dovetail. Brodsky's own concluding entry negotiates with the tertium quid in reason's binary exchange between reality and its appearances to situate in language the freedom which cradles our moral and aesthetic possibilities. Indulging in the art of poetry for her purposes allows Brodsky to close, if not complete, the process of enquiry that started with Chandra.

Despite all its merits, the book still leaves plenty room for deliberations and improvements. While the tension between aesthetic subjectivity and artistic objectivity has been made apparent throughout the text, there remains the unfulfilled need for a direct and deep investigation into the heart of the conflict. Pairing Hume's aesthetic vision alongside Kant's could help make any literary study philosophically wide and conceptually whole. The stark exclusion of Hume has limited the scope of this book.

Notes

[1] My use of the word 'critique' implies all the three Kantian critiques: Critique of Pure Reason, Critique of Practical Reason and Critique of the Power of Judgement.

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GANDHI, TRUTH, AND NONVIOLENCE: THE POLITICS OF ENGAGEMENT IN POST-TRUTH TIMES. By Vinay Lal (Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2025. 368 pp.

No doubt some readers will ask, do we need another book on Mahatma Gandhi? Surely every educated citizen of the world remembers this hero who helped liberate India from British rule. Alas, as Vinay Lal writes in the present volume, statues, memorials and commemorations often smooth out the past, making it easily digestible for contemporary interests and tastes; statues of Gandhi "may be designed in fact to make one forget as much as remember." (2). This volume reminds us that Gandhi was, in Lal's words, a "provocation, a disruptor of the consensus, someone who … is there to unsettle us." (3). But, as Sumathi Ramaswamy writes in her contribution "The Unbearable Lightness of Being Mahatma", unremembering has taken hold in some quarters of India, because "Mahatma's disobedient words and deeds" are too uncomfortable and inconvenient for some of the rich and powerful (173)

This is a collection of 13 essays plus an excellent introduction from Vinay Lal who is also the book's editor. The authors are mainly historians, but also include academics from the fields of law, political science and religious studies. Most are professors in the USA, with one based in England, one in Israel and, alas, only one who is based in India. Women make up a third of the contributors. As the subtitle implies, these essays speak to our time, now that democracy is threatened in India as well as in USA, Europe and elsewhere. The volume carries a dedication to US civil rights activist James M. Lawson Jr, "a member of the beloved community" and it includes a conversation between Lawson and Lal.

In Lal's introduction "The Measure of a Man: The Many Enigmas and Strange Journeys of Mohandas Gandhi" he warns that Gandhi was not only killed by three bullets in 1948, but that in today's India Gandhi has become "the target of many assassinations", the aim of which is to exorcise the Mahatma "from the nation's consciousness." (p. 1). Lal reminds us of the scurrilous attacks on Gandhi on social media and the growing tendency among some of Hindu nationalists to heroize Gandhi's 1948 assassin. Borrowing a concept from American philosopher Kames Carse, Lal suggests that Gandhi was a practitioner of "infinite games." Finite games have winners and losers. We are all contestants of finite games, be it on the sports field, building a career, or elsewhere in society. Most politics is a finite game. Trump sees politics exclusively through the lens of winner and loser. Gandhi, on the contrary,

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only played an infinite game, a game with no potential victory or defeat and, consequently, no winner and loser, concepts that Gandhi eschewed (pages 15–17). Instead, we can see in Gandhi, "the vision of life as play and possibility" and what this book offers is a collection of hopeful essays that can be used as "aids in the pursuit of that vision." (p. 22). Although the essays are varied in approach and content and each is worth reading for its own sake, a few common threads do emerge.

Firstly, Gandhi's spirituality is fore-fronted. Gandhi stands as a radical social, economic and political revolutionary, but these activities are disclosed from his deep spirituality. He was inspired by a variety of scriptures, but mainly by Hindu teachings such as Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* and, most of all, the *Bhagavad Gita*. Ramaswamy describes how Gandhi attempted to reduce his own self to zero, so that God could fill him up (135–37). Neelima Shukla-Bhatt shows how he consistently sought solace in "mystical poetry and devotional music" (181) and that "the spiritual, the ethical and the aesthetic were integrally linked in Gandhi's search for truth and striving to perfect his practise of nonviolence" (200). We learn from Lal, Shukla-Bhatt and Yohann Grinshpon that Gandhi actively cultivated the art of dying. Grinshpon remarks that "Gandhi's yogic fearlessness" made him unafraid of death. (218). Gandhi's spirituality also transformed him into a critic of "modern civilization", with its soul destroying technological-solutionist approach to human life and, as Leilah Danielson puts it, "its centralizing, bureaucratic character" that undermined "democracy and personal responsibility" (99).

Secondly, Gandhi's emphasise on equality shines forth. Sudipta Kaviraj points out how Gandhi cultivated a "rare gentleness and civility" during discussions and disagreements with Rabindranath Tagore (133). He treated Buddhists, Christians, Jains, Jews and Muslims as equals with his fellow Hindus. It is this that gets him into trouble with the Hindu ethno-nationalists of the ruling BJP party today. Embracing the equality of untouchables lost him a great deal of support early in his political career, especially in his home state of Gujarat, a place that today has become a hotbed of Hindutva violence, leading to, as Tridip Suhrud puts it, "the ghettoization of Muslims and marginalization of Muslims" (287). Gandhi's sense of the equality made him see political Zionism as a form of colonialism that would subvert the rights of Palestinians. Lal tells us that Gandhi and the India National Congress called for an independent binational state in Palestine with special protective provisions for the Jewish minority. Ajay Skaria argues that Gandhi's "new neighbourliness" extended equality to the minor, those whose way of being is inassimilable to the norms of the majority. This radical neighbourly equality is open to "a promiscuous inclusion", and consequently, could be extended to include non-human animals as well as other life forms and entities (87).

Thirdly, Gandhi was a being in the world and a being in time, moving across the world and changing his views over time. Faisal Deviji takes a topographical approach, mapping out three great journeys that Gandhi took at different points in time and demonstrates how Gandhi learned "to dismantle the universal pretentions of imperialism" by "occupying no specific place and simply interrupting the expansive narratives of universality" (39). Charles DiSalvo argues that over time Gandhi "transcended transgressions of which we are all guilty" (332). At one point in his life, for instance, he worked as a business lawyer, fighting for the rights of his clients. But then he came to see the amorality that lies at the basis of business law. At one time he held classist, sexist and even racist views. But he largely transformed these prejudices into positions that radically embraced the equality of the other.

Fourthly, a number of essays touch upon the legacy of Gandhi. Some deal with Gandhi's direct influence in the USA and in today's India. In a conversation between Lal and James Lawson, they discuss how the American civil rights movement deployed every technique of Gandhi's nonviolent *Satyagraha* except fasting. Danielson analyses the political career of A. J. Muste, dubbed by newspapers all over the world and by the Gandhi Peace Foundation as the "American Gandhi" (109–12). She argues that Muste was most responsible for introducing Gandhian nonviolence as an organisational project into the United States, yet "if Gandhi and King are perhaps remembered too much, Muste is remembered hardly at all" (91). Karuna Mantena argues persuasively that the 2019 Muslim demon-

strations in opposition to the ruling BJP's Citizen's Amendment Act were a series of innovative nonviolent actions that showed that these protestors should be seen as "the true inheritors of the nationalist project and the protectors of the Constitution" (p. 300).

A second part of the legacy is the memorialization of Gandhi, attempts at remembering and unremembering. As we have already seen, Lal writes that the many statues of Gandhi that dot the country "may be designed, in fact, to make one forget as much as remember" (2), while Ramaswamy describes the "mini-industry" that emerged around Gandhi's personal belongings ("companionable objects") as they found their way into museum collections (148-162). She also examines how contemporary artists have responded to the legacy of Gandhi, contributing to a melancholic, aesthetic afterlife. Her conclusion is worth quoting:

> Herein lay the dilemma of a man who aspired to become zero. He was, instead, transformed into Mahatma, and frozen and petrified in and by objects that he spent a lifetime trying to jettison. These objects in turn have come to serve as proxy for his presence, in fact to the point of quite displacing him as a man and as a leader of a vast movement … Ironically, but inevitably, as an excess of memory and over-remembering set in around such objects, a veritable 'empire of forgetting' takes hold around Mahatma's disobedient words and deeds, deemed too uncomfortable and inconvenient for moderns for whom life is anything but aspiring to become zero" (173).

This excellent book is an academically satisfying work. Each author throws new light on the career and work of Gandhi. But even more significantly, the authors successfully highlight the meaning of Gandhi today. Collectively, the essays show that Gandhi's example is a thorn in the side of right-wing ethno-nationalists, especially in his home territory of South Asia. His critique of 'modern civilization' in its current techno-feudal incarnation, seems more poignant than ever. His pointing to a spiritual lacuna at the centre of modern civilization seems relevant in the age of Big Data and Big Tech. Thus, Gandhi's example remains the primary inspiration for nonviolent campaigns of resistance the world over, from demonstrations and encampments against genocide in Palestine to the Global School Strike for Climate, from the marches of Blacks Lives Matter to the flash actions of Extinction Rebellion. Wherever the aim is nonviolent resistance and disobedience, whenever the aim is to provoke and unsettle, to disrupt the consensus and dismantle the pretentions and interrupt the narratives of imperialism, there we find the example of Gandhi at work. This book succeeds in showing that the complex meaning of Gandhi is alive in the age of post-truth politics.

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FOUCAULT'S AESTHETICS OF EXISTENCE AND SHUSTERMAN'S SOMAESTHETICS: ETHICS, POLITICS, AND THE ART OF LIVING. By V. Antoniol and S. Marino (Eds.), London & New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024. 208 pp.

With its nine papers, this volume constitutes the most thorough comparative study of Michel Foucault's and Richard Shusterman's views on the aesthetic and political significance of the body. For both thinkers, the challenge lies in rediscovering the subjective resources capable of initiating a process of self-transformation that is not merely intellectual, but also embodied, extra-cognitive, and rooted in the sensory and performative potential of the body. The detailed introduction by the editors, Valentina Antoniol and Stefano Marino, maps the paths through which these philosophers, though from different starting points and perspectives, converge on a similar conception of the body as the medium and stake of an ethical-political practice.

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