

playwright had taken a deep draught from *Kādambarī*'s cup, after which he tackled the formidable task of transforming a lengthy, intricately plotted, richly descriptive story into a drama. Centuries later, Hideaki Sato, passionate about what he rightfully calls "an excellent work," has given the *Kādambarīnāṭaka* a learned critical introduction, a commendable translation, and a comprehensive bibliography.

The introductory material contains an in-depth discussion of the drama's history and source story; an analysis of its plot structure, with reference to theories of classical Indian dramaturgy; an exposition on the *garbhāṅka* [play-within-a-play] and its use in the *Kādambarīnāṭaka*; and an examination of the *Kādambarīnāṭaka*'s rasas. The translation proper includes explanatory notes and copious variant readings from Sato's sources: two manuscripts and one printed edition of the play. His extensive collations and emendations mean that this is not only the first translation of the *Kādambarīnāṭaka* but also, as A. K. Warder indicates in his foreword, the first critical edition of it. Sato's commitment to such demanding scholarship is to be applauded. (It is unfortunate, therefore, that Sato aligns himself in the introduction with M. Coulson's opinion that translations of Sanskrit stanzas result in either boring or bewildering the reader. Sato's own translation does neither.)

Narasimha, likewise, is to be applauded for his commitment to composing a dramatic version of *Kādambarī*. I know how difficult that is, having written and produced my own "*Kādambarīnāṭaka*" ("Moonson," 1990, Chicago). While I shamelessly borrowed Bāṇa's plot and freely used my translation of his dialogue, Narasimha shows real ingenuity by entering *Kādambarī*'s story *in media res*, by altering the story's various sequences, and by employing the relatively rare *garbhāṅka*. And, if the plot wasn't enough of a challenge, the *Kādambarīnāṭaka*, as opposed to *Kādambarī*, is heavily versified, with a total of 341 verses in about twenty different meters. Sato, wisely, chose to present the verses as four to eight lines of prose English, which makes for an attractive presentation while at the same time signaling to the reader that this is, indeed, a play in verse.

Narasimha's dialogue echoes wonderfully the rhetorically and syntactically intricate language, teeming with *alaṅkāras* and poetic conceits, that makes up what old-style orientalist disparagingly called *Kādambarī*'s jungle. Though Sato must also have noticed Narasimha's debt to Bāṇa in this area, he does not venture into making comparisons between *Kādambarī*'s descriptive passages and the *Kādambarīnāṭaka*'s dialogue. Sato avoids doing so, one could surmise, from his concern with bringing long-overdue attention to the *Kādambarīnāṭaka* as a singular work of dramatic art that can hold its own within the genre of Sanskrit-Prakrit drama. He has done his job well. This is a text worthy of study, and, moreover, a play that wants staging.

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*Hybrid Histories: Forests, Frontiers and Wildness in Western India.* By AJAY SKARIA. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. xxiv, 324 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

This book beckons to be read twice, once as history and once as *goth* (story). In both these forms it reaches beyond recurring ascriptions of history as tragedy and travesty. Set in the densely forested Dangs region in western India, *Hybrid Histories* critically considers the meanings of history and the mappings of modernity, the culture of wildness and the nature of civilization, the intonations of pasts and the

inflections of power, and subaltern spaces and colonial places. Based upon rigorous archival research and sustained field work, this is an imaginative, innovative, and important work, complex in its narratives of history and challenging in its terms of theory.

The book opens by looking ahead of oral and radical histories that imbue the oppressed and dispossessed with “historical identity” by envisioning agency and history in the mirror of the west, a “hyperreal Europe.” At the same time, it also seeks to think through the “affirmation of difference” within critical strains of recent scholarship. Discussing dominant associations between memory, history, and modernity, Skaria suggests that history is a pervasive “myth of modernity,” which is best denaturalized and interrogated through “hybrid histories.” Such pasts traverse and exceed a reified west to animate a “politics of hope” and articulate a “counter-aesthetics of modernity.” The introductory arguments are interesting and provocative. Yet the critical force of “hybrid histories” —slippery notations, these—actually inheres in analytical and descriptive accounts that lie ahead, traversing and constituting the book.

*Hybrid Histories* focuses on the numerically significant and politically salient groups of Bhils and Koknis in the Dangs, “communities currently classed amongst the Scheduled Tribes of India, and formerly described by the British as ‘wild tribes’” (p. v). Storytelling is a critical dimension of Dangi life. Such stories assume different genres: *goth* about gods and goddesses; imaginary *goth*; and, finally, *vadilcha goth* or stories about the past/ancestors. Positing an intimate connection between time and space, *vadilcha goth* are true stories (*khari goth*), which sometimes reach back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They are the locus of this book.

These Dangi narratives entail distinct performances and persuasions of truth. They imply discrete times and spaces of the past. In *goth*, there are two historical epochs, *moglai* and *mandini*. The former is the time of “extra-colonial” freedom, the latter is the space of “extra-Dangi” demarcation. Politically and morally *moglai* has precedence over *mandini*, chronologically and discursively *moglai* traverses *mandini*. Produced simultaneously, the two insinuate themselves in precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial terrain and temporalities in inherently different ways. Each distinctly and ever together, *moglai* and *mandini* articulate the politics and the presence of the past.

Skaria conjoins creative renderings of Dangi *goth* with critical readings of the colonial archives. Through its organization, *Hybrid Histories* is “intended to be read in at least two ways as professional histories of Dangs, and as Dangi histories” (p. 18). The former are arranged in a sequential fashion so that *moglai* is followed by *mandini*. The latter emerge as supplementary narratives that “explore the meanings of *mandini* and *moglai* in more simultaneous ways, and maybe define and displace the sequential narrative” (p. 17).

The book covers much ground. It also defies summary. The expressions of *moglai* among the Bhils and Koknis rest upon discussions of shared kingship and plural sovereignty, the making of forests and the meanings of frontiers, the production of livelihood and the practice of raids, and the embodiments of power and the anxieties of authority—processes variously marked by an “aesthetics and politics of wildness,” and differentially mediated by the terms and twists of gender. Tracing the meanings of *mandini*, the book at once rethinks colonial histories and reconsiders subaltern pasts. Here theoretically textured accounts of colonial environmentalism, forestry, frontiers, leases, writing, and masculinity work in tandem with analytically grounded narratives of transformations of Dangi wildness, sovereignty, borders, mobility, kingship, and resistance—the one entailing the other.

On each of these questions, Skaria has critical insights to offer. For example, in the book Dangi landscapes do not merely constitute an external and *a priori* “nature” in front of history. Rather, these terrains are actively configured as part of the production of space and the construction of time within historical practice. Indeed, *Hybrid Histories* makes critical contributions to a range of scholarly debates and theoretical discussions, from specific issues of continuity, transition, and rupture represented by colonial rule to the wider rethinking of the environmental history and the historical anthropology of South Asia. However, since Skaria inadequately specifies the broader terms of these discussions and arguments, particularly at the beginning of the book, he is often unjust to his own accounts.

I have various queries concerning specific analyses offered here—questions about the status of the “extra-Dangi” as a historical/conceptual fault-line, and inquiries regarding homogenized representations of western conceptions of “wildness,” for example. This is not a caveat. It is the point of this review. Through its imagining and inscription of theory and narrative as conjoined endeavor, *Hybrid Histories* productively opens up several sites for dialogue—in the work of history, toward the labor of ethnography, as a text in my class.

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*Pakistan: A Modern History.* By IAN TALBOT. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. xvi, 432 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

Pakistan's history since independence in 1947 demonstrates convincingly that people do not always receive the government they deserve. Ian Talbot, building on his influential earlier work on the preindependence movements that created Pakistan, here analyzes in detail the distressing political history of this new nation. Yet he argues throughout that radically reformed public policies and a transformed political culture could yet bring stability, accountability, and effectiveness to Pakistan's political processes. Published in 1998, this book includes a brief account of Pakistan's nuclear tests but ends before its miniwar with India in Kargil about Kashmir and the latest military coup, by “Chief Executive” General Musharraf.

Talbot's extensive knowledge of the mass movements and the political maneuverings that produced independent Pakistan in 1947 provides substantial historical depth to his state-centered analysis. Comparative political scientists, he asserts, often focus on political parties, thereby failing to appreciate the powerful effects of ethnic and kinship identities (including *biradaris*) in mobilizing people for political participation, both within and outside of formal political organizations. He further asserts that such political analysts sometimes neglect the historical context, not understanding that many of Pakistan's current political conflicts arose from its colonial heritage of “contested national identity, uneven development, bureaucratic authoritarianism, and imbalance between a weak civil society and dominant military” (p. 17). These factors favored, and continue to favor, a political climate of state enforcement of law and order over and against popular participation, except as resistance to that state. Further, the preindependence indigenous elite and mass-based movements to create Pakistan themselves left legacies of regional versus national conflicts, tensions between Islam and Muslim nationalism, a dominant culture of “political intolerance” (p. 12), residual intermediary political magnates, and