide testimony to this recent spurt and interest in this sub-field reflected in the burgeoning number of articles and dissertations dealing with Literary Orientalism. Hence, "Articles/Conference Presentations on Literary Orientalism" and "Doctoral Dissertations on Literary Orientalism" form the basis for Chapters III and IV, respectively. Each chapter in the book provides a detailed bibliographical survey, which will, indeed, be of immense help to researchers and scholars. An illuminating and crisp Preface and a lucid Introduction makes this little-known sub-field of English literature accessible to students.

European attitude towards oriental inferiority is quite well known. Macaulay's infamous Minute of 1835 denigrating literature in Arabic and Sanskrit language is a confirmation of such attitude. However, most specific has been the European perception of Islamic Orient which was, as Said has rightly pointed out, "regularly associated in England either with the problems of empire or with the corruption of fancy." (Said, 1983: 270) Its focus was never on highlighting the prestige of high culture or systematic learning, rather with intrigue and debauch, difference and hostility. Writing *Literary Orientalism: a companion* also stands for "the depiction of the Orient/Oriental in Western literary texts" with the professed aim of treating 'Orient' as referring to "the lands to the east of the Mediterranean and stretching through Asia, mainly Turkey, Arabia, Persia, China, Japan, India and also covering Africa ...[with] strong and unmistakable religious, sociocultural and emotional overtones." (Kidwai, 2009: xiv)

Certainly Europeans have a long history of coming to terms with the Orient, and this justifies Kidwai's assertion that "Literary Orientalism as a subfield of English studies had come to the notice of critics and research students much before the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*...[and] even these pre-1978 critics seem familiar with the tropes of representation, cross-cultural encounter, empathy and of employing the Oriental setting as a pretext for grappling with or interpreting some wider or sensitive issues closer home." (Kidwai, 2009: xv) In fact, one can find the trace of orientalism in philological tradition. The traditional philology was interested in research into ancient writing. As Al-Dabbagh (2010) has rightly observed, the traditional philologists "believe that philological studies, which consisted of the collection of ancient writings and the establishment and interpretation of true texts, appeared both in the West (where they corresponded to the Hellenistic period) and in the East (where they

corresponded to the time of the Han Empire). Therefore, in spite of the fact that orientalism, as a term, became widely used only in the nineteenth century, it goes back, in practice, to Antiquity..." (Al-Dabbagh, 2010: 21) But there is more to the phenomenon of orientalism, for it principally deals "not with a correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient ... despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a 'real' Orientalism." (Said, 1979) The Literary Orientalism of the pre-1978 critics is accommodative and equally sympathetic in its portrayal and treatment of cultures of the East discernible in the classics of the English literature and European-authored literary texts, but in dealing with this term in ideological and specific sense the methodological problems that one may encounter in such a broadly construed field as this are or will be difficult to handle.

There is definite and unmistakable foregrounding of one religious group in this companion. As Kidwai points out, "This companion to Literary Orientalism focuses on the treatment of only Islam and Muslims in Western literary Orientalism, to the exclusion of other religious, ethnic, linguistic or racial groups in the Orient, who otherwise happen to be equally important." (Kidwai, 2009: xv) Notwithstanding the positive side of this focus which Literary orientalism with "religious, sociocultural and emotional overtones" can bring in providing a better human understanding of 'Other' cultures, the religio-cultural determinism may also lead to its being a self-

validating and hermetic occlusion. Also in the exclusivity of the treatment of Islam and Muslims some prominent members falling in the league of literary orientalists, such as Renan and Louis Massignon, have been inadvertently missed out. Renan's 1883 speech that he gave at the Sorbonne entitled "*L'Islamisme et la science*" is a positively chilling and provocative statement on Islam and Science. Massignon, like Renan, must be seen "within the great structure of French cultural, political, and colonial domination of the Muslim world." (Said, 1983: 282) But unlike Renan, he had a passion for Islam. To quote Said (1983), "Renan's epistemological attitude toward Islam ... is one of divestiture and judgement, and Massignon's of sympathetic assumption and rapprochement." (1983: 282) And both should have found place in the *Companion*.

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LOVE AND GENDER IN THE RIG VEDA AND THE MEDIEVAL PUNJABI LITERATURE By J.S. GREWAL

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