

pation: each novel is a genuinely new departure, often devastatingly sharp in its critique of men and women, yet always, in the final analysis, *fair*.

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Saros Cowasjee. *Studies in Indian and Anglo-Indian Fiction*. New Delhi: Indus-Harper Collins, 1993. pp. 178.

Saros Cowasjee's fiction and scholarly research record his perspectives on Indian and Anglo-Indian literature from his location as a member of the Indian diaspora. This most recent collection includes conference papers, articles, and essays written between 1975 and 1990. In the brief author's note, Cowasjee explains that his goal is to preserve attention to works that are significant, for various reasons, to the literary record of Indian independence. Many passages in the collection demonstrate Cowasjee's long-standing interest in the fiction of his friend Mulk Raj Anand; Cowasjee's insight into the man and his work is particularly evident in the essays on Anand's *Coolie* and *Private Life of an Indian Prince*. Some of the other texts examined are *The Hill of Devi* by E. M. Forster, *The Princes* by Manohar Malgonkar, *The Rape* by Raj Gill, *Twice Born Twice Dead* by Kartar Singh Duggal, *There and Then* by Christine Weston, and Cowasjee's own *Goodbye to Elsa*. Without Cowasjee's focussed attention, a number of the earlier texts stand in danger of slipping from view.

The opening essay on the princes in Indian fiction provides a roster of British and Indian accounts of an occasionally opulent way of life now almost vanished from Indian society. Critical of the often-romantic presentation of Indian princes in British literature, whose colonial agenda reads this apparently monarchal residue more favourably than he feels it deserves, Cowasjee reviews the texts in and out of print and identifies those he deems to be the most historically accurate and artistically successful. This desire for a marriage of artistry and historical veracity reverberates throughout the collection as its primary critical focus.

One of the results of this approach is that current postcolonial and feminist interrogations of the political freight of literary works and their criticisms are sometimes sidestepped, producing commentaries that occasionally will draw fire. For example, Cowasjee seems to assume in the second essay that all exiled writers are men, despite his discussion in a subsequent chapter of women writers of the Raj. Although he mentions the Indian writer's affinity for exile, often due to an English education, he does not necessarily offer a politicized problematization of this linguistic residue of the colonial experience. Sometimes this perspective works to provide a counter-interrogation of postcolonial critical and teaching practices. For example, he recalls being able to elicit from students a more powerful attraction to Mulk

Raj Anand's *Untouchable* by emphasizing the staggering statistical significance of the hardships suffered by the text's protagonist as representative of his caste. While Cowasjee's analysis values the social significance of such texts, it laments the reduction of any literary work to such quantitative and socially focussed concerns, implying that reliance on such a response may re-create a missionary-like rescuer fantasy that fails to appreciate the cultural and artistic value of the text. He aptly points out the dearth in North American classrooms of information about India; as a result, students often expect studies in Indian literature to provide documentary information rather than an appreciation of literary craft.

Cowasjee wants to privilege texts for their historical veracity and thereby produce what amounts to a canon of texts answering the needs of such students. At the same time, however, he wants to foster critical appreciation. His chapter on "The Partition" is, in part, an example of this particular focus; it contains a helpful footnote listing significant texts appearing since the essay's presentation in Suva, Fiji, in January 1980. This chapter, which identifies the moment of the partition as a holocaust, remains compelling in its articulation of the need for continued literary attention to this critical period in the development of postcolonial India and Pakistan.

*Studies in Indian and Anglo-Indian Fiction* provides plot summaries and reviews of several of the works it examines, with a final section devoted to Anglo-Indian novels—J. R. Ackerley's *Hindu Holiday*, Dennis Kincaid's *Durbar*, Christine Weston's *Indigo*, Philip Mason's *The Wild Sweet Witch*, Edmund Candler's *Siri Ram—Revolutionist*, and Sir George Otto Trevelyan's *The Competition Wallah*. The essay on "Sahibs and Natives" offers a significant analysis of the British colonial reading of self through the experience of the imperialist encounter with India, while the essay on the partition explores the internal politics and profound wrenching of community that occurred for the primary religious communities involved.

One of the most interesting and occasionally puzzling aspects of this collection lies in its effort to exemplify an even-handed reading of both British and Indian culture and politics. This desire occasionally leads Cowasjee to make claims for the absolute justice or injustice of particular portrayals or even to privilege what he considers to be British or European standards for evaluating the literature and culture he ostensibly seeks to illuminate and promote. The collection is most successful where it observes and articulates Indian and British readings of self and other in historical context. Throughout, it is enlivened by Cowasjee's creative wit and talent for imagery. *Studies in Indian and Anglo-Indian Fiction* thus offers a summary overview of Cowasjee's scholarly achievements, making his provocative insights accessible in a single volume.

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