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Book Reviews

Angelika Malinar, *The Bhagavadgītā: Doctrines and Contents*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, Pp. 296.

Angelika Malinar has made an adventurous effort in dealing with the critical perspectives of *BG*, the most significant text composed during the Sunga dynasty (1st c. B.C.) for founding the Brahmanic ideology, in all its cultural perspectives, strongly against the voracity of Buddhism that had been swallowing up the Vedic heritage with its omnivorous spread all over the vast area of the sub-continent and with its daring jaws expanding much beyond it. Its anti-castism that attracted the common people soon found an orthodox counter in the Bhāgavata/Sātvata religion with a non-Vedic deity Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa its ruling lord and propagator. A Brahmin sage, son of one Devakī, Kṛṣṇa of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad was converted to a member of a pastoral tribe (might be vaiūya in caste and profession), called sātvata believed to be an incarnation of the Vedic God Viṣṇu/Nārāyaṇa with a purpose to destroy evil and protect virtue, an incarnation on par with other anthropomorphic incarnations of Viṣṇu such as Paratūrām (a Brahmin) and Rāma (a Warrior). This Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva (son of Vāsudeva the Sātvata/Vṛṣṇi/Yādava) was worshipped along with some other members of this tribe, viz., Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Viūvaksena. Those who worshipped only Vāsudeva among these members were called *ekāntins* (those who aim at only one), and philosophers like S.N. Dasgupta hold that *BG* was composed by those *ekāntins* because the text says that only Vāsudeva is the highest divinity among the Vṛṣṇis/Sātvatas/Yādavas (X). Although the text is ascribed to one Vyāsa, believed to be the celebrated author of the *MBh.* and all other *Purāṇas* (not "epic" as it is understood in the Western literary vocabulary, composed during a millennium and a half since the composition of the *MBh.*, its historical author is anonymous, and its very title *Srīmadbhagavadgītā* an adjective of the "Upaniṣad" (feminine gender in Sanskrit) forming thus the complete title *Ūrīmadbhagavadgītōpaniṣad* clarifies that the text is a song sung by the "divinity" himself, i.e., Bhagavān Vāsudeva.

But surprisingly, although both Pāṇini (4th c. B.C.) and Patañjali (2nd c. B.C.) seem to be aware of the divinity of one Vāsudeva, they never mention the existence of this text as sung by him. Thus historically, this text is associated neither with Vyāsa as its composer, nor with Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa its singer. Obviously, the Brahmanic patrons of the Suṅga dynasty appointed a group of great thinkers for composing this text ascribing it to Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa the most popular Bhāgavata deity of the time, so that its message be considered as divine as that of the Upaniṣads, and would therefore motivate both the elite and common class as the persuasive state apparatus of the Brahmanic ruler, serving as a strong counter to the outgone Buddhist advisor of the Maurya empire. Two significant points make our observations clear. *BG* puts forth its counter to Buddhism on both its merit and demerit. Whereas the Buddhist *Fire Sermon* poses fire as an image of horror of desire, *BG* converts this image to that of enlightenment that destroys this horror (*Jñānāgni*), and this enlightenment is no more confined to the Brahmins and Warriors; it is open to all—women, Vaiūyas and Ūdras provided they qualify (IX). Without withdrawing its support from the performance of the Vedic rituals, it declares that meditation (*japa*) is the best kind of sacrificial life (*vajña*). The esoteric breathing exercise (*prāṇāyāma*) open to all the castes, classes and categories of the society is also effective for this enlightenment. What is most important for this enlightenment is the sincere and regular performance of one's own duties without waiting for the expected results which must be surrendered to the action itself. Action for the sake of action is the most significant slogan of the *BG* letting this slogan open for healthy debates over its implication for philosophy of action or ethics of work. The issue of "surrender" is so ambivalent that it is extremely difficult to trace any (Marxist) primitive slavery or feudalism rejecting altogether its deeper implication as the most essential means of spiritual enlightenment (or liberation) that the Buddha sought for.

Multifarious perspectives of the Brahmanic ideology such as theological, philosophical, social, political, logico-ethical, historical and spiritual are so comprehensively presented in the *BG*

that almost nothing is left out that would obstruct one's appreciation of the Brahmanic culture as a whole that was perhaps finally structured by the text for all times to come. That is why the text has been so pivotal in the history of Indian culture constantly cultivated during the classical, post-classical, medieval and modern phases of Indian history with its several commentaries and interpretation from Ēaṅkara (8th c. A.D.) till the Indian nationalists and European Orientalists of the colonial period. Schools of philosophy and systems of religious and political thoughts have enormously appropriated and adapted the text for justifying and propagating their own ideas and doctrines.

Malinar feels that in spite of innumerable commentaries and interpretations there are issues that have been ignored so far; and these issues comprise the interwoven theological and philosophical frameworks that identify the cultural-historical contexts of the "Hindu" tradition. "The present study", Malinar writes, "attempts to address these and other issues through a chapter-by-chapter analysis of the text and by relating some of its doctrines to the epic, literary context in which it is embedded." (P.1) The misguided methodology apart, Malinar commits, at the very outset, two major mistakes emerge by considering *BG* as an inseparable part of the epic *Mahābhārata* and by understanding the theological mission of the text as upholding "Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa as the 'highest'" (sic: highest reality or what?) (p.2) But Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa has never been held as the highest Reality till the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (6th c. AD) excepting as a divine personality (or a man with divine qualities) and the authority of this Purāṇa in explaining the Brahmanic texts such as Upaniṣads and *Brahmasūtra* was not granted till Madhva (13th c. AD) who wrote a discourse on this Purāṇa titled *Bhāgavatātātparyanirṇaya*, and next to him, it was Ūrīdhara (14th c. AD) who philosophized the Bhāgavata religion by way of writing commentaries on *BG*, *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* treating these texts as the trilogy of this cult, which according to him, proposed the highest theological status of Kṛṣṇa (*Kṛṣṇastu bhagavān svyam*). But Ēaṅkara the first commentator on *BG* considers Kṛṣṇa as Īcvara, not the Absolute Reality, Brahman but an incarnation in human form. Thus Kṛṣṇa is the highest theological Reality only in the Bhāgavata cult, not in the Brahmanic culture of which it forms a part much later appropriating *BG* as one of its authoritative text. Malinar's bringing this issue into her interpretation of *BG* is out of the context, apart from her misunderstanding of the issue itself.

Excepting the fifth doctrine out of nine that Malinar counts as preached in *BG* (pp.5-7) others are unfounded. She has failed to understand the concept of *bhakti* and several of its elements. Like many other Western scholars, Malinar has also wrongly translated the Sanskrit word *niṣkāma* as "disinterested" a misapplication of the Kantian concept absolutely erratic in the context of *BG* that instructs that a *sāttvic kartā* must perform his action with full enthusiasm (*utsāha*) and patience (*dhyti*). He must be interested sincerely in the performance of his action. One example of the author's poverty in understanding the notion of a *bhakta* ("a loving follower of a god means to know that one belongs to the god by virtue of sharing his immortal nature as being an 'individual self' [*jīva*]...") in a long sentence (p. 11) that jumbles up ideas without any precision. She should have studied thoroughly the commentaries of Ūrīdhara for having comprehensive ideas of *bhakti* and *bhakti*. It looks extremely strange that the author cites no reference to any of the Sanskrit commentators relying wholly upon the English texts! Her linking the text structurally with the epic *MBh*, and with the Kṛṣṇa cult and *Sātvata* theology does not bear any insight because the text can be substantially studied without any reference to these two phenomena which are cited only nominally. Excepting the first and last chapters the name of Kṛṣṇa does not occur anywhere else that would refer to the Kṛṣṇa of *MBh* in person. Everywhere, the divinity speaks (*Sṛībhagavān uvāca*)—hammering the pivot that the whole text is the voice of "divinity" itself.

Malinar's beating around the bush of social-cultural factors contributes little to her interpretation of the text, and ends virtually in presentation of a mass of material scattered all around like beads crying for their collection in a string. Although *BG* starts with depression (*Viśāda*) that leads to escapism to be avoided by all means in the world-war, and ends in liberation through renunciation—not resignation (*mokṣa-sanyāsa*.) where one (Arjuna simply stands for any man disinterested in the world-war) feels to have dispelled all infatuations due to ignorance and have attained wisdom by divine grace, the remaining sixteen chapters are not so structured that one would trace any systematic sequence in the development of various themes that concern the text. Themes such as action, knowledge, the nature and means of liberation are discussed unsystematically as they appear time and again here and there notwithstanding efforts made by Sanskrit commentators for correlating them systematically. Instead of highlighting the text thematically against the socio-

cultural backdrop, the author is lost in chapter-by-chapter analysis. While discussing the doctrines (in her own way "systematically") she dabbles in Kṛṣṇa-worship and Vaiṣṇava worshipping much more than highlighting the vital themes such as philosophy of action, ethics of work and liberation. The first section of this chapter titled "Conflict of Dharma" is too poor to be taken into account for guiding the reader in his understanding of *dharma* in relation to *Karma/Karma-sanyāsa*. Her understanding of *Yoga* a pivotal theme in *BG* is also very poor.

Angelika Maliner's noble efforts in presenting the message of so important a text as *BG* appear much ado about nothing because of her lack of sufficient meditation, apart from the lack of thorough acquaintance with the original Sanskrit commentaries that contribute significantly to a serious study of *BG* in the traditional history of Indian culture.

Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, pp. 431.

Conceptually derived from the Greek *empeiria* and Latin *experientia* the English *experience* has been used more as a means of religious knowledge than as a means of scientific or logical cognition leading to any verified or verifiable knowledge based on objective events or facts of the external world or nature. The term was rejected by the analytic philosophers of the first half of the last century, although prior to them continental philosophers acknowledged its philosophical significance. Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer and Dilthey have rescued *experience* from its conceptual crisis in their own ways, without attributing any singular or foundationalist authority to the term. During the last two decades of the last century, *experience* regains its strength in the hands of both the anti-essentialists and neo-pragmatists, and continues to draw attention of the scholars around the world (including an anthology by the present reviewer, *Art and Experience*, Westport/London: Praeger Publishers, 2003). *Experience* now reaches the peak of scholarly attention in the present work of Martin Jay whose intellectual insight has focused the European thinkers of the past three centuries with remarkable clarity. The author articulates his programme: "We will pay closest attention to those thinkers in the modern period who have put 'experience' to greatest work in their thought, while expressing the emotional intensity that allows us to call their work 'songs of experience.' Our task will be not only to explore their invocations of the term, but also explain as best we can why it has functioned with such power in their vocabularies. When and why, we shall ask, did it gain the foundational authority that makes its recent critics so uneasy? To what is the invocation of experience a response? Under what circumstances does that invocation lose its power? ...Our scope ... will be confined to British, French, German and American thinkers from many different disciplines for whom 'experience' has been an especially potent term." (p. 5)

Treated phenomenologically, *experience* covers a vast range of awareness that is both discursive and non-discursive, linguistic and non-linguistic, sensory and non-sensory spreading thereby far beyond the epistemological boundary of the epistemologists—far beyond even its religious dimension. Relevantly Dilthey is quoted by Jay, "there is no real blood flowing in the veins of the knowing subject fabricated by Locke, Hume, and Kant, but only the diluted lymph of reason as mere intellectual activity." (p.43) Thus *experience* cannot be reduced to an essentially epistemological question of empiricism and rationalism represented by these thinkers. *Experience*, understood in cognitive terms, was responsible for partition between the transcendental subject and the thing-in-itself (object) united later by the logical empiricists (Carnap) into an undifferentiated realm of sense *experience* that posed a puzzle for the analysts (Quine). It is, however, in response to this cognitive function of *experience* that two alternative approaches were made to this phenomenon in the later phase of the Western philosophical thinking—discovering different modalities of *experience* such as aesthetic, religious, political and scientific and searching for an integrated holistic *experience* superseding Kant's 'method of partition' (Dewey). Jay acknowledges the merit of such modalization that helps clarify the complexity of the stakes involved in the general appeal (see the essays by Keith Yandall and John Llewelyn in any *Art and Experience*). Keith Yandall clarifies the entire range of *experience* on the grounds of structure and contents. Structurally, there are two kinds of *experience*—intentional and non-intentional. On the basis of contents there may be several sorts of *experience* such as sensory, introspective, moral, mathematical, logical, religious and aesthetic. The last one can be treated either in terms of the art works in general or in terms of their several kinds such as pictorial, literary, musical and those of dance, drama, photography and film (see the essays by Woodfield, Stecker, McFee and Carvalho in my *Art and Experience*). The logic of the remodalities

of experience is also recommended by Jay. (p.133)

Jay's treatment of experience in the French and British Marxist traditions is an immensely valuable aid to the merit of the volume. His correlation of Althusser's notion of ideology as the "lived" experience of human existence with Eagleton's observations: "Unless reasoning springs organically from lived experience it is likely to be suspect" (pp. 199-200) and exposure of the interrelationship among Leavis, Williams, Sartre and Althusser on the notion of experience contributes significantly to our understanding of the concept. So also is his thorough exposition of the American culture of experience in the pragmatist tradition of James, Dewey and Rorty exhaustive and insightful.

The experience of the loss of experience is one of the oldest motif of Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School and this loss of experience is the loss of Romantic innocence as exemplified by Benjamin's memory of the childhood that he has communicated to Adorno (p.313). So Jay takes account of the crisis of experience in Benjamin: "Alternating between utopian hope and elegiac despair, combining theological impulses with materialist analysis, Benjamin's ruminations on the crisis of experience went beyond anything we have encountered..." (p.314) Thus Blake's songs of innocence is metamorphosed into "songs of experience" by the author most appropriately. The post-structuralist rejection of stable subject, a I continuing from the past to future through the present obviously rejects the type of all-pervading consciousness presupposed by Augustine's *Confessions*; but Lyotard reconstitutes this experience by subverting the subject-object dualism: "the world is not an entity external to the subject, it is the common name for the objects in which the subject alienates himself (loses himself, dies to himself) in order to arrive at himself, to live." (p.361) Whereas de Man rejects the reflection of experience in favour of its linguistic constitution, Derrida associates it with a metaphysics of presence, and questions if there can be an experience of the other or of difference (Prior to Jay Pierre Keller has presented a thorough analysis of human experience as observed by Husserl and Heidegger- see his Cambridge title, 1999). On the other hand, Foucault considers the phenomenological "lived experience" (*Erlebnis*) a nineteenth century fiction that restores the Cartesian ego by privileging pre-reflective experience. But he writes: "man is an animal of experience, he is involved *ad infinitum* within process that, by defining a field of objects, at the same time changes him, deforms him, transforms him and transforms him as a subject." (p.400) Finally, the author concludes, after a voluminous intellectual detour in both sides of the Atlantic spanning over several centuries that took him more than half a dozen years, that the trip is not entirely over, it involves an openness to the world that leaves behind such exhaustive fortresses.

A summary presentation of Jay's work, partial as it is, might benefit the readers in comprehending the vastness of the intellectual area that he has traveled. Evaluating comments would only appear superficial while viewing his amazingly wide range of reading, inconceivable erudition, patience and passion for pursuing knowledge for its own sake. In our age, only few can succeed Jay in reopening the openness of experience, complete the trip left incomplete by him and reach the destination unreachable for him.

Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005, pp. 422.

Ugliness has rather been unjustly kept out of our critical attention, in its simplistic assessment as an antonym of beauty. Where Aristotle's magic of mimesis converted ugliness to beauty, it was not without an ontological conversion although the epistemological culture of the audience played a vital role in experiencing the specific property of the converted phenomenon called beauty. What the audience experienced as beauty in a mimesis of a deadbody is the formal resemblance of a natural object worked out in a different material (though itself a natural matter) by the skill (*techni*) of the artist. There are thus two elements in this conversion: a change in the material ontology, and a cultural habit of appreciating the artistic skill of converting a form in different materials: in Aristotelian terms of causality, the efficient cause (artist) makes the same form (formal cause) in different materials/material cause). Aristotle, accordingly, does not allow any ontological status to the property called beauty that an empirical object possesses. Different cultures might exercise different epistemological habits ignoring any sense of beauty in such material conversion of a form.

In the medieval period theological criteria were adopted in considering Divine thought as beauty (Plotinus) and its opposition (shapelessness/chaos) as highness—Beauty-God/ugliness-Evil.

Augustine holds ugliness simply as an inversion of beauty. But all the time beauty refers to an epistemological practice or attitude, rather than to any ontological existence, measured out by the sensuous response of the audience: beauty yields pleasure and ugliness pain, and accordingly, there must be some objects that are neither beautiful nor ugly as they stimulate neither pleasure, nor pain. Early modern philosophers such as Hobbes, Hume and Burke appear to have subscribed to this view. In the Hegelian dialectic idealism attempt has been made to allot an ontological status to ugliness as an antithesis to beauty, and in Croce's neo-Hegelian idealism ugliness plays the role of an aesthetic counterpoint in spirit's progress to its ultimate destiny. Other idealist philosophers such as Bosanquet, Stace and Samuel Alexander consider it as an ingredient in beauty reflected as discords in music and horrors of tragedy. But along the Aristotelian interpretation, horrors of tragedy are not at all ontological entities, because in its mimetic conversion horrors of the real world have been transformed to beauty; precisely, according to this view, there is nothing ugly in art, therefore no paradox of tragedy. The Kantian philosophers have denied altogether any independent existence of ugliness. When John Keats identifies beauty with truth, it is with an epistemological view that he identifies artworks with the metaphysical entities. Like Aristotle, he also thinks that there is nothing ugly in art. On the other hand when the ugly is associated with the evil or the base, it is an ethical norm that is adopted in such realistic assessment. There might be also psychological, moral, legal and pragmatic approaches to ugliness. But in spite of the relativism encountering the relationship of beauty and ugliness, it is difficult to agree with the analytic philosophers like Guy Sircello that our gain from ugliness is the same as our gain from beauty, apart from the vagueness of the measuring of gain itself. If the gain is loaded with an experimental humanist value, then certainly both the gains are not the same. In a roundabout way we must come to the conclusion that ugliness is a relative quality that is culturally value-loaded and is judged differently in the contexts of nature and art.

But in the present work, the author uses the concept of ugliness in a specific sense—*negative/passive* emotions (feelings) such as irritation, envy, anxiety and paranoia that are politically ambiguous "in a range of cultural artifacts produced in what T.W. Adorno calls the fully 'administered world' of late modernity." In her programme for expanding the Aristotelian category of 'aesthetic emotions' (of pity and fear, or for that matter, love, anger, hatred, laughter, courage and wonder as 'counted' by the Indian aestheticians of classical antiquity) the author applies Adorno's notion of the historical origins of the artistic "autonomy art gained after having freed itself from its earlier cult function... depended on the idea of humanity. As society grew less human (this idea was shattered)... Today, however, autonomous art shows signs of being blind." (*AT* 9/1.2) Absolute freedom of art from religious, political and other social roles within an unfree society has afflicted art itself. Artistic autonomy performs an ideological function—creates the false impression that the world outside is a rounded whole. The principle of autonomy that renders art ideological, Adorno holds (contra Benjamin), also provides a precondition for art's emancipatory role. The issue thus concerns the mediation of autonomous art and advanced capitalism that causes the emergence of socio-artistic truth. On the other hand, Peter Bürger holds that 'autonomy' does not refer to any absolute detachment from society, though not socially conditioned: "The relative dissociation of the work of art from the praxis of life in bourgeois society thus becomes transferred into the erroneous idea that the work of art is totally independent of society. In the strict meaning of the term, 'autonomy' is thus an ideological category that joins an element of truth (the separateness of art from the praxis of life) and an element of untruth (the hypostatization of this fact, which is a result of historical development as the 'essence' of art."

Sianne Ngai's innovative efforts in dealing with the emotions / feelings that have been overlooked in traditional aesthetics are firmly supported by Adorno's suggestion that literature may be the ideal space in such investigation "since the situation of restricted agency from which all of them ensue is one that describes art's own position in a highly differentiated and totally commodified society keeping pace with the recent developments in expanding the horizons of aesthetic thinking—from its philosophical confinements to the spheres of political philosophy and economy—Ngai makes a courageous detour through several disciplines such as sociology of emotions in media studies in the American and global hemispheres. Philosophers, filmmakers, novelists and dramatists of both the modernist and postmodernist traditions are correlated—Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Freud, Melville, Beckett, Hitchcock and Gertrude Steine are intertwined for realizing the enormous capacity of ugly feelings to diagnose everyday life in late modernity. Ngai convincingly exposes how the sexual polarity of the Enlightenment dualism is reversed in the sociological perspectives of the late

modernity. No emotion can be tied with specific sexuality. Envy in feminism can be explained in terms of socio-historical relativism, not confined to any psychological category of a specific sexual identity.

For Ngai 'tone' is not merely a rhetorical connotation as dealt with by Richards and the New Critics. It is "a literary or cultural artifact's feeling tone: its global or organizing affect, its general disposition or orientation toward its audience and the world." Emotions can also be categorized according to their duration—long-lived or short-lived. Rage, for example, cannot be sustained indefinitely, whereas feelings like envy and paranoia, though less dramatic, are long-lived. Ngai thus deals with the seven feelings, she identifies as "ugly", animatedness, envy, irritation, anxiety, stuplidity, paranoia and disgust in a wide-ranging cultural context, ranging from contemporary feminist debates to an American cultural discourse that has found it compelling to imagine the racialized subject as an excessively emotional and expressive subject. Quite significantly she coins "stuplidity" by a "strange" amalgamation of shock and boredom, a feeling that is simultaneously stupefying and sublime.

Ngai's venture in exploring 'beauty' in mental states neglected hitherto by traditional literary critics and aestheticians is a challenging success and opens avenues for researchers in probing into the social and historical perspectives of emotions as expressed in literary and other terms of our cultural behaviour. The irony of ugliness poses a rhetorical question for the meaning of beauty examined so far in the vocabulary of traditional aesthetics.

Roberto M. Dainotto, *Europe (In Theory)*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2007, pp. 270.

The author acknowledges that "Indebted to the subaltern historiography of Ranajit Guha, Homi Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, as well as to the subaltern epistemology of Enrique Dussel and Walter Mignolo, *Europe (In Theory)* questions Eurocentrism not from the outside but from the marginal inside of Europe itself." Dainotto's intellectual honesty and insight are both excellent and extraordinary. The reader is simply baffled to reopen the chapters of the Anglo-German Romantic nationalism of Hegel and Husserl who projected their missions to Europeanise the whole world, whereas, as the present author lays naked, the very idea of Europe or Eurocentrism evolves out of the intellectual practices of the East. Moving in a direction opposite to Edward Said, the author excavates that, it is not William Jones' Eurocentrism that dominates the Orientalism, rather the Orientalism of the Islamic Orient, as Juan Andres, the Spanish Jesuit of the later eighteenth century, traces the Arabic origin of Europe's modernity—as a challenge to the French writer Charles Montesquieu: "If Montesquieu had claimed that as colonies of the Oriental world of Islam, the civilizations of Spain and Italy did not constitute an integral part of Europe but were its negative south, Andres was then ready to declare Al-Andalus and Sicily as the very origin of Europe's modernity—and such origin of Europe, interestingly enough, was to be located in the Orient." (P. 6)

Following Habermas' theory of identity as an opposition of the I and the Other, by which the I knows itself, one has to accept the view that the concept of Europe must have first formed as an anti-thesis to that which is not Europe—the First opposition between Europe and something that is not Europe is Asia. Europe is the anti-thesis of what Jean-Marc Mousa calls "the Orient" a vague and imaginary place that refers indifferently to any one of the three areas of an undefined geography—Asia, the Mediterranean and the Islamic territories and the space of Byzantine Christianity. (P.52) Michele Amari, an Italian writer of the 1840s even declares that far from being any antithesis to the Orient, Europe's history and civilization find their roots in the East. (P.5) Prior to Dainotto's Publication *Comparative Literature* published a special issue on the theme of the idea of Europe (58.4.2006) to which he himself contributed an article on the Arab Origin of modern Europe among eight other authors who highlighted the issue from various perspectives. Susan Suliman, the editor of this special issue of *CL* discerns two ways of considering the idea of Europe: (1) as a supranational cosmopolis in opposition to narrow, warring nationalisms and (2) Europe in opposition not to nation-states but to a non-European "other"-Asia, Africa, The "Third World" or the "non-Western" Parts (east/south) of Europe. In Romania, for example, a national self-definition as European carries an explicit condemnation of "Eastern"/Russian identity and culture, whereas, others study the shifting borders of "east" and "south" as part of central Europe's ongoing self-definition. But Dainotto insists on identifying Europe and the emergence of Eurocentrism not by setting Europe against something non-Europe, i.e., Asia in particular only—"It would be against the

logic of Eurocentrism, in fact, to form a sense of European identity by making recourse to Asia or anything outside Europe. A modern European identity, in other words, begins when the non-Europe is internalized—when the south, indeed, becomes the sufficient and indispensable *internal* other Europe, but also the negative part of it" (that refers to the countries including Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal as irrational, Corrupt and clan-based in comparison to rational, civic minded nations of northern Europe). Thus the identity of Europe emerges in setting itself against not only non-European Orient but also elements within its borders—its south. With this original insight Dainotto surveys the sources available on the issue of identifying Europe—Montesquieu's north-south division, Hegel's "two Europes" and de Stael's opposing European literatures the modern one from the North and the Pre-modern one from the south juxtaposing also with the observations of the Spanish Jesuit Andre and the Italian Orientalist Amari that the modern European culture is eastern rather than northern, and springs from the southern via Islam. Dainotto thus works out his thesis meticulously in the long five chapters of the book that exhibit his profound understanding of history and skill in correlating the material in order to build up a theoretical network.

In dealing with the idea of Europe, the special issue of *CL* noted above carries topics of diverse interest such as treading the native ground; identify discourses on borders in Eastern Europe; integration and subversion in the classical myth of the rape of Europa; Europe in comparative and world literature; Europe under the rule of Alexander and during the early modern classicism; Europe in the middle English Chronicles of the fourteenth century, the "old" and the "new" worlds or Europe reflected in literary discourses of the post world war. Avoiding this diverse reflective order, as is natural for a journal's special issue, Dainotto's single-minded study of the topic attains its desired comprehensive character with a schematized integrated structure: "an attempt to single out, in eighteenth and nineteenth-century theorizations of Europe, the surfacing of structures and paradigms that have since informed ideas of the continent and of its cultural identity." (p.4) In response to Anthony Pagden's comment (2002) that no history of Europe from 500 B.C. to the early 1700 A.D. could be written, Dainotto believes that such a history of idea of Europe could be traced while following Dipesh Chakrabarty's suggestion (2000) that history is the very thought that *produces*, as its own "sovereign, theoretical subject. In other words, writing a history of the idea of Europe is to write a history of European idea of history. Citing several sources, Dainotto observes that the Middle Ages were the childhood of Europe and during 1450-1620 the word Europe had already become part of a common linguistic usage as reflected in the words of Francis Bacon "We Europeans" although the birth of Europe could be traced back to the period of "barbarian" migrations, invasions and conquests that penetrated the Roman Empire in 330 AD founding the city of Constantinople and extended to 800 AD.

During the 7th and 8th centuries, the Islamic invasion and the continuing warfare between the Islam and Christianity changed the idea of Europe substantially when Cordoba, Toledo and most of Spain were in the hands of Islam—the Mediterranean was replaced by the Alps as the center of new Europe that began to lose its political meaning and reduced itself to a mere religious and geographical denotation: "The moral...almost ideological content of this Europe is the Roman church", notwithstanding Charlemagne's attempts for reconstructing the warning Roman Empire into a new Holy and Roman Empire during 800-814 A.D. Charlemagne's Europe was the geographical only—the Christian one, Christendom being all moral and political meaning.

In course of time European consciousness has been dominated by the rise and fall of the nation-states of this continent—France, Germany, Britain, literatures of these states reflecting the moral and political Europe as well as shaping the theory of Europe, the Baconian European ongoing for their definite identity—who are they and what are they? The Arabist identity was neglected by the German Romantist Friedrich Schlegel who was unwilling even to accept the Arabic/Oriental admixture of the Spanish muse. Eastern Europe, Russia, Poland, Bulgaria and the Slavic states were marginalized, although the slave was counted one among the three distinct races with the Latin and German—Romance and Germanic literatures comprehended the totality of "civilized Europe". Southern Europe: Italy, Spain and Portugal—Romance, Oriental and Catholic; Northern Europe; England, Helvetia, Scandinavia and Germany—the Germanic/Western/modern and Protestant; in between north and south France was an eclipsed hegemonic power. It was for Hegel, for his Germanocentric philosophical system that the Orient was humanity's infancy. In his dialectical concept of history Eurocentrism was virtually Germanocentric that triggers the rational process of universal history.

Consequently, Oriental studies paved during the colonial period by William Jones were interpreted by the Palestine immigrant Edward Said as a conspiracy for dominating and exploiting the east's intellectual tradition. The whole perspective of Said was received with divided response—by inordinate praise or by total rejection. Significantly, Said's perspective was countered by R.K. Kaul as too marginal to be appropriate only for the Persian aspect of Orientalism whereas its Indian aspect was rich in sincere admiration for its cultural and literary heritage rather than any colonial administrative objective. Said's politicization of an academic quest might have been encouraged by his personal patriotic grievance and reaction supported by both the Marxist and Foucauldian concepts of power and systems of domination, and, therefore, might have led him to an hasty and parochial conclusion, but the southern Europeanists found in Said "a new lexicon to discuss the old facts of Europe's internal colonialism." Thus the theoretical frameworks of postcolonial and subaltern studies stimulate insights and perspectives for studying Europe (in theory) afresh. Said's indictment of the Orientalist prejudice that the Orient is primitive might have a limited scope for interpretation and appreciation of a whole location of culture, its stimulating strength for reexamination of history in some of its spatial and temporal aspects is certainly immense. Indeed, sometimes bitter experience of *personal* agony reveals the sweetest savour of universal truth.

Dainotto's narration of the history of Europe in its theoretical perspectives reads more like a historical narrative than merely a narration of history.

A.Ch. Sukla

Tandra Pattnaik, *Śūnya Puruṣa: Bauddha Vaiṣṇavism of Orissa, New Delhi: D.K. Print World (Pvt.) Ltd., 2005, pp. 268. ISBN- 812460345-6*

There is no denying the fact that the cultural history of Orissa is inextricably associated with Jagannātha Consciousness which has been variously analysed, interpreted and critically acclaimed in terms of Śaktism, Śaivism, Jainism, Buddhism, Tantricism and Vaiṣṇavism. Together with Balabhadra and Subhadrā, the wooden image Jagannātha is claimed to be the Jina of the Jainas, Ādi Buddha of the Buddhists, Rudra of the Śaivas, Bhairava of the Śaktas, Viṣṇu of the Vedantin Vaiṣṇavas, Kṛṣṇa of the Bengal Vaiṣṇavism and Nilamādhava (*bluestoned Nārāyaṇa*) of the tribals. Despite all these associations/interpretations, the origin and development of the cult of Jagannāth is still shrouded in mystery. Whereas a coterie of scholars and critics including Monier Williams, R.L. Mitra, H.K. Mahatab emphasize the Buddhist cause behind the cult and associate the 'trinity' with the *triratna* (three jewels) of Buddhism, i.e., Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha, others interpret the trio in terms of the confluence of Śaktism, Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism—Balabhadra epitomizing Śaivism, Subhadrā representing Śaktism and Jagannātha embodying the essence of Lord Viṣṇu.

The book under the cover "*Śūnya Puruṣa: Bauddha Vaiṣṇavism of Orissa*" by Tandra Pattnaik published under Utkal Studies in Philosophy (xii) is claimed to be a "pioneering study of the indigenous philosophical tradition of Orissa which evolved between the 15th-16th century A.D. and in which the author has brought to limelight the 'wonderful syncretism of Buddhism and Vaiṣṇavism' as embodied in the concept of 'Śūnya Puruṣa'. No doubt, after the publication of *Santha Sāhitya* (1982) by C.R. Das, *The Cult of Jagannātha* (1984) and *Odissi Vaiṣṇava Dharma* (1990) by K.C. Mishra and *Jagannātha Revisited* (2001) by Hermann Kulke (et al) the book under question is an invaluable addition to the treasure house of Jagannātha consciousness in relation to Buddhist orientation to Vaiṣṇavism.

While regretting in her 'prologue' the fact that 'the culture, philosophy and literature of Orissa have been pushed to the oblivion' (p. viii), by scholars and researchers, the author, herself a university teacher by philosophy, has made an indepth analysis of the philosophical and religious nuances/implications of the indigenous Santha tradition of Orissa accommodating the philosophy of the Oriya Santhas like Achyutānanda (*Śūnya Samhitā*, *Aṅākara Samhitā* and *Sūrya Samhitā Tikā*), Balarāma (*Virāṭa Gītā*, *Brahmāṇḍa Bhūgola*), Jagannātha (*Tūlā Bhīṇā*), Chaitanya (*Nirguṇa Mahātmya*), Dvarakā (*Parase Gītā* and *Chatīśā-Gupta Gītā*) and Bhima Bhoi (*Stuti Cintāmaṇi* and *Brahma Nirupaṇa Gītā*). She is candid to express the difficulty in tracing the exact philosophical affiliations of the *Santha* tradition of Orissa. For, the Orissan Santha tradition appears to be Vaiṣṇavite in form, yet it has virtually nothing in common with the tenets of *bhakti* as propounded in various *bhakti sūtras* of Nārada and Saṅḍilya and other authoritative texts like the *Gītā* and

Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Being self-proclaimed Vaiṣṇavas, these Oriya Santhas acclaim Lord Jagannātha as the Viṣṇu-incarnate and at the same time portray Jagannātha as nameless, formless (*Śūnya dehī*) void, i.e. Śūnya Puruṣa. Saguṇa-bhakti is as such directed towards a lovable personal Lord before whom the devotee surrenders through ritualistic worship reminiscent of the nine fold devotion (*navadhā-bhakti*) of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. But, as Pattnaik rightly points out, "these santhas strictly adhere to bhakti as a means of God-realization" not in terms of emotional attachment as in Alvārs or Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism, but as a matter of Yogic realization done in consonance with body (*piṇḍa*) and the Cosmos (*brahmāṇḍa*). The author therefore tenaciously tries to associate Jagannātha with the theory of *Śūnya Puruṣa* and makes an exhaustive analysis of the philosophy of 'Śūnya' (void)—layers of Śūnya, Śūnya Puruṣa as the potential womb of the Samsāra (phenomenal world) and Jiva (soul), Piṇḍa and Brahmāṇḍa theory, the theory of creation (*Śrṣṭi tattva*) and Jagannātha as Śūnya Puruṣa—in cause of her analysis of the Jagannātha consciousness and Vaiṣṇavism, Buddhism and Santha tradition in Orissa in Part One of the book.

Whereas Part One of the book is devoted to the cultural milieu in which Jagannātha consciousness, Buddhism, Vaiṣṇavism and Santha tradition grew in Orissa, Part Two titled as "Philosophical Concepts" deals in detail with the theoretical/philosophical and religious implications of *Śūnya Puruṣa* and devotion oriented on knowledge (*Jñānamiśra bhakti*). A special attraction of Part Two of the book is the portion on "Sudrabhāva" which envisages the concept of equality (*Samatā*) and the dream of a casteless society which not only enriches the Jagannātha consciousness, but also points to the vital fact that 'Orissa continues to remain one of the states of India least affected by communal tension and religious fundamentalism.(p. 228) Last but not the least, the two Appendixes—(i) 'Śūnyapuruṣa in relation to the Dharma Ṭhākura of the Dharma cult of Bengal' and (ii) 'The Buddhist Archaeological Heritage of Orissa'— shows how the author has heroically discarded the claims of N.N. Basu, H.P. Sastri and P. Mukherjee that 'The dharma-cult had largely been responsible for the development of the Śūnya-centric Vaiṣṇava cult of Orissa' (p. 236) with a view to justifying the fact that the Buddhist heritage of Orissa has been admittedly assimilated into the very social life of the common Orissan people as evident from the philosophy, literature, history, culture and archaeological evidences of the soil.

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