

prerogative of the German nihilist) stands out. The rigorous exercise of Babbioni reaches a pinnacle when he utilizes Cavell's and Williams's respective analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Purloined Letter* and Denis Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew*, to show that they ultimately embodied the very characters that they studied in their practices and principles of writing as matured philosophers in their later stages of life. For Babbioni, Cavell is the playful, adventurous and "outsider" Auguste Dupin in philosophy who was the intimate and human voice in a strict and objective school of philosophy. On the other hand, Babbioni analyzes Williams's handling of Marxist and conservative critiques in Oxford and Cambridge styled-philosophical circles to prove that as a true "maverick" of the discipline, Williams establishes a dialectical style of writing and rebutting criticisms against approaches in a deeply logical and witty manner (one is reminded of the aphorism of Nietzsche that he so admires). He ends the long exploration with a unique quantitative study that just put to empirical language many of his observations and contentions in the book prior to that chapter.

Babbioni's personal attempts at fulfilling many of the Emersonian perfectionist writing criteria in the process of tracing them in the philosophical styles of Cavell and Williams is praiseworthy because of several reasons. First, Babbioni digresses in many spaces from his original plan (that he meticulously lays out before sections or chapters begin). Many times, as a reader with a literary background trying to understand the complex workings of an academic-thinker in philosophy, one does feel lost and has to backtrack. His analysis in turn helps one expand on his or her own understanding of 'style' as a human phenomenon in the process. Secondly, Babbioni effectively blurs the boundaries of and merges literary discourses with philosophical exposition. However, it blends and contextualizes even a lay reader into the stylistic worlds of Cavell and Williams. Thirdly, Babbioni's beautiful use of allegory to portray the unique positions of 'outsider' and 'maverick' for two of the most renowned analytical philosophers as against their contemporaries, further emphasizes that philosophy is relational and perfectly unfinished. Thus, in *Cavell, Williams and the Question of Style in Philosophy*, one does get a first-hand experience in 'living' style as an innate ability that gets worked and re-worked on by human interactions and deliberations. As personalities evolve, so do their styles. So, there can never be an absolutist explanation of style.

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MODERNITY, PRINT AND SAHITYA: THE MAKING OF A NEW LITERARY CULTURE, 1866–1919. By Sumanyu Satpathy. London: Routledge, 2024. 238 pp.

Where Walter Benjamin might view print as a tool of "mechanical reproduction" that withers the "aura", Benedict Anderson argues print capitalism catalyzes the rise of linguistic-national consciousness. Sumanyu Satpathy's *Modernity, Print and Sahitya: The Making of a New Literary Culture, 1866–1919*, engages with these theoretical tensions and places Odia literature as both a casualty and a beneficiary of the print revolution, carrying the contradictions of literary modernity.

It must be appreciated that the book does not follow a strict chronology, but rather delves into layered insights ranging from linguistic debates to the evolution of Odia *sahitya* as a modern genre. The book's structure is designed thoughtfully with five thematic chapters which stand on their own while contributing to the larger story of the development of modern Odia *sahitya*. These chapters reveal a new dimension of Odia literary culture's evolution through interactions with print, education, and colonial power. This structure does more than just presenting information; it tells a story of transformation in which debates about grammar, schoolbooks, and newspapers are as important as literary texts themselves.

Odia modernity, to Satpathy, is not derivative, but reconfigured by local struggles for linguistic recognition and the sociopolitical anxieties of a late-colonial regional elite. To understand this, the author has offered a distinct model where authors like Fakir Mohan Senapati, who dealt with agrarian distress, caste discrimination and misuse of law, employed interesting literary strategies. His irony and narrative playfulness create what Satpathy calls a “proto-modernist realism”, one that constantly reveals the contradictions of its own discourse. Unlike the more established and institutionally supported Bengali and Hindi literary cultures, Senapati’s writings emerge from a deep negotiation with the rising print culture in Odisha. The book attempts to reconstruct the socio-literary world of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Odisha when Odia emerged as a modern literary language sourced from periodicals, schoolbooks, literary essays, and other archival records. Satpathy carefully traces how Odia intellectuals, writing in periodicals such as *Utkal Dipika* and *Utkal Darpan* utilized print not only to assert Odia linguistic autonomy but also to resist the cultural dominance of Bengali, which had enjoyed a head start in the colonial print economy. This is where the book resonates with Benedict Anderson’s notion that print capitalism enabled the masses to imagine themselves as part of a cohesive national and cultural unit, outlined in his *Imagined Communities*. Satpathy’s use of Anderson’s theory of collective consciousness equips the reader to observe Odisha’s case diligently, where the standardization of Odia through print accelerated the Odia’s rise as a literary language. This phenomenon was both a political act and a cultural reawakening.

Furthermore, the book decodes a compelling story of resistance, adaptation, and the making of a modern regional identity combining intellectual clarity and historical nuance. For scholars working at the intersection of postcolonial studies, comparative literature, and print culture, this work offers a rich archive and a significant methodological intervention. Although Raymond Williams is not cited directly, his conceptual influence is palpable, especially in discussion around evolving lexicons. For instance, keywords like *adhunik* (modern) and *sahitya* (literature) changed their meanings under the pressures of colonial educational and bureaucratic systems. These are not simply translations of “modern” and “literature”, but terms with histories, tensions, and aspirations of their own. The ideological and aesthetic shift of understanding *sahitya* as a standardized, codified genre, *adhunik* as a phenomenon that represents modern age and *adhunikata* as a “new kind of newness” is noteworthy. This transition was not simply literary, it marked a shift in what may be counted as a cultural autonomy over terms. The author also engages with Dipesh Chakrabarty’s “provincializing” of Europe and his concept of the “Muddle of Modernity”, particularly in showing how terms like *adhunik* (modern) and *sahitya* (literature) were refracted through both colonial discourse and indigenously reinterpreted (Chakrabarty 14). The book’s philological attention to such terms gives it a depth that few postcolonial studies of print culture achieve. Odia was once declared unfit for serious literature, a claim, Odia writers actively resisted through the very medium of print. In this context, Chakrabarty’s “Muddle of Modernity” becomes a useful lens, because modernity in Odisha was not just about catching up with the West but also about rethinking tradition in new formats. Satpathy illustrates this through the example of *Bhagabat Tungji*, a traditional space for collective reading of sacred texts. It is considered a pre-modern forum that arguably evolved into proto-public spheres and eventually transformed into modern literary spaces. He reconstructs indigenous modes of collectivity within temple courtyards, marketplaces, community reading halls (*chatshalis*) as sites of dialogic engagement, rejecting a purely Eurocentric model of the Habermasian public sphere. These public spaces can be seen as precursors to modernity. Thus, the arrival of print in Odisha did not simply replace oral cultures but restructured them, allowing for a new public language of criticism, debate, and identity-making.

These theoretical undercurrents are strong but not overwhelming. As readers, we can notice how the author has weaved ideas from Anderson, Bernard Cohn, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Raymond Williams into his arguments without letting theory obscure the material. It is a herculean task to place Indian languages especially the less-discussed ones like Odia, within global theoretical debates. Satpathy shows that it can be done, and done with sensitivity. He does not just apply Western theory;

he localizes it, questions it, and even adds to it. He complements Francesca Orsini and Sheldon Pollock by contributing to the larger project of vernacular literary history in South Asia. But he challenges them by valuing non-canonical forms of writing and centering arguments on the intra-vernacular conflicts. Thus, Satpathy has provided a template for how vernacular literary histories can write back to larger paradigms in global theory.

Unlike other works, *Modernity, Print and Sahitya* represents a critical departure from Eurocentric or metropole-focused literary histories. It draws attention to the asymmetries and inter-lingual rivalries within Indian language traditions themselves, especially the tension between Bengali and Odia. In doing so, Satpathy complicates the field's habitual binaries (East or West, colonizer or colonized) by highlighting the inter-regional politics of literary canon formation. The book insists that comparative literature must take seriously the dynamics of the so-called "minor" languages and examine how they negotiate both the pressures of dominant regional languages and the broader forces of global modernity. His exploration of how Odia intellectuals mobilized print technology to assert their cultural autonomy not only contributes to our understanding of a polyphonic literary modernity in South Asia but also calls for a rethinking of what constitutes the "comparative" in comparative literature. The interplay of translation, adaptation, and terminological transformation serves not only as a formal strategy but also as a politically charged process. Like Williams, Satpathy understands literature not as an autonomous aesthetic domain but as a material practice which is deeply embedded in institutions like schools, presses, periodicals and beyond. His study is both particular in its focus, meticulously grounded in the literary and material history of Odia print and expansive in its implications for how we theorize language, literature, and modernity.

In outline, Satpathy's writing is clear and accessible without being simplistic. His logically built arguments and his apt examples from textbooks, grammar primers, or essays not only speak to seasoned scholars but also welcome new readers into the conversation who want to navigate such theoretical texts. Though the book offers an incisive reading of colonial structures, class and culture, the conversation around the gendered nature of print culture and elitist tendencies of public spaces in colonial Odisha remains comparatively limited, suggesting avenues for future research.

The book concludes by reminding readers that modernity is far from being a linear progression and is best understood through complexities. *Modernity, Print and Sahitya* is more than a regional literary history. Its interdisciplinary approach to the theories of print capitalism, the public sphere, and language politics provides a nuanced account of how a new literary culture was marked by both continuity and rupture. Satpathy challenges universal models of literary modernity by focusing on the philological and linguistic dynamics of the Odia language. The book is a profound reflection on how print reshaped modernity, public life, and linguistic identity in colonial Odisha. It encourages us to consider the historiography of vernacular languages as rich, autonomous narratives that challenge our assumptions about what it means to be modern, literary, and Indian. At the end, the question that remains urgent and open-ended: If the printing-press enabled regional languages to enter modernity, will digital platform amplify their voices or absorb them into a new kind of homogenizing globalism?

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APPRECIATION POST: TOWARDS AN ART HISTORY OF INSTAGRAM. By Tara Ward. Oakland: University of California Press, 2024. 322 pp.

Instagram, to say the least, has democratized the phenomenon of creating and sharing images. Instead of dismissing it as just another social media nonsense/discourse, this phenomenon deserves