Book Reviews

Jose Carlos Gomes da Silva, *The Cult of Jagannatha: Myths and Rituals, Delhi;* **Motilal Banarsidass, 2010, pp. XVI+206.**

The central thesis of the book questions the observations of Alexander McDonald (1975) that "the religious culture of the Jagannatha worship at the city of Puri is par excellence a meeting place between the Aryan and non-Aryan elements of the population", and of Charles Fabri that "the temple of Jagannatha along with all others built during the 7th-14th centuries bear the marks of non-Aryan beliefs". He also questions the existing researches on the subject that discover the prominence of heterodox philosophical ideas as well as the religious rites in the system of Jagannatha worship. (p. XV) Instead, the author argues that both the temple and the rituals cohere with the Brahmanic orthodoxy reflected in other places of India including the groups of temples of Khajuraho of Madhya Pradesh and some others in Rajasthan. "How to interpret", the author writes, "the iconographic specificity of Puri deities?" What status should be attributed to the Sudra ritualists of the great temple? The present book provides new answers to these old questions. Puzzling as it may appear, the 'strangeness' of Orissa ethnography is a particular — yet extremely coherent – expression of Indian traditions". (p. XVI)

The standing problem related to the issue in question is its historicity — what probable time could be attributed to the beginning of this Vaisnavite shrine leaving the mythologization of the whole phenomenon, that fixes it to the beginning of the Drapara aeon, altogether? One can confidently propose that historically, the shrine never dates earlier than the 9th century, because it does not appear on the list of the pilgrimage of the South Indian Vaisnava saints called Alvars who were active during the 6th-9th centuries enlisting the Tirumala hills (installed in the 5th C.), Dwaraka, Vrindavan and Naimisyaranya as their regular pilgrim spots. During the visit of Hsuan Tsang (7th C.) the whole of coastal Orissa was pervaded by the Vajrayan Buddhist tantric system of religious practices. Some scholars, therefore, observe reasonably that the Puri shrine was originally a Buddhist stupa/ caitya, a mound converted to the temple, the place being identified with a "blue mountain" (nila giri/ adri/ parvata etc). If so, then this conversion must be much later than Hsuan Tsang's visit. The Sanskrit texts that mythologise the shrine are some portions of the Skanda Purana, Brahma Purana and Matsya Purana that cannot be dated earlier than the 11th-12th century. Portions of the Madala documents that deal with the early history of the shrine are surreptitious. It appears, quite reasonably, keeping the issue of conversion aside, that the shrine was founded some time between the 10th-11th centuries most probably by Yayati I (of the Soma dynasty 922-955) who was a great patron of Brahmanism admired by the historians for uniting Kosala with Odra and Kangoda, the western and the coastal regions of the modern Orissa. The temple was subsequently renovated and enlarged by the Ganga kings during the early part of the 12th century (1110 AD onwards), although the rulers of both the dynasties were Saivites as well. But the point that remains yet to be clarified is what exactly was the nature of the deities and their worship. Unfortunately, the records available mystify and mythologize this pivotal issue so notoriously that it seems ever irrecoverable. As it stands now, the four distorted anthropomorphic images – represent the Bhagavata cult, non-Aryan in its character. Krsna Vasudeva, his elder brother Balarama and sister Ekanamsa commonly known as Subhadra (Brihatsamhita, 57 of Varaha 5th C.) with Sudarsana the wheel-weapon of Krsna. The accessibility of the deities to the common people of all the castes and not only to the Brahmins and rice-offering to be shared among all the castes, are the features of the shrine that oppose the Brahmin-dominated rituals of the orthodox Aryan culture. It is not yet clear whether such tradition prevails from the very beginning or is introduced later. The suggestions that an original Buddhist shrine is converted into the Vaisnava one is not also untenable because of the orthodoxy of the Soma ruler Yayati. Again, the king Indradyumna of the legends and myths etymologically meaning one who is capable of strength, power and fame (dyumna) like Indra, the king of the gods of heaven, might be identified with this Soma ruler who actually performed Asvamedha sacrifice, and as coming from the western region might be also identified as the king of Malava, a kingdom west to the coastal Orissa. Coincidentally, Yayati had a strong cultural tie with Kanauja as evident from his inviting Brahmins of high order from that country.

All these crucial features of the whole phenomenon are simply ignored by the author da Silva, his sole effort centering around legitimatizing the myths and legends available in the Sanskrit and vernacular texts into a systematic Aryan structural order. His scholarship is admirable so far as he applies the structural theory of myth pioneered by Claude Levi-Strauss in studying the whole range of myths that are actually, possibly and probably related to the myth and rituals of the Jagannatha worship. Thus the mythical isomorphism that he discovers is extremely enlightening, insightful and informative although unfortunately, the whole discovery appears irrelevant in shedding any new light on the core point of the issue concerned. The reader wants to know the core points: At what point of history the shrine was founded? Who was the founder? What was the course of this foundation? Whether the initial features of the worship including iconology and worship rituals are still the same or has undergone changes? If so, then why? And finally, What are the courses of these changes?

The legends say that there was a sapphire image of Vishnu originally worshipped by an aboriginal. What was the kind of that image – iconic or aniconic? An iconic image should be worshipped by the pancaratric tantric method which must be unknown to the aboriginal worshipper, its being known only to a trained and educated Brahmin. If aniconic, then how to identify it with Visnu? The author's discovery that the "blue mountain" is simply a symbol of the cosmic pole (meru) substitutable by the cosmic tree (banyan) is acceptable, but only conditionally. The other alternative that there was a Buddhist mound caitya (tree)/ stupa later converted to a stone temple is equally acceptable. But a historically plausible argument is preferred to a fictionally probable argument. The Indradyumna legend is not merely an archetypal event. It has also a historical reference that a historian must trace out. It seems that the fame of the shrine as Sri-kshetra is not properly understood by the author who stresses the name Purusottama a kshetra, thus tracing its Vedic/ Aryan significance. Sri-kshetra might be referring to the influences of Ramanuja, the south Indian Vaishnava of the Sri school who came to the shrine during the Ganga rule (11th C.) and founded his monastery just in front of the main temple. Ramanuja exercised

significant influences on the whole system of rituals as he was emphasizing the Vyuha-worship of the Bhagavata cult (See Sukla, 2010). If, according to the author, a non-Aryan system has not been Aryanized, the other pole of the truth cannot be denied. In fact, as it stands, there is positively a compromise between both the systems – the orthodox and the heterodox without any domination of the either – it is a syncretism. This is precisely what the legend in both its versions – Sanskrit and vernacular – concludes. Indradyumna, his Brahmin emissary Vidyapati and the aboriginal worshipper Visvavasu all bow to the final decision of the divinity. Vishnu as Jagannatha is therefore radically different from Visnu as Venkatesa (Tirumala) who is not accessible to all – is touched only by the Brahmin priests. The latter is Vedic but the former is non-Vedic (obviously because Krishna is not a Vedic god), if not certainly anti-Vedic. The rituals of Jagannatha is therefore not ordained strictly according to the Vedic principles.

The vital issues of the whole phenomenon need a thorough investigation that have remained mystified so far, although at the same time the present author must be admired for his insight into the structural arrangement of the myths and rituals relating to the issues concerned in a codified manner.

Claude Calame, *Greek Mythology: Poetics, Pragmatics and Fiction*, Trans. Janet Lloyd, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 275.

The present work, originally published in French in 2000, interprets items of the Greek mythology in terms of literary narratives or fictions. Myths, understood as fictions is of course an Aristotelian trend which teaches us that the *mythos* of a Greek tragedy is a probable mimesis of reality. Thus, according to Aristotle, myths are more philosophical/general than historical events. Modern anthropologists treat myths as the representation of the social events including even the religious rituals. Calame suggests that these myths falling between social reality and cultural fiction emerge as a literary form or kind. Greek myths, of course, are not only the contents of the major forms of Greek literature such as epic, tragedy and lyric, they are also found in the historical and geographical texts of Herodotus, Thucydides, Strabo, Pausamias and Pliny. Calame would argue that wherever they are found, they attain a literary status because of their fictionality, thus presuming the nature of literature as fiction, a thesis already prepared by the Canadian critic Northrop Frye who is drawing upon Karl Jung, considers literary forms as major archetypes reflected in the seasons of the Western climate—Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn (Fall). Plato's philosophical dialogues also depict events fictionally. Viewed in this light, stressing the fictional aspect of literature and ignoring its formal aspects, Calame functions as an Aristotelian critic, joining the Neo-Aristotelians/Chicago critics as against the New Critics of the twentieth century: it is plot (mythos) not language that makes literature—"the Greek idea of a poetic product as an artifact that creative mimesis turns partly into fiction and partly into a reference to reality seems very modern. As has been suggested, it more or less responds to what we understand by the use of the term and concept 'fictional'." (p. 47) Keeping aside the logical issue of the "possible world" theory, the author undertakes the issue of linguistic reference for explaining myth as a fictional construction, or rather as a linguistic narration. He argues that in a linguistic

manifestation there are two processes of reference—internal and external. The former is purely linguistic such as anaphora and the latter is a deictic device that relates an utterance to extralinguistic phenomena such as time, place and person. Thus following Karl Bühler, the German linguist, the author argues that there is no need for a special kind of language, rather a need for *interweauing* these two referential processes, producing a network that links the natural and social reality and the linguistic discourse, a network in which both the author and the audience (recipients/interpreters) exist. This way the fictional product (myth) acquires a *pragmatic force*. Interestingly enough, the author's idea of a pragmatic force differs from that of the traditional pragmatist linguists such as Austin and his pupil Searle. The author's pragmatic force is distinguished from Austin's illocutionary force of an utterance, or Searle's "act of pretending to perform an illocutionary act of assertion with no intention to deceive". Drawing upon Longinus's idea of *phantasia*, the author says that the network of the two referential processes enables the poet or the mythmaker to place what he says before the eyes of the listeners, i.e., the members of a community of a particular cultural and epistemological nature that includes its religious beliefs and practices as well. Thus myth as a fiction has also its religious appeal responsible for enabling the addressee (listener/interpreter) for sharing with the speaker in comprehension and active and cognitive interpretation of the speech or discourse that is called a myth.

The author, then, makes the point clear that it is the shared religious belief that makes a myth meaningful for both the myth maker (the part) and the reader, for both of whom a myth is both semantically and pragmatically (practically) meaningful. Such an observation delimits the scope of any universal appeal of a myth, the phenomenon being not simply a story to be enjoyed aesthetically, but also a system of religious practice that makes it typically illocutionary, where the meaning of a discourse is interwoven with its practice or use. To be precise, the author now shares with those theorists of myth who consider it as a discourse of ritual. The deictic expressions such as "there", "once upon a time", "a king named Agamemnon or a hero named Odysseus" are meaningful, significant or interesting only to the Greeks or Europeans who share with their cultural perspectives. In this regard the author does not hesitate to claim that history is also mythical or fictional—in its claiming for recounting (the empirical) reality which it only fabricates. Myth then, in a way, like history, evokes nationalism—one can not appreciate a myth unless one participates with deictic elements. Homer, Hesiod and Pindar, the mythmakers of Greece contributed both to the Greek language and the nationalist spirit of the whole culture. Its heroic past with its religious practices are all presented to the Greeks and Europeans through the interwoven process of linguistic and extralinguistic factors.

The author further notes a different dimension of the concept of myth in its anthropological perspectives where 'myth' replaces 'fable' undergoing three essential transformations: (1) myths treated as the manifestation of pre-philosophical thought is now treated as the origin of historical line, i.e., the dawn of a linear history of nation concerned; (2) *mythos* and *logos* are no more two binary concepts, the former evolving into the latter, and thus losing its narrative aspect as forming more and more a particular cultural context; (3) as a particular mode of human thought it now gains an ontology,

reality that transcends its semi-empirical character, and in this transformation, as a unitary substance (rather than a collection of heterogeneous stories) becomes a scientific phenomenon fit for interpretation/analysis assigned to the branch of knowledge called *mythologies* by Levi-Strauss: "Mythological patterns have to an extreme degree the character of absolute objects, which would neither lose their old elements nor acquire new one if they were not affected by external influences" (p. 7). The author then claims that this transformational approach to the myths—studying them in their evolution from stray stories *in a culture* to a structural unity, one turns down the binary dichotomies such as primitive/developed, oral/written and nature/culture thus recalling Levi-Strauss/ Derrida debates over structuralism and deconstructionism.

Having thus drawn a theoretical outline, the author exemplifies the logic of his arguments by analyzing some popular myths. One such myth is the story of the rape of Persephone, the different versions of which correlate its different fictional, religious (pragmatic) and historical perspectives that indicate the cultural evolution of a nation that might be called Greek, European or Western.

The story of Earth goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone (Kore) from the sky god Zeus, as observed by J.G. Frazer, embodies or personifies the agrarian events of growing corn and its harvest—Demeter the Corn Mother and Persephone the Corn Maiden who dies/enters Hades as *abducted* by the god Pluto, and is reborn or resurrected in form of sowing the seed and germination. The same is interpreted by Karl Jung as the archetypes of death and rebirth. But for the writers of this myth, from Homer to Isocrates through Diadorous and Apollodous, considered it as the origin of their cultural history interwoven with the religious rites that establishes the relationship between divinity and humanity. Earlier writers mention Demeter's first arrival in Eleusis in search for her daughter and pleased by the reception of the inhabitants there, offers them cereals as a gift of the mankind, whereas Isocrates claims her first arrival in Athens. In doing so he subjugates other parts of Greece to Athens both politically and economically. It is Athens, not Eleusis that developed agriculture and thus the promoter of an agrarian civilization in the European world. On the other hand, Eleusians claim that it is there in their land that Demeter taught how humanity can be related to divinity, and this relationship must be *performed* cyclically through the specific rituals that are Eleusian mysteries—mysteries of the ceaseless birth, death and rebirth that keep up the continuity of the humanity-divinity relationship.

The manifold nature of myth—a fiction, an aspect of national history, an absolute reality presented in form of a text open for interpretation, a ritual meant for regular performance—as the author Calame offers, tends to be an advancement over the earlier theories of allegory, symbol and mimetic rites. But the network of his interpretation and reference does not force a reader to assign him the status of originality that he seems to claim. He is erudite, and is remarkably insightful. But excepting wide-ranging information by way of references to a considerable number of researches on the topic, he perhaps adds only the historicity of myth to the earlier studies by the galaxy of groundbreaking theorists such as Frazer, Cassirer, Jung, Eliade, Levi-Strauss and Malinowsky. His

argument that myth is not merely an Aristotelian *mythos* as radically different from *logos*, but is also transformed to a *logos*, posed the question: Can this transformation retain the fictionality of *mythos*? For him *mythology* does not mean merely a collection of myths, it is also a logic of fictionality. Mythologies might be a distinct branch of knowledge, like poetics, rhetorics, physics open for technical analysis, one such methodology being provided by Levi-Strauss on the model of structural linguistics. But what new method does the author actually provide excepting the view that myth can be studied both as poetical fiction and performance speech act that belong to two different branches of knowledge—poetics and pragmatics? Further, following the author one ponders, whether the meaning of the myths is strictly confined to the appeal of that particular nation that produces it suggesting that myths are meaningful only in its cultural context, its transculturality being at stake. (pp. 37-38)

Richard Hunter, *Critical Moments in Classical Literature: Studies in the Ancient View of Literature and Its Uses*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 217.

The author's key argument is that critical insight and, in some way practice as well, originated not in the philosophical texts of ancient Greece but in the pre-philosophical literary texts, particularly in the play *Frogs* by Aristophanes (5th c. B.C.). Secondly, he demonstrates that in the ancient Greece the use of poetry was not for its delighting effect only but fir its educative function as well: "poetry lay at the heart of 'classical' education" (p. 2). Aristophanes tells in the mouth of Aeschylus the playwright and a character in the *Frogs*, that the role of school teachers for children is comparable with that of the poets for adults (*Frogs*, 1054-5). For substantiation of his arguments the author uses the *Frogs* as the key text:

> For us the *Frogs* dramatizes, as Plato's *Protagorus* was to do some years later, the emergence of a language of literary criticism and the emergence of the critic; as with the closely related satire of intellectual movement in the *Clouds*, Aristophanes no doubt had in mind in the *Frogs* real contemporary developments, and probably also comic predecessors, but the state of our evidence means that we will never be able to proceed beyond discerning the tantalizing traces of the outline of a history of the ideas which for us first surface in the *Frogs*. One of the aims of this book is to make some of those traces more visible…I have been concerned to show how themes and ideas constantly reappear over time and in different genres…Thus suggesting a more fruitful way of studying critical history, and to pay particular attention…antiquity's concern with what literature was for, what its uses were. It is a utilitarian view of literature and of 'literary criticism' which predominated in antiquity… (p. 2-8)

Criticism/assessment/evaluation as a process of weighing used sarcastically by Aristophanes is prefigured in Aeschylus' *Psydeostasia* where the souls of Achilles and Memmon are weighed against each other on Zeus' scale for assessment of their heroism. Thus weighing as an imagery for evaluation persists in Greek literature over time. But at

the same time the author is aware of the limitations of his studies that he undertakes here: "though I have tried throughout to call attention to the interplay between the practice and criticism of poetry, I am very conscious that this book is not the much-needed study of the mutual interchange between poetic imagery and ideas and the language of ancient criticism." (p. 8) Obviously the book does not intend to be a survey of classical critical theories but to highlight the ways literature was *used* by antiquity—more practical than aesthetical in its approach, and at the same time, the book also impresses that classical literature and classical interpretation, despite changes in intellectual and cultural contexts, matters for the contemporary readers.

The author states that the *'Frogs* has bequeathed to the critical tradition not just a way of talking poetic style, but also a critical language which uses sociopolitical distinctions to describe levels of style…" (p. 19) Later critics like Longinus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus have followed the guidelines of the text of Aristophanes—even of the Homeric epic to be "subjected to an endless process of integration, in which characters and their actions were precisely examined by the standards of 'realism' familiar to the audience…" (p. 21) The master architect of the Greek criticism Aristotle also follows the Aristophanic literary text in considering his principle of propriety or accuracy. "The *Frogs* is replete with literary 'problems' and problems in the making" that are thoroughly elaborated upon in the 1st chapter of the work concerned.

In the second chapter, the author studies the satyr play *Cyclops* by Euripides that dramatizes the Homeric episodes and reconstructs the oral myths in literature through an allusive practice that is a part of the hermeneutic skill in critical exercise: The *Cyclops* is a very striking instance of how later writers appropriate, and often, as in this case, literally 're-write' their predecessors by bringing out the modern structures which can be found there; as is well known, Euripides reads Homer in the light of some of the political and ethical interests of late fifth-century Athens…*Cyclops* is a text of the greatest interest for anyone concerned with how myths, and the texts which incorporate them, are made to work in, perhaps we might say to 'have meaning for' the time of their telling; as is well understood, myths often speak to the contemporary concerns, as well as the historical memory, of the communities which tell them." (p. 55)

One can compare the views of Professor Hunter with those of Professor Calame that we have just studied above. This is in fact the practical function of myth that both the authors have examined. Myth is a narrative that alludes to the history of a culture, and if mythopoea is, according to the modernist literary theorists, the primary function of literature, and myth is recreation or deconstruction of history, then both literature and history tend to be fictional—*mimesis* of the same reality though in different modes. Another common point in both the authors—poetics also functions as pragmatics in antiquity—"interplay between the practice and criticism of poetry" as Hunter says. In both the cases, if literature as myth is for contemporary concern, then its archetypal universality, symbolizing reality in general that philosophers, linguists and anthropologists have been arguing rigorously through the whole of the twentieth century would be null and void. It is certainly true that myths represent and are meant for a particular culture primarily. But can its inter-cultural appropriation be only secondary outdating Frazer, Eliade, Cassirer, Jung and Frye altogether? Again why should the Greek myths be meaningful for the French or English? If they stand for the entire Occidental culture, then should we distinguish them from the whole of the Oriental horizon? But that way can we conceive of a holistic Oriental culture ignoring the differences between Chinese, Japanese Egyptian and Indian? If language and realism are the major criteria of cultural identity, then certainly we cannot think of a holistic culture. Regional myths cannot be universalized excepting only the motifs. Then, how to appreciate the literary culture of the 'other'?

But keeping aside all these issues, the reader of Hunter is highly impressed by his careful and intuitive correlation of creative literature with critical views that it generated subsequently. The critical perception of Aristophenes is transmitted later to the critics like Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Longinus and Plutarch. He traces the interplay of literary and social criticism (as noted earlier in Aristophanes) in Plutarch's remarks about comic vocabulary while studying the text "Comparison of Aristophanes and Menander" that reflects several familiar ancient narratives of cultural and literary history. In the fourth chapter the author deals with the Augustan critic Dionysius who writes on the practices of imitating the ancients. "We must not read the ancients," Dionysius of Halicarnassus writes, " superficially, expecting that benefit will come to us imperceptibly, but with principles to guide us, particularly if we wish to adorn our own *logos* with excellent features drawn from all of the ancients." (p. 109) Like the painter Zeuxis who collected integrated beauty from scattered bodies of naked girls, a poet should also collect the poets of charm from the works of ancient poets. The author comments that Dionysius reveals the idea that an interaction of Augustan poetry and Augustan criticism is necessary for a comprehensive critical view. Similarly, in the fifth chapter the author observes that Longinus' treatise *On the Sublime* is the most influential descendant of the *Frogs*. This chapter seems to be much better written than the earlier one in its dealing with the subject matter rather pinpointedly and coherently. This essay, no less than *Frogs*, Hunter states "reminds us again that the division between 'literature' and 'criticism' was not always simple or straightforward in antiquity. But his argument that "It is for this reason, if for no other, that the modern tendency to treat 'ancient literary criticism'" as a discrete area of ancient writing, to be studied in isolation from the literature which the ancient critics discussed, has done a disservice to our understanding of the way in which the ancients sought to explain and use creative art." (p. 168) does not seem to be accepted univocally. It is true that there have been "critical moments" in creative literature, but those moments manifest a critical taste of the contemporary society, not a theoretical assessment that a systematic criticism needs. At the same time we must agree with the author that critical views cannot be studied in isolation from literary texts although we cannot agree that literary texts are critical texts. Obviously Aristophanes is not a critic in the sense in which Aristotle is a critic. Longinus' style might be creative, but he is a critic, neither a poet nor a dramatist.

Deborah Weagel, *Women and Contemporary World Literature: Power, Fragmentation and Metaphor*. **New York etc: Peter Lang, 2008, pp. 129. and** *Words and Music: Camus, Beckett, Cage, Gould*. **New York etc: Peter Lang, 2010, pp. 160.**

Deborah Weagel introduces her 2009 publication "…this book provides a comparative study ranging from colonial New Spain to postcolonial Africa and India. It examines ways in which women in literature function within their particular cultural and circumstances to confront the challenge they encounter. With a focus on power, fragmentation and metaphor, it illustrates how some women in various countries throughout the world have exhibited resilience and power in the face of obstacles and vicissitudes." (p. 1)

Social Changes are due to two major factors—religion and politics, sometimes these two factors determining each other—religion structuring political principles and politics conditioning religious systems. Imperial powers have shaped diverse kinds of societies by their political ambitions and principles right from the very dawn of the Roman empire spreading over both the West and the East till the modern imperial establishment of the Western powers over the Eastern countries. This modern imperial conditions have been commonly known as colonial situations inevitably causing exploitation and social oppression. But the question is whether those situations can be homogenized. Critics like Gayatri Spivak answer the question in the positive whereas critics like Laura Christman differ—"in emphasizing ways in which imperialism homogenizes and generalizes others, there is a risk of overlooking the ways in which imperial and colonial discourses often deploy strategies of exaggerating and playing off differences among diverse others." Thus the different categories of different societies such as class, gender, location, race, caste and ideology cannot be counted under a single banner of "colonial rule" nor can there be a generalized postcolonial condition. Thus postcolonial culture cannot be homogeneous in both its structure and function. With this critical insight Weagel studies women characters in different cultures during a space of four centuries—from the 17th to the 20th putting them up in three major thematic frames such as power, fragmentation and metaphor.

The book contains six chapters portraying six women characters in different social contexts reacting to their conditions diversely as appropriate to differences in time and space: 1) Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz of the seventeenth century New Spain under the oppressive shadow of the Spanish Inquisition, 2) Ramatoula) Aissatou and Damem Salior in the French colonized West Africa, 3) Naseem in the postcolonial Pakistan, Jasmine and Dina Dalal of the postcolonial India. The dominating religious contexts are Hindu and Islam where traditional values are counted most. Thus Weagel, while studying six novels *A Room of One's Own* (Woolf), *So Long a Letter* (Marianna Ba), *The Dark Child* (Camara Laye), *Midnight's Children* (Salman Rushdie), *Jasmine* (Bharati Mukherjee) and *A Fine Balance* (Robinton Mistry) encounters women in world literature struggling not only for their survival, but also for exercising certain power and authority.

The author's interdisciplinary approach convinces the reader that literary study demands a wider arena of sensibility that correlates our experiences of modernity and postmodern outlook. In her introduction to the book she provides sufficient clues for understanding the contents of the book. For example, she tells us that woman's struggle for power is due to man's domination in the binary structure of our social behaviour. Male is portrayed as one seamless unity, the whole (the colonizer, the artist, the physician, the husband etc.) whereas woman is fragmented. Jasmine's life represents a cultural fragmentation in India and America—fragmented, but interconnected— 'The divider between the whole and the parts becomes fragmented itself enabling the creation referred to by Homibhabha as the Third Space" which "constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity." Clearly, a Derridean perspective that Bhabha preaches: "the same sign can be appropriated, translated, re-historicized and read anew." Thus the binary polarity can be eroded and the subaltern (woman, colonized, the other) can finally be redeemed and reinstated as a whole in exercising its power—woman integrated with man, the oppressed with the oppressor, colonized with the colonizer, they with us so on and so forth. Bhabha's "Third Space" that erodes the binary division reminds one of the state of *Yuganaddha* or *advaya* in both the Buddhist and Hindu tantric philosophy that explains the state of liberation, *nirvana* or *moksa*, as transcending all sufferings due to our experience of the world of binary relationship.

The literary characters that Weagel studies struggle to overcome this binary experience by several means as appropriate for them. Peculiarly, the African woman chooses marriage in a polygamous family to achieve greater freedom. Jasmine's life represents a cultural fragmentation in India and America—fragmented, but inter-connected—a third space. Picasso, the dominant male artist encounters the model, a dominated female in fragments, the modernist artist anticipates and prepares the way for the postmodernist/postcolonial novelist Rushdie exploring a woman in fragmentation struggling for integration. On the other hand, Mukherjee's woman is not physically disintegrated (as in Picasso and Rushdie), but culturally. Her quest is for a cultural whole—a "third space."

The metaphor that dominates the book under review is rather quilt than fragmentation, because the author aims at building a quilt of all the fragmentations that the characters represent. The "Third Space" is virtually a quilt —that unites the discrete binary polarities. Dina Dayal the protagonist of Mistry's novel, is literally a quiltmaker: "I present three mega-metaphors that can be associated with Dina's quiltmaking and her quilt: a woman's mind is a quilt, a quiltmaker is a builder, and a quiet is a text." (p. 5) Quilt is a sign of deconstruction as well—discrete patchworks reconstructed into a whole— the "Third Space" which is never 'organic' whole of structuralism, prone to further deference, reconstruction into another quilt and so on and so forth. Weagel's shrewd imagination gleans the characters and their cultural situations as patches and uses them as textures for her book which is a quilt itself. Dina Dayal and Deborah Weagel represent each other metaphorically creating a quilt-text where fiction and criticism rival each other—an admirable effort indeed.

The second book by Weagel is self-defined: it studies two phenomena—*music in literature* and *literature and music* as they are not identical but analogous. Out of the

seven chapters of the book the first two are devoted to the study of music in Albert Camus' novel *The Stranger*, the next two chapters to Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot,* the fifth one to John Cage's musical compositions and the last two chapters to the performing musician Glenn Gould. Camus is a modernist, Beckett sharing both modernism and postmodernism, Cage a postmodernist and Gould representing both postmodernism and romanticism. The author writes: "This book delves into some of the specific ways these four power houses of the twentieth century moved beyond the boundaries of tradition and help to redefine our perception and understanding of words and music in contemporary society…Camus incorporated musical terms and structures in some of his writing, Beckett treated words and pauses in a musical manner in some of his plays, Cage also experimented with silences and rests in his work and created innovative scores that involved words and music and allowed musicians beway in performance; and in his radio documentaries Gould created complex contrapuntal musical textures with a mélange of words, music and sounds." (p. 8)

Thus the choice of the creative characters in the book is founded on an aesthetic logic: "These men were some of the most innovative, creative and thought-provoking artists of their time, and their contributions continue to illuminate our path as we move forward in the twenty-first century." (*ibid*.)

The author herself is a musician and combines in herself a literary critic with musical performance and criticism. Therefore she is qualified enough to comment on the musical aspects of Camus' novel such as the contrasting function of the images of the sun and sea reflecting Camus' personal struggle in exploring his identity amidst the situations that eroded his ontological security. In Camus' novel the dominating imagery of the sun and sea function as mutually complementary heroes of nature. At the same time their contrast can also be affiliated with a time/dominant type of musical relationship—the suntonic and the sea dominant. (pp. 20ff.) The detailed analysis of the phenomenon the author offers convinces the reader of her ability for the interdisciplinary probe into the matter she handles with sincerity and seriousness.

Similarly, Weagel analyses Beckett's *Godot* from its musico-literary perspective: "The musical threads that Beckett wears into *Godot* includes indications for dynamics similar to those found in a musical score." (pp. 54ff.) While studying Cage and Beckett in a complementary perspective she writes that "silence" was explored and redefined by these two great artists demonstrating that silence is not really silent. Silence is a positive and productive space, not simply a negative void. Pauses and rest in the theatre and music, words and notes gain equal status in their semantic levels. Weagel applies Heinrich Schenker's theory of hierarchical levels to interpret Beckett's play and Cage's music *4'33"*, and suggests that whereas Beckett's play with its structured use of silence ends itself to a theoretical analysis, the freer nature of Cage's music does not do so. Her thorough analysis of the point with scales of notes illustrates her technical skill in appreciating the artists and justifying her arguments.

The aouthor admires the pianist Gould for his interpretations of composers like Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Brahms and Schoenberg, and for his performance in the Canadian radio and television documentaries that covered a very wide range of topics. In the sixth chapter of the book she compares and contrasts Gould's unedited performances with the edited ones—that include the integration and layering of both words and music with a suggestion that "Gould's radio documentaries represent some of his most significant contributions to twentieth-century artistic production." (p. 109ff.) While writing on the musical and verbal counterpoint in Gould, the author admits that there are certain limitations to the analogy of music and verbal counterpoint. By way of referring to Eric Prieto she agrees that literature uses words, not tones; hence literal transfer between the two genres of art is not possible. Therefore, mutual applications of concepts is an inherently metaphorical act. (p. 138ff.) Musical semantics differs from verbal semantics. In music modulations of sounds create meaning, notes determining their structure. There can be music without words, so also excepting songs and opera, literary genres are meaningful without music, and, of course theatrical performance combines literature with music for generating a complete semantic reality. The only way of tracing music in literature is to find analogical imagery in a narrative structure that function musically as in the case of Camus' novel. Weagel's success lies in her unprejudiced analysis of both the phenomena that she deals with in this book—"music in literature," and the scope and limits of the analogy of "music and literature."

Mithilesh Chaturvedi (Ed.) ***Bhartrhari: Language, Thought and Reality***, **Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 2009, pp. 615.**

The present book publishes the proceedings of the International Seminars held on the title subject in 2003 under the auspices of the publishers memorizing centenary of their publication programme that they began in the British Indian city of Lahore in 1903.

The present volume contains twenty-six chapters contributed by different authors including Bhartrhari's works with a special reference to the aspects of *Vâkyapadiya* and a comprehensive (if not exhaustive) bibliography on Bhartrhari—different editions of his works in both original Sanskrit and (English) translations.

Bhartrhari founded the philosophical/theoretical treatment of Sanskrit grammar, otherwise called the *Siddhânta* School, drawing upon metaphysics, epistemology, logic and ritual that contributed to both linguistics and philosophy of language followed by the grammarians like Bhattoji, Dikshita, Kaunda Bhatta and Nâgesa Bhatta.

Bhartrhari follows the mainstream grammarians Pânini and Patanjali in considering the divine origin of language as a whole, and its subsequent phenomenal metamorphosis used by man for communication of emotions and feelings and conveying information. Language is the full-fledged and sophisticated medium of social behaviour and improvement over gestures and postures as the communicative media. Pânini holds the first fourteen aphorisms of his treatise (in eight chapters) as communicated to him directly by Lord Siva the archetypal preacher of all the branches of knowledge; and Patañjali invokes five Vedic stanzas for justifying the sacred origin of language. Following them Bhartrhari also studies both the sacred and profane aspects of language in general and of Sanskrit in particular. But the central question is whether the grammatical rules are discerned indirectly from the use of the learned speakers or are deduced from the very

sacred pattern of the language—the *vâk*. If grammar is use-based, then its relevance is to be counted only in the profane level, otherwise the sacred level is beyond any bondage of grammar. This is what exactly is in the mind of our grammarians who use the Sanskrit word *vyâkarana* for grammar that literally means morphologization (vi-â-karana) which also means a kind of distortion (*vikâra*) of the Reality or Truth. This is why the Buddhists (followed by Sankara) hold that Reality is trans-linguistic. This view of language is clearly a profane view. The sacred view of the grammarians plead for a trans-phenomenal level of language which is itself Reality which assumes various forms in course of its descendance into the profane level—*martyam âvivesa*. The Rgvedic stanza that Patañjali invokes suggests a historical evolution of language, particularly of Sanskrit from its proto level. The researches of the comparative philologists have explored the pre-historical status of the Indo-European language as a whole. The language-bull of the Rgveda that descended like a shower of rain (*vrsabha* means both a bull and a shower of rain in Patañjali) had already had four horns, three legs, two heads, seven hands, been bound in three-wise referring to as, Patañjali understands, the divine origin of linguistic structure such as four parts of speech (nouns, verbs, prefixes, particles), three times or tenses (past, present, future), two kinds of words (eternal, produced), seven declensions respectively. The three-wise tie of language refers to its association with the three places of the human body —heart, throat and head—causing externalization of language in a sequence (*RV* IV.58.3). Patañjali also refers to other stanzas of *RV* such as VIII.6.9.12, I.164.45, X.71.4 and X.71.2 that suggest the morphology, categories, function and physical production of language. The seven rivers represent the seven declensions produced by tongue's striking the palate; and language reveals itself as a wife strips herself for the enjoyment of her husband.

Although Pânini does not name the language of which he formulates grammatical rules, his "Mâhesvara" *sûtras* clearly suggest that he believes in the divine origin of language which Patañjali articulates by citing different Vedic stanzas while explaining the nature and function of the language he deals with. Moreover, he clarifies unambiguously that it is the language of the elite Brahmins of the *ârya* race that, both Pânini and himself. More interestingly concerns, he states that in some other countries such as Kamboja, East, Middle-East and Middle North people use words common in the *ârya bhâsâ*, but in different senses. In that case the *âryans* must use them as they are used in the Vedas as well as by the *ârya Brahmins* who are the authorities in use. Grammar is therefore a guide in setting the rules for such *âryan* uses. What is still more important to note is the point that Patañjali compares the rules of grammar with those of the Vedic sacrificial rituals and codes of the Brahminic conducts in the sphere of âryan household and society. Reform of regulations in religious rituals is, for Patañjali, the ideal regulations in linguistic use.

The injunctions in the Vedic rituals and the âryan social conduct are exemplary for the injunctions in the linguistic use so that an *ârya* should retain the sanctioning of both for attaining merit in his life that leads one to the ultimate happiness in the divine world. Language spoken by the *âryans* has a common source but distinguishes itself by purifying the system of its formation and use.

As a Vedic ritualist, Patañjali is a pluralist in religion and philosophy, not a monotheist or monist anticipating the later development of Vedanta by Sankara. Like Pânini, he is a descriptive linguist. His idea of merit or *dharma* is the same as that of Mimâmsâ and his idea of attaining ultimate well-being by studying grammar and connective language is the same as that of the Mimâmsâ notion attaining the highest delight (*priti*) by performing sacrifices with correct use of the Vedic mantras. Any imposition of the monist ideas such as search for an essence of language as done by the later theists since Bhartrhari is absolutely anachronic. Bhart[hari's quest for a linguistic essence (*Sabdabrahma*) may be compared to the eidetic phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, which, in Halenstein's words is "concerned with the grasp of the essential features common to objects of the same category". It is for this of language than a grammarian of the descriptive school founded by Pânini and developed by Patañjali.

In his keynote essay V.N. Jha wisely warn's that in interpreting Bhartrhari a scholar should not be over-ambitious in a parallel between him and the contemporary linguists and philosopher of language (p. xxiii). Johannes Bronkhorst has put up much of his imagery in ascertaining the Vedic tradition of Bhartrhari, a quest, which, he thinks must shed the necessary light on the metaphysical aspect of Bhartrhari's linguistic monism and its sacred perspectives. He tries to ascertain a particular Vedic tradition or school (*sâkhâ*) to which Bhartrhari was affiliated and therefore considers it as the authority (or âgama) for his metaphysics of language. His meticulous studies conclude that Bhartrhari takes both the ritualistic principles of the Brahmins and the speculation thoughts of the upanicads into account the Maitraniya tradition. On the contrary, as Candona says, neither Pânini, nor Patañjali is affiliated to any particular *sâkhâ* in presenting grammar as a part of Vedic studies (Vedânga). Cardona's reference to Helârâja's comment on Bhartrhari treats of *âgama* as the tradition of the grammarians makes much more sense than Bronkhorst's churning the ocean of Upanisadic texts for interpreting this term. Candona is also correct to note that Patañjali stresses the descriptive function of grammar rather than search for the ontology of language—whether language is an eternal entity, the absolute reality not reduced by the human speaker—as done by Bhartrhari. No Vedantic perspective can be read into him, as Dasgupta correctly observes, Nâgesa sometimes does. Even Bhartrhari is not a monist Vedantin as Iyer has elaborately propounded. In fact he is a Kaula tantric non-dualist, parallel to the Vajrayana view of the Reality as Yuganaddha or Mahâmudrâ. His Buddhist link is rightly traced by Helârâja. It seems, none of the contributors to this volume is aware of this perspective.

Navjivan Rastogi contributes an insightful and scholarly chapter—on Abhinava's elucidation of Bhart[hari: "he develops hints and insights which were in incipient stage in BH or were only suggested therein. Here we have a creation of full-bodied religious language, depicting reality as constituted by the sacred language (*mantra sarira* or *úabdarâsi*) and its essence as *mantra* or *sabdana….*" P. 326 (The sentence is rather awkwardly long crying for editing.)

This sacred aspect of language is rather pitiably missed by the Westernized scholars like Bimal Krishna Matilal, who interprets *sabdana* as a profane function of

languaging and thankfully accepted by Tandra Patnaik. Ramesh Pradhan and Tandra Patnaik study Bhartrhari along with the contemporary Western philosophers of language. Pradhan observes that Bhartrhari is an anti-contextualist and anti-intentionalist turn: Meaning is *akhana*, and it cannot change from content to content, and is independent of the speaker's intention. But Pradhan should have noted that this stand of Bhartrhari is founded on the sacred aspect of language, a stand taken by both Pânini and Patañjali. Further, this stand cannot also be compared with Heidegger's that "language speaks, not man", because Heidegger too treats language in its profane aspect, and for that matter, all the philosophers and linguists of the contemporary Western world treat language that way. Donaldson's interpretation theory invokes the role of belief in understanding the speaker—the structures of thoughts and sentences are interdependent. But Bhartrhari is uncompromising about the independence of the linguistic structure that constructs thoughts. One should always remember the self-revelation theory of language suggested by the Ru stanza quoted above by Patañjali: Language reveals itself to its chosen hearer (as the wife strips herself to her husband)—no question of interpretation, it is straight communication or no communication.

There are two chapters on grammatical topics: Arindam Chakraborty writes on the philosophy of case-endings, and Vincenzo Vengiani on the genitive absolute (œeca relationship), the latter being a very careful and meticulous study of the subject. Sesa relationships cannot be clarified as a *kârakas* because they do not satisfy either the semantic or the formal conditions laid down by Pânini for assigning *kâraka* designation. According to Pânini, the cases, where the six kinds of syntactic relationship cannot be formed (i.e., the remaining—*sesa* cases) take up genitive relationship. This rule allows almost a limitless use of genitive cases for various reasons, particularly to avoid the complicacies in determining the case in question—the rule allows an excellent morphological flexibility without any semantic loss. Bhartrhari's view is that *sesa* is indeed a *kâraka*, but only informal, i.e., whereas the *kâraka* relation is strictly formalized, the sesa relation is not. Bhartrhari discerns two kinds of *sesa* relationship—noun-noun and noun-verb. Pânini's rule, that all that remains (*sesa*) without any formal *kâraka* relations can be put into genitive, exhibits a tremendous descriptive ability as also the vast area of linguistic use he deals with. The present chapter is extremely valuable for the students of grammar and applied linguistics.

Tola and Drogonelti write a fine chapter on the gender in Bhartrhari. Houben assesses Bhartrhari as a cognitive linguist. The whole volume is an exemplary one in representing Bhartrhari in the contemporary context.

Nrusingha Charan Panda, *Bhagavad Gita: A New Exposition in a Broader Spectrum*, Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., 2009, pp XV + 587

The author offers a stanza-wise commentary of the *Bhagavadgita* claiming that it has some special characteristics. "The present exposition", he writes, "on the *Bhagavadgita* is an updated one on the basis of modern thoughts in general and newer scientific discoveries in particular. As the title indicates, interpretation has been done in a newer vision in a broader spectrum". (p.X) Although the modifiers "newer" and "broader"

are not defined precisely, it appears that by "broader" he means non-sectarian, i.e., without any ideological — religious, philosophical, social or cultural — bias as several other such commentaries have been – the ones by, for example, all the religious leaders right from Sankara till date, and the social leaders like Gandhi, Tilak, Vinobha, or even the thinkers like Aurobindo who have tried to draw upon this seminal text for underpinning their own ideas they have developed independently or to accommodate the ideas of this text into their own systems of thought. By "newer", he means the scientific ideas in biology, physics, astrophysics and other such natural sciences that have threatened the foundations of the religious traditions represented by the *Gita*. In other words, he means an objective scientific point of view although, he confesses, there is no view with an absolute objectivity. However, he frequently refers to the principles of natural sciences in explaining the philosophical concepts otherwise considered religious dogmas.

Philosophers of great eminence such as Surendranath Dasgupta have already observed that the *Gita* was composed by the Vaisnavas of the Ekanti group during the 1st c. B.C., and later on interpolated to the *Mahabharata* composed during the 2nd c. B.C. The Ekanti Vaishnavas belong to the Bhagavata School otherwise called *satvatas* who worshipped only Krsna-Vasudeva out of the four heroes of the Vrsni genealogy such as Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. For worshipping only one (*eka*) as the ultimate end (*anta*) of the Reality as a whole these Vaishnavas are called Ekantins. The present reviewer has studied this phenomenon in detail in his 2010 publication on the leading advocate of the Bhagavata cult — Sridhara Svami. The author of the book under review, however, does not accept this dating of the *Gita* which, he believes, was written as a portion of the original *Mahabharata* composed during the pre-Buddhist era, i.e., prior to the 6th c. B.C. because of the fact that neither the epic, nor this portion of this text, refer in anyway to the events of the Buddhist culture as a whole. Nor does he offer any specific account of the divine character of the singer/ speaker of the text Krsna-Vasudeva—whether a mythical or a historical character. Unlike Aurobindo who believes in his historicity, Panda would prefer to call him pre-historic and his song, the *Gita* is mostly of a symbolic order that transgresses the limitations of time and space of any culture, past and present. The prescriptions and proscriptions of the Indian sages were based on "Vedic and Vedantic ethics, humanitarianism, altruism and centred around a metaphysics of one formless, all-pervasive God without the dichotomy of subject and object." (p.15) In the author's view, Arjuna's state of dejection is only natural to all men irrespective of differences in language and religion, or, for that matter, differences in any cultural criteria. This view is of course not a new one, as several thinkers have already considered the message of the text universal in appeal.

One of the new interpretations may be considered. In IV. 13 Krsna as the Almighty claims to be the creator of the four castes according to the inborn qualities and division of labour (*karma vibhaga*). But the author reads *vibhaga* not as "division". He translates the stanza: "Types of persons in conformity with their Innate Nature Resulting from their works done in their past lives." Translation of *guna* as innate nature may be appropriate, but translation of *karma vibhaga* as the works done in the past lives seems to be a self-imposition because there is no reference to the past lives. The author is free to interpret

castes as "types" rejecting the Brahmanic caste division into four categories Brahmana (priestly class), Ksatriya (warrior class), Vaisya (business and cultivators' community) and Sudra (community of servants in general). He observes that "The Sanskrit word for "caste" is *jati*, and for colour is *varna*. Each one of the four castes of the Hindus has not a specific colour. Moreover, God, one and only one for the whole universe, has not created all the religions of the world. Caste-system among the Hindus was a social evolution in the prevailing circumstances of the ancient age. In the present social context it has become obsolete though still extant, being propped by political interest and group interest. The word *varna* literally means "shades of colour" and contextually means "types" (p.134). Thus the author interprets, the caste system basically refers to the categories due to the psycho-biological innate nature of beings in the world — not only human beings, even all kinds of creatures such as gods, demons, animals, birds, trees and creepers. The *Brhadaranyaka* (I.4.II) is an authority in this regard following which there is another Sanskrit stanza quoted by Jagadishwarananda in his edition of the Sridhara commentary on the *Gita*. The author restricts the meaning of *varna* to shed of colours. But Amara Simha (2.7.1) refers to several senses "progeny" being the major referent and "caturvarnya" referring to the four castes by birth. Again, the author warns that this stanza should not be correlated with the "Purusasukta" (Rg Veda 8.10.90) which all the orthodox commentators on the *Gita* – from Sankara to Madhusudana through Sridhara have done. Admitting that *varna* means psycho-biological "types" the question of taxonomical method remains problematic, i.e., whether founded on action or on birth. Even if following the author one agrees that *karmavibhaga* is due to the actions of the past lives, the question of *samskara*, then the continuity of the caste remains birth-bound from time immemorial, say, following the author, pre-historical as is the appearance of Krsna and existence of the divinity. Therefore the Vedic religion, founded on two pillars – sacrificial rituals and castism, i.e., *varna* by birth cannot support any self-contradiction that the author commits by saying that the Vedic caste division is obsolete although still extant. How can a system be both obsolete and still extant? One is free to consider caste system sociologically with a historical foundation. But a kind of system the pre-historical divinity speaks of must be correlated with the Krsna's version, must be correlated with the Vedic statement that supports the caste system by birth. *Guna* means the qualities expressed in action as ordained by the three strands of phenomenal reality – sattva, rajas and tamas – that are beginningless and endless. In the Vedic rituals priests were not chosen from people at random but by the mark of their generation, i.e., from people whose forefathers were also performing these rituals. Thus, according to the Vedas as well as the *Gita* which is also pro-Vedic, an *Upanisad* sung by Krsna, the divinity (not by rsis), human taxonomy, i.e., categorization into types is based on action determined by the permutation and combination of the constituents (*guna*) or strands of Prakriti. Thus *guna* and *karma* are necessarily correlated in determining simultaneously the relation as a whole and its individual types in particular. The other name of this creation is *jati* meaning both birth and type. The psycho-biological birth is itself a type. It depends upon the thinker how could he extend and interpret this system without violating the basic principles guiding them. This Vedic system of religion and its corollary philosophy has been degenerating long since the fall of classical age in the 10th century, since the advent of Islam reaching its climax currently due to the globalizing economy and its corollary materialist model of human life, and therefore, it is extremely risky to accommodate the message of the *Gita* in an age that interprets liberation strictly in terms of material prosperity.

The author repeatedly tries to extend the issue of castism as a human category according to the modes of combination of the three constituents (*guna*) of nature that determine the human nature as an inborn character (*svabhava*). Not only in the context of the Vedic religion also this type of castism is traced in all other religions. He therefore comments (p.396): "It may be mentioned here that brahmanas exist in all religions, societies, geographical locations and ages. They will continue to exist so long as the human species is not extinct. But the present caste system in Hindu society based on one's birth in a certain family, shall and should dwindle away." If it is simply a natural phenomenon, then why should the author use the imperative modal "should"? Imposition of any personal impression or wish damages the judgment founded, as the author proposes, purely on psycho-biological factors. Of course he successfully manages to interpret the stanzas 41-44 of the Chapter 18, but strangely avoids the issue as dealt with in the stanzas 32-33 of the Chapter 9 where Krsna arguably refers to the inferiority of women, *vaisyas* and *sudras* debarred from performances of the Vedic sacrificial rituals—signified by the conditionals *kim punah*. Krsna, the representative deity of Bhagavata cult, is nonetheless a patron of the Vedic religion. His song is meaningful precisely in the context of the two religions and societies. Contextuality of a discourse is rejected only at the cost of damaging it severely. One must remember that Krsna sings the sermon of *bhakti* primarily in the context of the Vedic religion that he patronizes. The author mistranslates these two stanzas—maybe intentionally omitting altogether the mention of women, etc. What Krsna advocates committedly is not any complexion-based racism or gender complex, but maintenance of psycho-biological purity necessary for the continuity of the Indian culture founded on the Vedic religion. As a recent scholar Ali Rattansi (*Racism*, Oxford University Press, 2007, p.19) wisely observes, with a reference to the contemporary serious historians, complexion-based racism "often attributed to early India has little foundation in historical reality" for the obvious reasons that the key figures of the *Mahabharata* (including the *Gita*) such as the author Vyasa and the leading character of the epic Krsna, both are of dark complexion.

The author's probing insight and courageous grip of the intricate issues, irrespective of the controversial challenge, are of great admiration as they deserve our serious attention for diving deep into the subject concerned.

A.C. Sukla