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Book Reviews

Mohini Mullick and Madhuri S. Sondhi (eds.), *Classical Indian Thought and the English Language: Perspectives and Problems*
New Delhi: Indian Council for Philosophical Research and DK Printworld, 2015

Reviewed by Michael Palencia-Roth

I have heard it said more than once that every western generalization about Indian culture, religion and thought turns out to be inaccurate. Such a statement might well summarize the main issue explored in the book under review here: the translatability of classical Indian thought.

In December 2011, a group of interdisciplinary scholars from India and beyond, convened by Mohini Mullick and Madhuri Sondhi, gathered in New Delhi to present essays and debate the issues of "classical Indian thought and the English language". The scholars are: Sudipta Kaviraj, S.N. Balagangadhara, D. Prahlada Char, Claus Oetke, Vivek Dhareshwar, P.K. Mukhopadhyay, Aloka Parashar Sen, K.D. Tripathi, Wagish Shukla, and Ramakrishna Bhattacharya. The neutral title conceals the startling premise that classical Indian thought cannot be adequately interpreted in English. Why? Indian scholars educated and trained in the English language are incapable – consciously or unconsciously – of rendering Sanskrit thought accurately. On the one hand, one thinks differently in English and Sanskrit. On the other, some Sanskrit terms have no equivalents at all in English, and attempts to find substitutes result in misinterpretations. Some of the differences between the two languages do not depend only on differences in historical and philosophical traditions. These differences stem also from the "rupture" (15) that English colonialism produced in the Sanskrit tradition.

That "rupture" created a before and after in India's history that is different from the before and after brought about by other invaders or colonizers, for instance the Mughals. This is the undeniable premise of Sudipta Kaviraj in the important lead essay, "Why and How Should We Read Ancient Texts?". The English imposed their language and, with that, governmental structures, bureaucracies, and educational practices. In doing so, Britain altered the ways in which India's history and literature would be understood, taught, translated and transmitted. Thus, for example, Kalidasa, now widely accepted as the greatest Sanskrit poet and dramatist, would be first appreciated by the West as "the Indian Shakespeare" through Sir William Jones' 1789 translation of *Shakuntala,* which then was translated from English into German and delighted poets and thinkers of the "Goethezeit". Entranced, Goethe even wrote, „Nenn' ich, Sakuntala, Dich, und so ist Alles gesagt".

The book is divided into two parts, the first being more theoretical in orientation than the more practical second part, which deals with more specific topics. In the first part, the main questions are the following. Kaviraj asks, "Is translation necessary" (10-47)? Balagangadhara maintains that methods and perspectives imported from western social

sciences are inadequate tools for understanding India (48-104). Char insists that the English language itself distorts Sanskrit thought (105-124). Oetke takes issue with this position, and, while not disagreeing that distortion does occur, insists that the same problem exists in the translation into English from any language, even from languages more closely related to English (125-168). Dhareshwar maintains (169-208) that the problems with the translation of Sanskrit into English are not merely linguistic; they are "conceptual and cultural" (169). Moreover, the problems are complex, for they point to difficulties in both directions, Britain and India. For example, even if they do not admit it, Indians have been "enslaved" by English culture. A complex "enslavement." A case in point is Gandhi, who first read the *Bhagavad Gita* in England in Edwin Arnold's translation (189). That translation inspired him to move toward India's independence through the concept of *satyagraha* and the practice of *Hind Swaraj*. The *Gita,* in Dhareshwar's words, enabled Gandhi "to remove structures that were occluding [his] experience" (190).

In the second part of the book, scholars focus on specific texts or concepts. Tripathi explores the Bharata's *Natyashastra* and its famous commentary, the *Abhinavabharati* by Abhinavagupta in the 11th century (271-290). The issue he discusses is how to understand Indian aesthetics in the context of its profound differences with western aesthetics and the difficulties in establishing both a textual and a "living" tradition in India (288-290). Mukhopadhyay discusses "ethics" in India and how differently moral thought and moral dilemmas are viewed in India and the West (210-237). He focuses on multiple aspects of *dharma* which refers to "duty" and one's obligation to act in conformity with it, with divine law and with nature. The complexity of the idea of dharma is not covered by any single term in English, or even by a set of terms. For instance, Mukhopadhyay comments on the famous beginning of the *Bhagavad Gita,* in which Arjuna is faced with the dilemma of being placed in-between two opposing armies and asked to fight. The injunction, if followed, would result in the death of his family members, his teacher and his friends, and Arjuna refuses to fight. Krishna explains, in subsequent chapters of the *Gita,* that refusal is not "moral" (for he would be shirking his "duty"). Arjuna has the moral obligation to fight. Sen looks at the terms *varna* and *jati,* in relation to the history and meaning of "caste" (238-270), a word, he points out, that is not even an Indian word but is originally from a Portuguese word, "casta". Thus one of the most central categories of Indian culture is refracted through a foreign term. The potential for misunderstanding and misinterpretation is enormous. Perhaps the most original contribution is that by Wagish Shukla (291-308), who maintains that the Indian classical tradition is "performative," while the western tradition is "referential" [think of Erich Auerbach's now canonical *Mimesis*], and that therefore we in the West, says Shukla, cannot help but misunderstand Indian aesthetics, thought and texts.

English is generally acknowledged to be the most common language of academic analysis. How, then, does its use impact the analysis of traditions in languages other than English, and especially of traditions in non-western languages? For scholars who are stubbornly and even blithely monolingual, this question is sometimes classified as trivial. Consciously or unconsciously, they maintain that thought, regardless of the language in which it is

expressed, is not culture specific. But this position is not only wrong. It is willfully blind. For scholars who have studied even one foreign language at some depth, and especially a language from a different civilizational and linguistic tradition, the difficulties adumbrated by issues explored in this book ring true. The difficulties are compounded when the culture being interpreted is translated into the language and traditions of thought of the culture that conquered, colonized, or ruled it.

Is there a solution to these difficulties? In his essay "On the Availability of Ethics in India," P.K. Mukhopadhyay reformulates the question, in the context of moral thought, which concerns all of the authors in this book of essays. Given the difficulty of "translating" ethical concepts central to Indian thought (210), as per his example of Arjuna's dilemma in the *Bhagavad Gita*, a solution to the difficulty might be to insist on "intercultural communication" rather than on "intercultural translation." In other words, what is required is a more modest intention in the interpretation of Indian thought and culture.

The question of intention aside, however, the difficulties remain and should be considered a caveat to scholars engaged in comparative civilizational analysis. If Sanskrit is truly untranslatable, then all interpretations of classical Indian thought are, in a sense, misinterpretations; all readings of Sanskrit (and other Indian languages), misreadings; all translations, mistranslations. One cannot overstate the challenge that these essays and debates present to comparative civilizational work. How much does our practice of comparative civilizational analysis depend on fitting other cultures, other civilizations, into our own hermeneutic practices and traditions? Is this not another form of colonization? Of course, comparative civilizational work must continue. The issue then becomes, how?

Madhuri Santanam Sondhi, *Intercivilizational Dialogue on Peace: Martin Buber and Basanta Kumar Mallik*
New Delhi: Indian Council for Philosophical Research, 2008

Reviewed by Michael Palencia-Roth

What grounds for comparison concerning Martin Buber (1878-1965) and Basanta Kumar Mallik (1879-1958) would inspire a book of more than 400 densely argued pages? Buber and Mallik never met. There is no evidence that either read the other or even knew of the other's existence. Buber was born a Jew in Vienna and spent much of his professional life in Germany before immigrating to Israel in 1938 due to the nazification of Germany. He lived and worked in Jerusalem more or less continuously until his death. Mallik was born a Hindu in India, where he was educated; he arrived at Oxford as a "mature student" of 33. He divided his time between Britain and India until he came back to Oxford to live during the last decades of his life.

The ground for comparison, for Madhuri Santanam Sondhi, is the *tertium quid*, the third thing to which they are both related: they are both dialogical thinkers concerned with peace whose ideas are relevant to comparative civilizational analysis as well as to more limited studies of individual human beings in relation to their social contexts. Beyond that, Sondhi is concerned with a specific question. How might peace in today's world be achieved, especially in cultures with conflicts at their center, Jewish and Arab (or the State of Israel and the Palestinian territories) in one case, Hindu and Muslim (or India and Pakistan/Bangladesh) in the other? Buber and Mallik, however different in their critical approaches, think about "peace" in ways that Sondhi finds fruitful for possibly reducing the tensions between nation states (Russia and the USA, China and Japan, India and Pakistan), between religions (Christianity and Islam), or even between the West and the Rest.

This book is divided into five long chapters, bracketed by an introduction and a conclusion. The chapters are, in order, "Relationism as Existentialism and Metaphysics," "Ethics," "Social Philosophy: Philosophical Anthropology and Social Change," "Political Philosophy – I," and "Political Philosophy – II". At the heart of both Buber's and Mallik's work are two interestingly similar concepts: "I and Thou" for Buber; "relationism" for Mallik.

Sondhi presents the core of their philosophies in the final paragraph of her introduction: "Mallik believed that all individuals as centres of instances of ideas and actions were in relationship across time and space, and that only an abiding sense of relatedness could be the foundation for building a new global society. Buber sought to provide existential depth to that relatedness, which he also believed to be the basis of ideal community, and by extension, internationalism. Both sought to answer the craving of modern man for a secure home in the universe, a home founded on mutual acceptance and relationship. Despite the renewal of warfare and existential anxiety, the problematic posed by Buber and Mallik has

not disappeared, and their suggestions can form the basis for further investigation and action" (50).

For Buber, "I and Thou" is a dialogical relationship of inter-subjectivity (as opposed to the "I-It" relationship, which is a subject-object relationship) at the heart of interpersonal relationships and of the relationship of "Man" with "God" that forms the basis for a spirituality with the potential to transform human communities from exploitative groups (based on I-It relationships) into more compassionate ones. Buber's ethics thus becomes an ethics of responsibility (made concrete in action and politics) of the Self for the Other and then for society in general. The largest extension of society is the "civilization," hence the reference in the title to an "intercivilizational" dialogue.

In Sondhi's interpretation, Buber's central concern is the moral history and health of western civilization, especially in two of its incarnations: Europe (through Germany) and Palestine (the Jewish and Arab experience). Behind Buber's thinking looms the ultimate exaggeration of the I-It relationship, the Holocaust. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is characterized as an I-It relationship that can only become an I-Thou relationship through dialogue, and through each side recognizing, and respecting, the subjectivity of the other. Peace becomes possible only through the relinquishing of absolutist positions and recognition of the human worth of the opponent. The intra-civilizational conflict playing itself out in Israel is analogous to other international and inter-civilizational conflicts in history.

Mallik approaches the topics of war and peace, ethics, and political philosophy from the perspective of an Indian born and raised in India who came to intellectual and philosophical maturity in Oxford, his "home" for much of his professional life. Mallik's central concept is what he calls "relationism." He departs from the insight that "relatedness is universal, ever present through space and time" and that "there can be no isolated, unrelated beings in the universe" (175). A human being cannot choose not to be related. He is "embedded" in a "relational network" (360-361). It is thus almost inevitable that issues of conflict and power arise. Moreover, at the heart of western logic itself is the issue of conflict; that is, logic progresses by the friction between contraries ('A' and 'not-A'). Everything takes place, Mallik would say, in the "between", between the two poles of an argument, between two people, between a person and the group, between two nations.

For Mallik, the key to avoiding conflict and achieving peace is "abstention," a concept that turns out to be similar to non-action in the Buddhist sense and to pacifism and non-violence in the Gandhian sense. Although that may incline one to consider Mallik a religious thinker, his notion of "abstention" is secular. Mallik does not depend, as Buber does, on divinity as the ground of intersubjective harmony; instead, Mallik depends on the desirability of avoiding conflict and of establishing equality among people. In his mind, his theory is not "spiritual" but "logical".

The ethics of abstention is part of a process that disarms absolutist thinking in the process of peace-making. "Reality" itself, according to Mallik, is "multiple"; it cannot help but be at least "dualistic," representing both positive and negative characteristics (217). Since this is so, it is a mistake to consider "the absolute" as the representation of the one true "Reality". Therefore, any absolutist belief is illusory. Conflicts and tensions are caused by adherence to "absolutes". The recognition of the non-absolute nature of absolutes should make it easy to abstain from acting on the basis of such contradictory notions. But, obviously, as history has repeatedly demonstrated, such an "abstention" is not easy.

Each of the five major chapters of the book explores "relatedness" and the "between" in the disciplines signaled by the chapter titles. While Sondhi cannot place these two thinkers in a dialogue that they did not actually have with each other, she does place in dialogue their thoughts, their theories, their terminology, and their strategies. For Sondhi, the dialogue is "intercivilizational" because both Buber and Mallik think in terms of culture as well as in terms of a personalist psychology. While India and Israel are not directly compared with one another, both countries have internecine conflicts as well as tensions with their neighbors that have flared up into wars in the past and might well again. In every instance, the conflicts and the tensions are caused by the adherence to "absolutes".

Finally, therefore, one must ask the question that haunts the pages of this book and the lives of its two protagonists. What are the real possibilities for peace, any peace? Both Buber and Mallik seem resigned to the realization that peace is merely the interval between wars (383). This may not be what we want to hear, or want to believe about humanity. But it seems to me to be the hard truth. The goal of an irenic world remains elusive, even unreachable and yet, as both Buber and Mallik insist, mankind must attempt to reach it. To present a possible blueprint for that attempt, and the role that the thought of these two philosophers might play in it, is the main *raison d'être* of this lucid and profound book.

Farzana Hassan, *Unveiled: A Canadian Muslim Woman's Struggle Against Misogyny, Sharia and Jihad*
Freedom Press, 2012

Wafa Sultan, *A God Who Hates*
St. Martin's Griffin, 2009

Reviewed by Laina Farhat-Holzman

Aside from endemic dysfunctional governance, the Muslim world's most pressing dysfunction is the treatment of half their populations: women. As some Muslim women living in the western world become educated and freed from the restraints of their Muslim birthplaces, a growing number are speaking out. This is an extremely bold thing to do, considering the murderousness of militant Islamists who kill for any perceived criticism of Islam and its values.

The two women whose books are the subject of this review come from different countries and have followed different paths in the New World. Farzana Hassan is a Pakistani-born professor and newspaper columnist now living in Canada. Wafa Sultan is a Syrian-born psychiatrist, in itself a rare profession for either men or women in the Muslim world.

Farzana Hassan has taken on the task of confronting Canadian Muslims with the misogyny that has taken root among these new immigrants in a country that, while very modern and free, tiptoes around not offending new immigrants. Hassan wants to reform her religion, a religion which she feels still has value. Wafa Sultan, now living in Southern California, has gone through the same process of calling for changes to Islam, but, despite death threats, has taken the dangerous step of rejecting Islam altogether.

The issues that both women criticize in Islam is Sharia Law and the concept of Jihad, issues that have introduced a spate of violence that is roiling the world today. Sharia Law was frozen in the 12th century and has not changed since that time. Jihad has been with Islam from its beginnings in the Arabian Peninsula, a call to war and conquest that prompts today's militant Islamists to continue the struggle against all other religions.

Farzana Hassan notes that while most ordinary Muslims regard Islam as a peaceful faith seeking only a spiritual commitment from its adherents, the Islamists insist that Islam is political with global ambitions and that it seeks to establish its social, moral, economic, and political systems across the globe. Unfortunately for the secularists, the militants are conducting a rampage of death and destruction across the world. Paris has had several tastes of this as I write this review.

Hassan bemoans the trajectory of her native land, Pakistan, in which her upper-class family lived, practicing a hybrid and tolerant sort of Islam, much influenced by British values. Pakistan, however, has been moving step by step into a fundamentalist version of Islam,

bringing death and destruction not only to its own citizens, but to its neighbors, Afghanistan and India. Many fleeing this dysfunction have found new homes in Europe, the US, and Canada. They have, however, brought contentious practices with them: particularly religious and tribal notions of how women are to be controlled.

She notes: "According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, in 2011 alone 675 women and girls were murdered by their family members for allegedly bringing dishonor to their families." 71 of these victims were children under 18.

Her chapter about The Burka Debate is particularly important reading. This garment is not only debasing women, but is currently being used by criminal Islamists in bank robberies and jihad attacks. In December 20111, Canadian Minister of Citizenship Jason Kenney announced that Muslim women would be required to unveil at citizenship ceremonies to affirm gender equality as core Canadian values. (Unfortunately, the new liberal government has reversed this order under the notion that women should be "free" to wear what they like.)

Her final chapter is a warning of how Islamists are trying to change Canada. It requires constant vigilance to oppose them. Women's groups are called upon to fight back and identify calls for "diversity" for what they are: practices eating away at Canadian values of equality and tolerance.

Wafa Sultan has a different battle on her hands: living with the threat of death at any time. She writes: "Most Muslims, if not all of them, will condemn me to death when they read this book. They may not even read it. The title alone may push them to condemn me. That's how things are with them. They don't read, or, if they do, they don't take in what they read. They are much more interested in disagreement than in rapprochement and they are---first and foremost---supremely interested in inducing fear in others with whom they disagree."

She knows whereof she speaks. This book traces her biography from childhood in Syria, teen-aged religiosity (Farzana Hassan went through this phase too), through university education and experience working with doctors whose scorn for women was not hidden. She and her husband fled to the United States, where bit-by-bit she began the process of studying and ultimately rejecting Islam. She is fearless.

At the end of her book, she takes on the issue of should a practicing Muslim become president of the United States, a question that has turned up in the Republican primaries. Her unequivocal view is: "No one can be a true Muslim and a true American simultaneously. Islam is both a religion and a state, and to be a true Muslim you must believe in Islam as both religion and state. A true Muslim does not acknowledge the U.S. Constitution, and his willingness to live under that constitution is, as far as he is concerned, nothing more than an unavoidable step on the way to that constitution's replacement by Islamic Sharia law."

She defends this analysis by quoting the Koran: “Believers, take neither Jews nor Christians for your friends. They are friends with one another. Whoever of you seeks their friendship shall become one of their number. Allah does not guide the wrongdoers.”

She concludes: “And only in America could a girl be born of mixed races, then acquire a new citizenship totally unconnected with her origins. America is the land of dreams---and what’s more, it is the only country where every dream can come true.”

She imagines a future in which her granddaughter could be elected president. She also imagines that at that distant time, muezzins will announce from the minarets of Syria: “Wafa Sultan’s efforts have been crowned with success, and a new god has been born: a God who loves.” En Shallah.

Naohiko Tonomura, *Eight Major Civilizations*. Translated by Jeremy Breaden Tankobon hardcover, 2013

Reviewed by Vlad Alalykin-Izvekov

In his 241-page work the Japanese scholar Naohiko Tonomura distinguishes between "eight major civilizations" which "added their distinct flavor to world history," and the so-called "common civilizations." In order to substantiate his concept, the writer offers an elaborate scholarly apparatus.

The book consists of eight chapters. In the first chapter Prof. Tonomura reviews approaches of some of the classics of comparative civilizations theory such as Danilevsky, Breysig, Spengler, Toynbee, Bagby, Ito, his own approach, and S. Huntington's concept.

In the second chapter the author offers an analysis of the existing criteria to separate "major" civilizations from the other ones. The chapter includes a description of the author's sole criterion, which appears to be a "Procrustean bed" of mandatory requirement for a "major civilization" to progress through a sequence of stages of certain duration.

In the third chapter the author describes evolution of the thus chosen eight "major" civilizations. This review includes them in the following order: Japanese, Chinese, Sumer, Egyptian, Indian, Greco-Roman, Andean, and Western European civilizations.

In the fifth chapter Prof. Tonomura reflects on the so called "common civilizations," and the rest of the book is dedicated to various supporting considerations, for example, the styles of civilizations are described in chapter seven.

While reading the book, the reader may find that the author's definition of a "civilization" is somewhat difficult to come by; however, an attentive reader will eventually derive the notion of a relatively advanced social entity with a distinctive culture.

In the author's view, a "major" civilization is one which has gone through a four-stage progression, each stage spanning four or five centuries 1) a tribal confederation state or parallel tribal states; 2) a unified state or parallel city-states; 3) a "time of disturbance"; 4) a "world-empire."

Needless to say, this teleological concept appears somewhat restrictive. Other criteria, such as, for example, Bagby's benchmark of the degree of cultural borrowing, originality, and influence, Tonomura dismisses on the "hermeneutic" grounds of its relativity. Perhaps that is why when the author asks whether there will ever be another "major" civilization, there is no answer. Indeed, it is not easy to imagine a brand new civilization that would fit the author's exacting and austere specification.

That said, the book is written in a succinct, transparent, and accessible style. The author's approach is fresh and original. The monograph, therefore, may serve as an excellent introduction into the comparative theory of civilizations, with a special accent on Asian civilizations.

Ashok Kumar Malhotra, *Wisdom of the Tao Te Ching: The Code of a Spiritual Warrior.* Second Edition. The Village Printer of Oneonta, NY, 2013

Reviewed by Lynn Rhodes

Ashok Kumar Malhotra has created a beautiful, illustrated, *transcreation* of the original, classic *Tao Te Ching* by the Chinese sage, Lao Tzu, a philosophical and religious Chinese text from around the 6th century BC. Like the original *Tao Te Ching*, Malhotra's *Wisdom of the Tao Te Ching* contains 81 brief chapters or sections. Malhotra has written in a conversational style that is easy to understand. The artwork on each accompanying page illuminates the text of each chapter.

The chapters are very short and the full text can be read through in an hour or two. The *Tao Te Ching* is sometimes known as The Way or The Power of the *Tao* and the *Te*. *Tao* literally means "way" and was known as "the Way" by numerous Chinese philosophers, but had special significance in Taoism. *Te* means "virtue," "personal character," "inner strength" or "integrity," with implications of "divine power." *Ching* means "canon," "great book," or "classic." Hence, the *Tao Te Ching* is often described as "The Classic of the Way's Virtues."

Malhotra takes the challenge of transcreating the *Tao Te Ching* by grappling with the ineffability of the original text itself. In other words, he dares to illuminate or transcreate ideas that are often considered to be beyond expressed or spoken words or language itself. From my perspective, i.e. without knowing the original Chinese language, and relying only on English translations, Malhotra adapts and moves an artistic message from one language to another with ease.

When Malhotra opens the first chapter in his book with: "*Words that describe the Tao, do not capture the real Tao; Names that represent Tao, do not express the eternal Tao,*" it is not meant as a literal translation. But it captures the essential meaning of the original first two lines.

A literal translation says:

> *The Tao that can be spoken is not the eternal Tao*
> *The name that can be named is not the eternal name*
> The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth
> The named is the mother of myriad things
> Thus, constantly without desire, one observes its essence
> Constantly with desire, one observes its manifestations
> These two emerge together but differ in name
> The unity is said to be the mystery
> Mystery of mysteries, the door to all wonders

The Chinese text of the *Tao Te Ching* uses only numbers for titles of each chapter. Malhotra provides a theme title for each chapter that delightfully sets the stage for deep engagement of the poetic prose that follows. Each chapter's theme is poetic in itself. *The Great Mother; Highest Good is Like Water; Usefulness of Emptiness; Sense Versus Inner Vision; Evil of Weapons; By Doing Nothing, Everything is Done; Government and People (particularly apt today);* are but a few.

It is difficult to select a favorite. When turning from chapter to chapter, one is immersed in a completely new and whole sense of being and timeless thought. I open the book randomly, to chapter 27 titled *Wondrous Secret:*

> A skillful traveler leaves no traces.
> A good speaker speaks without any flaws.
> An excellent reckoner needs no aids.
> An expert door hanger requires no bolts.
> And a good binder needs no threads.
> Thus, a sage helps all people without discrimination
> and resolves problems without turning away from them.
> This ability of the sage is called "insightful wisdom."
> The sage is the teacher of the un-sage-like person and the
> un-sage-like person is the subject-matter for the sage.
> One who does not respect one's teacher or the teaching,
> though is learned, has gone astray.
> This is a "wondrous secret."

While Malhotra cannot take credit, nor has he attempted to, for the original lessons of the *Tao Te Ching,* he deserves full credit for delivering a spiritually robust, poetic transcreation that provides scholars, students and philosophers, heightened insight into the profound lessons described by Lao Tzu. Malhotra's work is also strengthened by his command of Daoism, without which the transcreation would simply fall flat.

I recommend this book.

G. Reginald Daniel, *Machado de Assis*: *Multiracial Identity and the Brazilian Novelist*
University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2012

Reviewed by Pedro Geiger

The long and excellent book by Reginald Daniel, *Machado de Assis*, of 338 pages, focuses on two related issues. One deals with racial questions in the USA and in Brazil, detailing their historical development.

Racial problems were established in both countries by the encounter of the European colonization with the prior Colombian population and by the colonial introducing of African slaves in the American continent. The book deals with the behavior and the perceptions of the racial issue by the different social sectors of the American and of the Brazilian societies, and with the evolution of the legal policy measures taken by both states in regard to it. Brazil has earned the reputation of being a racial democracy for the reason of not having had legalized social barriers based in race. However, discrimination among sectors of the population existed and still exists there.

The opportunity of dealing with racial questions was taken by the author to cover with accurate studies the full Brazilian history. Based on a large and good bibliography, he discusses a wide variety of themes, comparing interpretations of known Brazilian historians, like the ones made by the Marxian Caio Prado Júnior with the ones made by the Weberian Raymundo Faoro, or describing cultural traits brought by the slaves (like their religions), how they influenced Brazilian culture, and how they were treated by the government institutions.

The second theme of the book deals with the Brazilian novelist Machado de Assis (1839-1908) an icon of Brazil´s literature and the founder of the Brazilian Academy of Letters. The linkage between the two themes treated in the book is the fact that, like Reginald Daniel, Machado de Assis had an African ancestry.

On both themes Reginald Daniel presents a vast number of references via a very long bibliographical list, which includes a large number of Brazilianists and Brazilian authors. The descriptions of the steps following the introduction of slavery in the Americas, their economic development, and the construction of a racial order in both countries are illustrated by much statistical data. These racial orders, which also encompassed the Pre-Columbian populations, established complete racial rules, as for family linkages or for participation in work.

The author details the American principle of the “one-drop rule” and emphasizes the “more attenuated dichotomization of blackness and whiteness” in Latin America and in Brazil. The result of this fluidity in Brazil brought an order of racial layers based on color blending, distinguishing whites, mulattos (*mulatos)* and Negroes. During Brazilian history, mulattos were even used to catch and return fugitive slaves.

This order, which established a racial scale in which one saw the development of racial prejudices from mulattos against blacks, helped the introduction of class and cultural values, over ancestry, as defining the racial status of an individual in Brazil. It gave rise to the belief that, after the Abolition, Brazil turned into a racial democracy.

In Brazil, during the Colonial Era, at some moments, the number of African slaves was higher than the number of the white population. The census conducted in 1890, after the beginning of a wave of European migration, still indicated a majority of African Brazilians, of about 56%. During the last quarter of the 19th Century, the Brazilian Empire adopted a policy of whitening the country. Adding its financial sources to the attraction exercised by the expansion of agricultural commodities for export, the State played an important role in the European colonization of the, then, provinces, of São Paulo and others in the South of Brazil.

The movement against any kind of discrimination is currently very strong in Brazil as in the United States, but a look at Brazilian society shows that, in correlation with their lower economic development, people of color made less advances in the social hierarchy. A lower percentage of colored people appear in the media, the arts and the politics.

The book´s examination of Machado de Assis' personality covers two main fields. One has to do with interpreting Machado´s political positions in relation to slavery and the Brazilian Abolition movement. The other has to do with the meaning of the contents of his novels and stories, and with their aesthetics.

Reginald Daniel presents the debates within the Brazilian literature about the definition of Machado de Assis' racial identity; about his behavior in relation to it and to the racial issue; and about how these debates were used in the general Brazilian political debates on the racial problem. He reproduces a portion of a press article after Machado´s death saying that "early criticism nurtured the belief [of] his indifference to the plight of African Brazilians and the cause of Abolition." Daniel states "Machado refrained from explicit discussion of slavery, racial discrimination, Afro Brazilian themes in general and the mulatto experience in particular" (181).

However one has to consider some of Machado´s ideological and political thoughts and positions. On the one hand, Machado realized the importance of the *significant* in face of the *signification*: that it is the form that defines art, not the content of its work. In 1866 he wrote in the newspaper *Diário do Rio* "our intentions are to see cultivated by Brazilian muses literary novels that unify the state of human passions and feelings with the original and delicate touch of poetry." This observation shows how he was committed to the future of Brazil´s development.

On the other hand, in the middle of the euphoria related to the Abolition, Machado previewed new social inequalities. He made his character, Paulo, in the novel *Esaú and Jacó*, declare: "now that the blacks are free it remains for us to free the whites." In this

novel he criticizes the beginnings, in Brazil, of financial speculation movements, the frenzy of the *encilhamento,* a Brazilian name of a financial game at the beginnings of the Twentieth Century which culminated in a deep crisis. In another novel, *Brás Cubas*, he observes the ascendant urban class starting to employ white servants for their homes. In *Iaiá Garcia* he presents preoccupations with the slave's fate after being freed.

Actually, what makes Machado de Assis an extraordinary figure is the commitment he made to the future, a commitment recognized by Reginald Daniel. In a country then mostly rural, with an economy based on the export of agricultural products, in large part produced by slave arms, Machado turned his eyes to Brazil´s economic social transformations, to the beginning of an urban development and ascension of an urban bourgeoisie; an evolution that would contribute to the fight against traditional social prejudices, but which would bring new social inequalities.

This behavior of Machado de Assis can help to explain his relative distance from the issues of slavery and race, both born in the rural agricultural mercantile Brazil. He turns to the new relationships in the city, of the patrons with their free clients, or dependents, the *agregados*, or with their adopted kin, the *afilhados*. The inclination of Machado de Assis to deal with the conflict "between individual morality (or conscience) and the dictates of public success premised on egoism, ambition…" is a proof of Machado´s electing the beginnings of the building of capitalism in Brazil as a priority subject.

Chapter Five of the book presents summaries of Machado´s main novels, *Iaiá Garcia*, 1878, *Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*, 1881, *Quincas Borba*, 1891 and *Esaú e Jacó*, 1904. A look at those novels shows that masters and dependent people appear in all of them, slaves or white servants; as well, in all, the sufferings inflicted on the lower social layers are always present. Therefore, opinions about Machado de Assis' political positions did change over time, in his favor, finding that he did explore the racial question, even if not in a very explicit way.

In regard to aesthetics, Machado de Assis' literary writings show two phases: a first one related to French Romanticism and a second one linked to French Realism-Naturalism. In the *Epilogue* of the book is presented a statement by John Barth: "Located in the late nineteenth and the early Twentieth Century, Machado´s 'both/neither' perspective which views black and white as inherently relative and interacting extremes on a continuum of grays, displays (…) a clear affinity with the postmodern sensibility."

In summary, Reginald Daniel's book, *Machado de Assis*, is a very important and deep contribution to a complete view of Brazil ´s history, and to the knowledge of who Machado de Assis was, in his life and literary production, and his place in Brazil´s culture.

Keith Muscutt, *Warriors Of The Clouds: A Lost Civilization in the Upper Amazon of Peru*
University of New Mexico Press, 1998

Reviewed by Michael Andregg

Dr. Muscutt fell in love with the Chachapoya of the northern Andes Mountains of Peru, sometimes called the "Cloud People." So he visited the area almost every year for over 20, documenting significant architectural ruins of what he came to believe was a civilization distinct from the Incans who had conquered them shortly before smallpox and other diseases spreading ahead of the Spanish invaders wiped out many of both of these peoples in the mid-1500's. Muscutt writes that the "last indigenous Chachapoya leader of any importance," a man named "Guaman," died in 1551.

Muscutt documents this over eight chapters that start with describing Kuelap, the largest city and "Citadel of the Chachapoya," a description of early Andean Civilizations in general and how they interacted, detailed exploration of the Chachapoya ruins that have been discovered in the modern era, a comparison with modern communities still living there, and commentary supporting Muscutt's claim that this otherwise relatively small group of mid-highland Andean peoples deserves the title of "civilization."

Here he runs into a perennial problem for civilizationalists, our lack of any consensus definition of what qualities are required for that august designation. Most agree that the presence of cities is essential, and that at least some monumental architecture typically exists. But others have many other criteria, and Dr. Muscutt selects one of the broader definitions in his preface where he declares that "civilization is community." That is a sweet definition philosophically, but minimalist, and would result in thousands of ancient communities being considered to be civilizations. We even see scores of modern groups, called "intentional communities" that might qualify that way. Many other scholars want scale, as in LARGE like the Egyptians, Chinese, Greeks and Romans, etc. and duration, as in existed for some centuries at least as a dominant group.

A true scholar, Dr. Muscutt chose to write his opus to the Chachapoya in extremely clear and lucid prose, purposefully stripped of most of the jargon of academic archeology to make it more accessible to general educated readers. But he also does some classical anthropology, and cites most of the others who have ever studied this small group and area. He also includes many photographs that show so much that words cannot (this book has many pictures, diagrams and illustrations of anthropological findings, as well as a good bibliography).

So I enjoyed his book greatly even though I am not convinced that the Chachapoya deserve that civilization title. And I learned a great deal, enough to seek a meeting with Dr. Muscutt himself, recently retired as a VP of classical arts at the University of Santa Cruz, California, USA. Muscutt remains passionate about the people he has come to love and committed to his thesis.

So, for general education about this sliver of the millions of Andean people who developed many things over centuries before being decimated by the conquistadores, his book is an excellent and relatively easy read. But for scholars trying to connect to the mainstream of Latin American research, Muscutt's book would be of interest but an eddy on the side of current research.