

across India during the medieval ages, emphasising particularly on the personal devotion (*bhakti*) to Krishna, which would consequently enable the devotee to attain *moksha*.

In the conclusion, the author discusses the Sanskrit literary tradition of later period which were immensely influenced by the *Mahabharata*. The concluding section discusses in detail a fourth century Sanskrit play by Bhasa, *The Shattered Thigh*. This play presents a dramatic reimagination of the final duel between Bheema and Duryodhana. Since this play also deals extensively with moral questions and ethical dilemmas, the inclusion of a detailed analysis of this play therefore becomes a perfect conclusion to the book dealing with the moral imagination of the *Mahabharata*.

SREYA MUKHERJEE

The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad

DREAM PROJECTS IN THEATRE, NOVELS AND FILMS: THE WORKS OF PAUL CLAUDEL, JEAN GENET, AND FEDERICO FELLINI. By Yehuda Moraly. UK: Liverpool University Press, 2021. 224 pp.

“You shall come to Valvins and we shall dig a hole in the middle of a field and bury all this sorrowful paper. We shall make a tomb for all this paper which contains so much of my life,” (4) writes Mallarmé on his deathbed to Henri de Régnier requesting him to destroy his lifelong dreamt project *Le Livre*. In the fictional world, from Balzac’s *The Unknown Masterpiece* to Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time* and Pirandello’s *The Mountain Giants*, the existence of an ‘impossible’ art is a given. For Moraly, it is a kind of law in real life too, where ‘...artistic creation frequently, if not – at some point or another – inevitably, entails battling with a work dreamed of but which remains forever unrealized (2)’. The book furthers the research on the very process that goes behind such an artistic creation.

Originally in French, the book is called *L’oeuvre impossible*. It is a book of biographical research that deals in detail with three incomplete projects, namely; the fourth part of *Couffontaine Tetralogy* by Paul Claudel; *La Mort* (‘The Death’) by Jean Genet; and *Viaggio di G. Mastorna* (The Journey of G. Mastorna), a phantom film by Federico Fellini. Using drafts and correspondences, the author explores these and various other “dream projects” to exhibit why they remained incomplete, how the unfinished arts reflect personal and professional aspirations, frustrations, and fantasies of their creators, and how these projects live on through subsequent works forever.

A devout Catholic, Claudel worked for about forty years on a tetralogy of plays that would depict the story of the evolution of the relation between Judaism and Christianity. It was his dream project, and a rather ambitious one, that would combine poetry, music, dance, and visual arts. He never finished it but Moraly finds its traces in several of Claudel’s subsequent works. He analyzes Claudel’s works, such as his epic tetralogy *The Satin Slipper* and his collaboration with Arthur Honegger on *Jeanne d’Arc au bûcher* along with several of his notes and letters to induce that Claudel’s dream project is marked by a paradoxical combination of grandeur and fragility. The author painstakingly exhibits how this contradiction present throughout the playwright’s art is a reflection of the tension between his religious beliefs and artistic ambitions.

For Jean Genet, Moraly focuses on his never completed text *La Mort* and calls this section in the book ‘A Triply Murderous Work’. He connects this dream project to Genet’s identity as a homosexual. Genet aspired to create a work that would reflect the phenomenon of ‘being’ a homosexual. As professed to Sartre, for him the very identity of a homosexual was akin to ‘a death instinct’. Although his dream project was never realized, this instinct, according to Moraly, manifests in the works of Genet at three levels – the death of the subject, the suicide of the author, and the destruction

of the work itself, making it “a triply murderous work”. Moraly also compares Genet’s dream project to his other works, such as *Le Balcon*, and *Les Paravents*, as well as to the works of other authors who influenced him, such as Rimbaud, Proust, and Sartre. Genet’s works thus analysed, reflects the presence of themes of death, love, betrayal, and identity.

Federico Fellini envisioned a cinematic counterpoint to Dante’s *Divine Comedy* as his dream project. Begun around 1965, *Il viaggio di G. Mastorna* was supposed to depict life after death that, unlike Dante’s orderly afterlife, is a world plagued by chaos and absurdity, a perplexing and troubling realm of the dead. Fellini’s later films, such as *Amarcord* and *City of Women*, turn out to be the last vestiges of the filmmaker’s original vision. Moraly also explains the difficulties Fellini faced in making his film, such as finding a suitable actor for the main role, dealing with censorship and criticism, and coping with his health problems and personal crisis.

The book brings three diverse artists together. The aim is not comparison yet their philosophy of art, their dreams and struggles meet and scatter throughout the book. For instance, the chapters unfold how all three of them were interested in exploring the boundaries between reality and fiction, sacred and profane, self and the other. It also highlights the differences between them in terms of their style, their genre, and their attitude toward their dream projects. While Claudel sought to express his faith through his works, Genet was a rebellious outsider who challenged the norms of society. While Fellini experimented with different genres and forms in his films, Claudel remained faithful to his classical influences and traditions in his plays. While Fellini embraced his dream project as a source of inspiration and creativity, Claudel suffered from his dream project bringing frustration and disappointment to the writer.

This leads to a weighty thematic consideration in the book – the paradoxical relation between death and art. A harbouring dream of an ‘absolute’ art can steer towards ‘death’ in multiple ways; such dreams may lead to the death of inspiration for the artist, as it was with Claudel, or it can lead to the dawn of a fresh artistic fervour, where Fellini’s filmography would be a case in point. Sometimes, the artistic vision on the verge of its realization is prevented by the physical death of the artist. In the concluding parts, the book delves into other incomplete works from several genres like theatre, film, and painting. One among these is Luchino Visconti’s adaptation of *In Search of Lost Time*. It’s interesting to note that Visconti refused to direct the film because in its fulfillment he saw the impending death of his creativity, reiterating that complex nature of the relation existing between death and art.

Apart from Claudel, Genet, and Fellini, the book also initiates similar evaluations of Mallarmé’s dream project *Le Livre* (‘The Book’), Schoenberg’s opera *Moses und Aron*, Bernard Dort’s never-completed autothéâtreography (his autobiography as a theatre spectator), Alfred de Vigny’s *La seconde consultation du Docteur Noir* (‘The second consultation of Dr. Noir’), Claude Monet’s ambitious painting *Nymphéas* (‘Waterlilies’), the theological manuscripts written by Isaac Newton and such other phantom projects that eventually supplied other accomplished ones with the sentiment of the original idealistic creation.

Through meticulous work of analytical reconstruction, the book divulges several unseen aspects of the artistic output of Paul Claudel, Jean Genet, and Federico Fellini. The book is highly recommended for anyone looking for a handbook on using the tool of content analysis in qualitative research.

DIKSHA BHARTI
Ranchi University, Jharkhand