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Research Articles

hybridization of the Romantic approach of culture. Williams becomes now more interested in the meaning-making activities and texts of the working classes, which also leads to a broader study of 'popular' culture. The author has pinpointed that the chief value of Williams' cultural theory lies in its recognition of the materiality of culture. All through his career, Williams consistently argued about the materiality of culture. The term 'cultural materialism' was used by Williams to describe his mode of analysis.

Chapter three unfolds the work of America's foremost cultural theorist, Edward W Said. This is for the common knowledge that unlike in Britain, Cultural Studies in America is a recent phenomenon. The author observes that in spite of Said's problematic relationship with the many variants of post-structuralism, his theory is shaped by, and is a response to, the post-structuralist debates about history, identity and representation (p. 79). All major works of Said have been discussed in this book, and it is squabbled that out of these *Orientalism* (1978) gained the widest popularity. *Orientalism* traces the various phases of relationship between the Occident and the Orient and enables postcolonial criticism that calls into question the authority of Western scholarship on other societies.

The author also illustrates the 'travelling theory', a key concept that Said elaborated in his work *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983). Said's main emphasis was on the context of theory that was decontextualized in its travels. He says, 'theory is a response to a specific social and historical situation of which an intellectual occasion is a part. Thus, what is insurrectionary consciousness in one instance becomes tragic vision in another'. An attempt is made within this paradigm of 'travelling theory' to describe the affinity between the work of Williams and Said.

Chapter four provides a comparative

overview of the work of Williams and Said, and pinpoints their major theoretical approaches of Cultural Studies. After going through the text, it is felt that the author is correct in saying that cultural theory that Said articulated was a product of his dialogue with Williams' work. Williams' emphasis on the materiality of culture, his foregrounding of its institutional bases and its relation to power and his persistent emphasis on seeing culture in term of production have greatly influenced Said's work. Williams' influence is more apparent in Said's key concepts: worldliness of texts and secular criticism.

The greatest strength of the book lies in that the author has judiciously analyzed the work of Williams and Said in conjunction with respect to Cultural Studies despite the fact that they occupy opposite positionalities. In juxtaposing their work, interesting patterns of overlap and divergence that emerged have been discussed in detail. Christopher concludes 'the work of Williams and Said, when read in conjunction, presents interesting patterns of overlap . . . the centre and periphery are engaged in a contrapuntal relationship and, together, they have revolutionized cultural studies by offering alternatives protocols to the study of culture' (p. 150).

Despite the fact that the chapters are broad, no derailing outline/introduction is specified in each chapter to the principal ideas and issues, and the way in which discussion would proceed. Concurrently, each chapter concludes devoid of a substantive analysis of some of the more problematic and pertinent issues amplified in the course of the discussion. Endnotes are used merely for citing references not for elaboration of points, as preferred. Nevertheless, the author must be given credit for incorporating unambiguous examples throughout the book that illustrate and elucidate particular points of investigations. This slim volume has a flow

that is not interrupted despite hefty quotations. Written in an easily accessible style, this book will be a fascinating reading for everyone interested in cultural theories and Cultural Studies.

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*Consciousness, Society and Values*, AV Afonso (ed.), Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 2006, pp. ix + 304, Rs. 375

Consciousness Studies as a trans-disciplinary programme finds its *bricoleur* representation in bringing together ideas from philosophers, social and natural scientists and literary critics in the volume under discussion. Although conceived in the form of what Professor Afonso calls a representation of 'fractal' kind, the volume goes beyond boundaries set up by disciplines of analytic, phenomenological and social sciences and portrays the depth of development by way of juxtaposition and debate. The thrust of this creative act of collation lies in 'consciousness as embodied in one's introspection and reflected in social and moral values'. The volume unfolds multiple ways of achieving this many layered objective, that is, how consciousness is related to society and human values, which makes it possible to explore some new and very exciting territory.

The volume is divided in four sections. Thematically, it runs through Consciousness as manifested in conscious experience, as embodied and as reflected in social and moral values, as collective, social and ideological entity and as the source of values like bioethics and perpetual peace. This diversity of facets and features of Consciousness are correlated in an emergent spectrum of criss-cross, which possibly is an Indian response by way of a critical assessment and synthesis in specific intellectual and cultural context. Such a contextualization is both reflective as well as

reflexive. The reflective aspect of the project is carried out by way of an interpretative novelty, while the reflexive aspect is embedded in an orientation towards values, which are humane and which have distinct contextual-practical relevance. This value orientation of the volume develops into a substantive programme of inquiry: rather than describing the knowledge organization in the field of Consciousness Studies, it turns into a virtuous enterprise of improving the efforts of all these extremely gifted and well trained scholar-contributors from India.

The first section include six papers by Sangeetha Menon, CA Tomy, Prasenjit Biswas, AV Afonso and TV Madhu that combine a wide array of methodological and critical approaches. Starting with S Paneerselvan's paper entitled, 'The Conscious Mind: Functionalism, Representational Theory and Biological Naturalism and their Compatibility', the section goes onto discovering the middle ground between analytic and phenomenological traditions by way of discussion on structures and forms of Consciousness. Especially it is very interesting to note that Sangeetha Menon, in her paper, identifies the very basics of consciousness in two categories like 'experiencer' and 'experience' and comes to an entangled, integrated and irreducible first person notion of self. This anti-naturalist notion of self sets the tone of discussion in this section. Conceivability of a self emerges out to be the major bone of contention in the neurosciences as well as in consciousness studies and it is echoed in various problematic forms in this section. Afonso in a well argued paper with an alluring title, part of which reads as 'Consciousness as a Subject-dependent Linguistic Process' makes a worth read for whatever it stands for. Afonso meticulously examines whether Popper's three worlds of constructivist epistemology can admit genetic

explanations of self and consciousness that turns out to be an expansive-reconstructive reading of Popper. In such an attempt, Popperian methodology of evolution from pre-reflective to reflective consciousness gets problematized in a genetic explanation such as Jean Piaget's, who in Afonso's extensive reading only partially jibes with Popper. Popper's three world epistemology and Piaget's developmental psychology meet at a distance, although both are evolutionary yet they both fall short of Subject-dependence, which is much more than a linguistic acquisition of concepts. Paneerselvan's essay on compatibility between representational theory and biological naturalism takes Searle to task for his naive notion of consciousness that does not accommodate any notion of 'unconscious'. It is worth remembering that Searle was taken to task by Derrida<sup>1</sup> for determination of intentional or intensional contexts of consciousness in the same way as Paneerselvan does. The assumed compatibilism between conscious representations and causal interactions between brain and world, for Paneerselvan, makes Searle susceptible to property dualism. This minimalist critique of Searle as a theoretician of intentionality even in the case of 'unconscious' working as background of causal connection exposes Searle's impoverished theoretical moves and especially the fact that Searle's notion of context dependence does not allow a freeplay between intentionality and consciousness in a causal closure. Two papers of this section, one by CA Tomy on the feasibility of Sydney Shoemaker's arguments against absent qualia and the other by Prasenjit Biswas on a posteriori necessity of qualia sharpen the debate on self-world relationship. For CA Tomy, Shoemaker's argument fails to categorically separate mental state from representational content as they are phenomenologically and functionally inseparable. Tomy rather suggests that 'there are no

pure phenomenal states called qualia' (p. 57). In sharp contrast, Prasenjit Biswas argues that qualia are based on a phenomenological doubling of self-consciousness and the content of it is an a posteriori necessity based on counterfactual connection with a phenomenal state. But this connection is looped between doubled up consciousness and all its internal and external correlates, the identity of which could be understood by following what he called a 'non-form'. Once again, in contrast from such hackneyed abstractions, TV Madhu's paper appeals to the craft of constituting oneself as a Subject under certain objective and material conditions that make it possible for the author to establish a dialogue between Marx's notion of Subject of praxis with embodied and speaking Subject of Merleau Ponty. Madhu succeeds in a conceptual blending that produces a space for language as the mediating resource between kinds of embodiment. Such a position overcomes the confusion of qualia-absent qualia argument by highlighting that contexts are determined by language including the very context of production of language itself. Further, first person notions of self and consciousness are germane to this feature of linguistic determination of contexts, which certainly needs a genetic and inclusive domain of the material world, which is an interactive and interconnected Popperian world.

The second section of essays contains Phenomenological approaches to the problem of self-world connection by reinterpreting the notion of world and self in terms of two important constituents: society and time. It is noticeable that the first constituent, that is society, acts as the source of doing what is called 'Constitutive Phenomenology' through the life-world, that is how the experiential enters into the conceptual and vice versa. Sebastian Velassary's phenomenological topos of the social world talks of the I-Thou relationship that allows an ontological

space to remain responsible to the other without altering the consciousness of the self. This avoids the situation of becoming stray dogs of modernity or postmodern narcissist and instead paves way for qualitative sharing of universal values of humaneness in our common lived experience. Without discounting such a loaded phenomenology of the social world, Koshy Tharakan employs a Husserlian-Nietzschean notion of aesthetic that leads to value things of the world in a certain way and this is the way of meaning-giving, structuring and intervening in the world. Interestingly, Tharakan points out that all these features of consciousness in the social world discloses itself not as an actuality, but as 'potentiality',<sup>2</sup> a notion that Giorgio Agamben employs to describe 'suspension of being' under modern social conditions. In a similar vein, Tharakan mentions how values themselves are objects of valuing and hence they paradoxically manifest in thought and not so much in action. L. Anthony Savari Raj continues with this paradoxical suspension of being in contemporary time consciousness in technological, sociological and historical realm. He gives the example of 'nanosecond' that denies any notion of persistence through tensed consciousness that matches with the notion of 'comptime' marking a complete separation of time from experience and human consciousness. In contrast to such 'temporalization of time', history provides a notion of human time that seeks to free itself from external and internal constraints of human condition. Raj, very poignantly commends Raimundo Panikkar's notion of combining temporality with eternity in a non-dualistic mode of experience. He further characterizes such a notion of time as transhistorical, which is an adventure of Being. Reading this essay at this point of time, I can see a very fruitful connection between Alain Badiou's just published magnum opus *Event and Being*<sup>3</sup> that argues that event is a trans-

Being and that Being is fable about the event and not an event. Panikkar, in Raj's exposition seems to come very close to Badiou's notion of event as something that moves beyond a singular notion of being and truth.

The third section is much more illustrative of a critical notion of consciousness that presents a common feature of *ideologycritique*. Starting with PK Pokker's 'Conscious as an Ideological Construct', the section goes onto showing how forms of knowledge are situated within a certain ideological-discursive context. Pokker alludes to Lacan's celebrated formulation that the discourse of the unconscious is structured like a language in Althusser's notion of overdetermination of consciousness by ideology that not only structures the acts of linguistic representation, but also determines Subject's relation to the world through her unconscious. Such overdetermined consciousness, for Althusser partakes in ideas that rule the world, while it leaves open the possibility of interpellation of a different subjectivity that can break from the unconscious and reproduce the material relations at the level of the conscious. Essentially such reproduction of material relations would give rise to counter-ideological and counter-hegemonic ideologies that would mark a recovery of the agency from the structure. In a sharper vein Murzban Jal continues the critique by way of identifying the phenomenology of the reified mind. Jal posits the paradigm of reification as a deconstruction of Subjectivity that makes *aufhebung* inoperative in the world. This becomes the toehold for a critique of irreality of representation that dominant ideologies produce and that constitutes the realm of the mental by detaching itself from the real. In such a situation the mind is estranged from the materiality of social relations and body, it's an ephemera that becomes an 'alien object'. This brings forth a theory of reification propounded by Lukacs,

Benjamin and other post-Marxist thinkers, which commits a fundamental inversion of sorts: life is conferred on inanimate objects and humanity is erased. This produces an objectification of social relations of exchange or value and a subjectification of mind as a mere estranged and disembedded instrument of consciousness. The message that Jal purports to give is rather nuanced: commodification from social relations estranges the human being, it is not totalizable in human consciousness, because a self-critical unpacking of this process is but a necessary component of this whole process of reification. It sounds quite like Lukács' views on class consciousness that can overcome this pitfall of the estranged mind.<sup>4</sup> K Gopinathan in his article on deterritorialization of consciousness exorcizes the Deleuzian notion of 'deterritorialization', which means 'construction of a plane of Gopinathan, is rather dehumanizing as it only marks 'a fractures space (that) invariably fragments the concepts, institutions and values located within it' (p. 205). He calls it a non-space that is everywhere and yet nowhere with its negative effect on society that contradictions co-exist without any possibility of transcendence, which Gopinathan characterizes as becoming-inhuman following Deleuze. Such a becoming is ontologically 'disembodied' and thereby annihilating the possibility of determination of value and meaning as they are encountered in moral practice. O. L. Snaitang's paper on tribal consciousness in India deals with the exclusionary practices of caste societies of India in committing cultural and epistemic violence on tribes. Neither their religions had been recognized nor had their culture been assigned a proper place. While it is ironically true that tribal culture and religion constitutes the substratum of developed cultures, tribes became strangers in their own homeland. Snaitang portrays the grim picture of victimhood of tribes in the

Indian context and paints how an important segment of achievements of human consciousness can be socially marginalized by erecting walls. Snaitang exemplifies within tribal collective consciousness the ramifications of deterritorialization and reification, to describe it in terms of the foregoing papers. S Lordunathan's paper on 'Phenomenological Inquiry on Structuring of Dalit Consciousness' argues about the thrownness of the broken being of the Dalits in India. In terms of consciousness, Dalits embody, according to the author, a continuous encounter with the closed self of the dominator that declares an ontological war against the face of the other, an other with an alterity. It is this ontological condition that keeps Dalit consciousness as a 'protest consciousness' that exist only as broken particular to provoke an ethic of justice for a co-human community and not for a community of others. V Sujatha in her paper interrogates the very conditions of dominant knowledge systems that derive their sustenance from the 'structuring dispositions' or the *techne* of first principles that 'disenfranchises' an outside. Indian system of medicine, practiced by Ayurveda system of medical practitioners, going by this logic of *techne* and such dispositions, was made to suffer as it was devalued. But as a saving grace, medicinal lores as it exists in the existential contexts of village communities within India could act as an inherited and incorporated knowledge within oral traditions and thereby creating an alternative space of consciousness. Diagnostics, care and other forms of practice combined in transmission of such an indigenous knowledge system very successfully, possibly by remaining excluded from the parlance of dominant knowledge systems.

In the penultimate section of the volume there are four essays by Francis Arakal, SE Bhelkey, SV Bokil and a co-

authored essay by IS Dua and Meena-kshi Gupta. The essays focus on how values are an intrinsic part of forms of consciousness. Arakal posits that the Advaita hierarchy of consciousness provides an explanatory bridge between phenomenal consciousness and absolute consciousness by way of a progressive de-superimposition of the Self and the non-Self. This is a practical and synthesizing process of attaining the knowledge of Brahman that always acts as the basis for separating the real from the unreal. Advaita proposes an absolute absence of discontinuity between the phenomenal and the absolute as it transcends the sensible by arriving at the knowledge of the real, which is without contradiction and difference. SE Bhelkey's essay on Kashmiri Saivism (KS) is a worthwhile exposition of some of the fundamental tenets of epistemic rendering of the relationship between consciousness and the human subject that attempts to functionally integrate three basic roles of human consciousness in the forms of knower, doer and enjoyer in reality, which is 'a united complex of infinitely multiple items' (p. 261). KS interprets the functioning of consciousness as a foreground-background relationship as Consciousness that foregrounds is an appearance of particularities of the world, while it pushes limitless and infinite consciousness without forms in the background. Such dialectic creates a unified agent who simultaneously knows, does and enjoys. This is a sublimation of various substrates of knowledge and values without an end in itself, but it develops into a perspective or a vision that act as the basis to create meaning and value in life and world. Therefore in KS, consciousness plays a foundational role in unifying objects and action in relation to the self-conscious agents who are engaged in knowledge enhancing activities. SV Bokil essay on 'Plato's Republic to Kant's concept of *Republic*' is an

exercise in understanding evolution of the notion of republic, from Plato's abstract domain of realization of truth to Kant's notion of individuated domain of the public. Bokil evaluates this transition as one from an abstract notion of good to public use of reason that justifies fraternity and peace. The last but not the least essay on biotechnology and consciousness argues that human consciousness must assume a voluntary role in the evolution of the species and hence an organic reproduction of species cannot ensure the transmission of consciousness. As they explain, 'Man, (sic) the flowering organism which has been empowered by millions of years of intelligence, will achieve a high moral culture when he recognizes that he ought to control his conscious and not wait for the eternity to make him a heap of earth' (p. 302). This optimism of will and pessimism of spirit is what, according to the authors, has brought about diversity in genetic copying of information that do not exactly become one between oneself and one's clone.

This collection of nineteen essays produces a fabulous gift of critical knowledge on the highly fuzzy and fast track terrain of consciousness studies. In all, the volume gives quite a few challenging riders to the gauntlet thrown by cognitive turn in Philosophy. The phenomenological thrust of essays compounded by analytic method of critique of cognitive reason goes onto establishing a humane connection with the realm of social, political and personal struggles of life. The volume wields a final criterion to evaluate the whole project of consciousness studies by placing it in the midst of valuing, which remains to be the foremost frontier of practice and knowledge in human society. The editorial in the beginning provides the right tips to provoke for and against the grain reading of the all these essays, lucidly written and compiled with a broadview of the emerging intellectual horizon.

NOTES

- 1 Derrida, Jacques (1986), *Limited Inc. a, b, c . . .*, (tr.) Samuel Weber, Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- 2 Agamben, Giorgio (2004), *The State of Exception*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Agamben explains potentiality as 'potentiality-not-to', which is a paradoxical manifestation of human subjectivity.
- 3 Badiou, Alain (2006), *Being and Event*, (tr.) Oliver Feltham, London: Continuum Books.
- 4 Lukács, G. (1954), *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp.

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Latest  
from IAS

Living with Diversity  
*Forestry Institutions in the Western Himalaya* by SUDHA VASAN

Diversity of forestry institutions that emerges from and permeates practice of forestry in the Western Himalaya is at the center of this work. Thick ethnographic descriptions of a range of forestry institutions in Himachal Pradesh – forest department, colonial forest settlements, national parks and reserved forests, sacred groves, forest cooperatives, indigenous institutions, institutions created in Social Forestry, Joint Forest Management and several other state projects are found in these pages.

The central argument is about the diversity of practice that continuously confronts the synoptic vision of modern forestry. Practical diversity of institutions that clearly emerges in this narrative challenges, defies and transforms state simplifications that attempt to simplify, homogenize and standardize ecological and social landscape. On the one hand the historical perspective in this book highlights the persistence of a mosaic of forestry institutions that reflect multiple attempts at state simplification. However, it is also argued that this diversity is not merely residual diversity driven by pre-existing institutional remnants. Instead it is continuously created and recreated by mutually constituting interactions of structures, dispositions and actions that constitute the logic of practice. Since institutional diversity is an active product of practice, it is neither a chaotic nor structureless institutional environment. Forestry institutions in Himachal Pradesh form a tapestry of interwoven variations that are dynamically recreated within boundaries of structural constraints.

The author relates this theoretical understanding to suggestions for a practical forest policy framework in the region that recognizes and positively deals with the resilience of institutional diversity. Efforts to manage forests by obviating, circumventing, ignoring or assuming away the existence of diversity risk unsustainability. This disjuncture between assumptions and pragmatic reality fundamentally underlies the limited success of forest management efforts. The inevitability and importance of forest policy engaging with institutional diversity is emphasized and a framework for "living with diversity" is suggested.

The book will be of interest and use to those in the fields of environmental studies, forestry, sociology, regional studies of the Himalaya, history, politics, management, human geography, social anthropology and development studies as well as policy-makers, bureaucrats and non-governmental organizations.

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Writing Resistance  
*A Comparative Study of the Selected Novels by Women Writers* by USHA BANDE

Resistance can be as esoteric as silence and silence can be as impenetrable as hegemonic power; conversely, both resistance and silence have the potential to challenge power. By its very nature, resistance is non-confrontational. It works subtly through seemingly small, innocuous everyday acts of non-compliance and achieves the desired results imperceptibly and slowly. As a socio-cultural-historical practice, resistance has been largely successful, the most obvious example being Gandhi's philosophy of 'passive resistance'; as a literary practice it poses challenge to the reader as well as the author.

Indian women writers have provided variegated pictures of resistance practices in the modern Indian context. In this study, Usha Bande examines the treatment of resistance in nine contemporary novels written in English. Through a close reading of the selected novels of Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Githa Hariharan, Manju Kapur, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy and Bapsi Sidhwa, she examines women's conditioning, their internalization of patriarchy and the reasons for their inability to subscribe to any oppositional action. Textual resistance functioning within the feminist, cultural and post-colonial milieu of the novels provides a platform to understand the theoretical debates and identify various resistant strategies deployed by the creative writers. She traces — drawing on the theories of feminist resistance, resistance operative during the anti-colonial/nationalist struggle, and subaltern resistance — the inter-connection between gender, cultural practices and the Western influence on India social system. Usha Bande observes that despite the influence of the Western ideologies, which cannot be avoided in the Third World context, and the present socio-economic changes, one cannot sidetrack the strong cultural leanings of the authors that provide unique ethos to the works. In her analysis, Bande focuses on issues such as resistance offered to patriarchy, to the matriarch as patriarchy's agent, rape and violence against women, childhood experiences as resistance and revisionist mythmaking as resistance. Recognition of resistance in these texts help us locate the implicit urges of women to re-define their 'self' and to survive not in abject passivity but with dignity.

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