

Also, there is insufficient attention paid to the material and institutional power asymmetries between countries, not only between the United States and South Korea, but also between the United States and North Korea, and South Korea and North Korea. Very real material differences influence how and under what conditions disagreements can be resolved between nations, including the absence of a peace treaty between the United States and North Korea and the size and growth of U.S. military power and reach, especially in the context of the “war on terror.”

Nevertheless, the book is a significant contribution to existing social science research on contemporary Korea. It is written in a clear and accessible manner and it will be a useful addition to undergraduate and graduate courses about Korean politics and politics in Asia, more generally. It will also be a valuable text to assign in courses about U.S. geopolitics and comparative politics and courses in sociology and political science with a topical focus on East Asia or a methodological focus on media content analysis.

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SOUTH ASIA

South Asian Texts in History: Critical Engagements with Sheldon Pollock.
 Edited by YIGAL BRONNER, WHITNEY COX, and LAWRENCE J. MCCREA. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Association for Asian Studies, 2011. xix, 403 pp. \$35.00 (paper).
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This volume of tribute to Sheldon Pollock, by general acclamation the most influential and game-changing Sanskritist of the last fifty years (at least in the United States), grew out of a conference at Columbia University (Pollock’s present institutional home) in 2008, organized by several of Pollock’s students at the University of Chicago, where he was for many years a professor of Sanskrit. The editors were all his students, as were fourteen of the sixteen contributors. Among the greatest tributes to Professor Pollock is that so many of his students turned out to be so good, as the present volume amply testifies. Among their strengths is that they have learned to critically examine the Sanskrit and vernacular texts in hitherto unexamined sociopolitical and material contexts. In addition, however, they often challenge Pollock’s conclusions, even as they adhere closely to his overall methodology.

The volume is divided into five distinct areas that have been of abiding concern to Pollock: the *Rāmāyana*; the literary culture of classical Sanskrit

poetry (*kāvya*); the assertion and development of vernacular literature and cultures within the Sanskrit cosmopolis; the presuppositions of Sanskrit textual practices and knowledge systems (*śāstra*); and the fate of Sanskrit on the eve of colonialism, when it experienced a tremendous upsurge in interdisciplinary vitality just as it was fading as the primary language of literary communication.

The first section has three papers. The first, by Ajay Rao, examines not just the role of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in early Hindu-Muslim contestation, explored by Pollock, but also its role in sectarian Hindu contestation. He locates evidence for this in the Vijayanagara empire and posits that the rise of a Rāma cult there, testified most grandly by the great Rāmacandra temple there, is due to a great extent to the “integration of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story into Śraivaishṇava temples” (p. 37) as a result of Rāma’s general rise to power and the proximity of the then ascendant Śrīvaiṣṇava power base in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Yigal Bronner addresses the efforts of Appayya Dīkṣita to valorize the role of Śiva in the *Rāmāyaṇa* in his discussion of the death of Jayāyus, the vulture king and only witness to the abduction of Sītā. Rāma has “fallen victim to a sophisticated global crime syndicate” (p. 55), replete with hit men and silenced witnesses. All of this feeds into the ambiguity of Rāma’s humanity and divinity, a much discussed topic, including by Pollock. Robert Goldman’s contribution (clearly he was not Pollock’s student) also addresses *Rāmāyaṇa* interpretation, in this case concluding, after an important discussion of levels of reception of the text, that the commentators bring to their project a vast arsenal of learning and come to very different conclusions, even if they do not disagree about the divinity of Rāma. This, Goldman observes, is part of a long history of criticism regarding the epic that continues into the modern world.

Part 2 addresses issues surrounding Pollock’s notion of the Sanskrit cosmopolis. The three papers in this section, by Xi He, Sudipta Kaviraj, and Jesse Ross Knutson, examine aspects of the *Lalitavistara*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Gītāgovinda*, respectively. He shows how the descriptions (*varṇaka*) in the *Lalitavistara*, a Mahāyāna prose epic, prefigure later texts in the development of prose stylistics in both their semantics and syntax. This study represents a departure in the study of this important text, which has so far been studied only because of its religious content. Kaviraj, a senior scholar known for his work in Indian intellectual and political history, speculates that the *Mahābhārata* was subjected to reanalysis by the well-known Śaiva scholars of ninth- and tenth-century Kashmir, Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta. What they reinscribed into their work was a ninth *rasa* or mood that is experienced by the reader or listener. This is one more than the usual eight and is called *śānta*, the mood of quiescence. It was developed, says Kaviraj, in order to account for the unrelenting despair that one experiences from reading the *Mahābhārata*. Knutson looks at the *Gītāgovinda* not as a religious text, but as the literary product of the Bengal Sena court, in which Jayadeva, the author, was exposed to, and adopted, Prakrit metrical forms. Further, and importantly, Knutson sees the text itself as primarily a poetic reading of the local polity and the Muslim invasions of the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Part 3 contains three essays. The first, by Blake Wentworth, tests the limits of Pollock's theory of the modernization of literary cultures in India through the reciprocating historical processes of cosmopolitanism and vernacularization. Because of the antiquity of Tamil literature and the mutual development of this literature with Śaivism, Wentworth sees a nexus of language, ethnicity, and religion that antedates Pollock's understanding of this phenomenon. Whitney Cox does not examine a vernacular literature or language in its relationship with Sanskrit, but "the southern reception and adaptation of Kashmir's Sanskrit culture" (p. 178). Thus he addresses the Sanskrit cosmopolis and its dispersion among regional cultures. Cox traces the dissemination of certain key Sanskrit texts to the south, the contact that these texts had with learned communities that possessed vernacular texts, and how these texts were in part reconceptualized in Sanskrit and again traveled back to the north. This is an excellent example of the processes through which the Sanskrit and vernacular ideas and literary forms influenced each other and recombined into a literary cosmopolis. Allison Busch examines how Pollock's method of locating the beginnings of vernacular literatures may not be completely realizable in the case of Hindi, because of its multilocality, in its forms of Avadhi and Brajbhāṣā. Busch shows that Avadhi is a noncosmopolitan vernacular because its origins are partially due to Sufi poetry, while Brajbhāṣā fits Pollock's model more closely because of its more thorough engagement with the Sanskrit tradition. Pollock's model of the process of literary vernacularization is not constructed to account for a power base as important as the Indo-Persian one, which stands beyond the pale of the Sanskrit cosmopolis.

Part 4 includes three essays, by Lawrence McCrea, Dan Arnold, and Guy Leavitt. McCrea examines Pollock's theorization of the usefulness of the idea of the ubiquity of *śāstra* as transcendent, posited in the theology of the Pūrvamīmāṃsā. McCrea specifically looks at poetics as a body of knowledge (*alamkāraśāstra*) and shows that because of its derivative character it presents a challenge to Pollock's notions of knowledge as ahistorical, that theory invariably precedes practice, and that because of the perfection of its origins it can never progress beyond its beginnings. Arnold examines the Buddhist-Mīmāṃsaka debate, pitting the self-authorizing character that orthodoxy confers on discourse against the Buddhists' arguments about the conventional character of meaning. Parallels may be found in contemporary discourse relating to Chomsky's ideas about the preexistence of syntactic structures and Bourdieu's notions of the naturalness of action. Leavitt questions certain aspects of Pollock's observation that as Sanskrit literature became an isolated engine that drove little more than itself, its "interests in philosophy and theology came at the expense of the social-moral dimension of literature" (p. 269). However, Leavitt discusses the two components in poetics called suggestion (*dhvani*) and erroneous cognition (*rasābhāsa*) to show that Abhinavagupta actually did ground his aesthetics in "a self-consciously moral emotive response" (p. 280).

The fifth part includes four essays, by Parimal Patil, Ethan Kroll, Ananya Vajpeyi, and Rajeev Kinra. Patil problematized Pollock's assertion that by 1800 innovations in *śāstra* should have come to an end by examining several scholars

who flourished after that date who did indeed present new material, in Nyāya and Vedānta. Kroll similarly demonstrates that seventeenth-century indigenous legal theorists were able to use ostensibly conflicting notions of inheritance of two twelfth-century legal theorists, Vijñāneśvara and Jīmūtavāhana, in order to work out an improved legal code. Vajpeyi looks at the rise of serious brahmanical scholarship on the character of the *śūdra*, examining several texts of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries. These texts, in turn, shed light on the nature of grief and the debates involving social position and the authority of brahmins in the Upaniṣads. Kinra departs from the preceding papers by looking at Indo-Persian literature and scholarship, particularly lexicography, from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, in order to determine how these texts employed categories that were used in other discursive areas and how this also prepared Persian and Urdu speakers to play a role in the British empire.

These uniformly excellent essays demonstrate the diversity of Pollock's strategies for the practice of Indic scholarship. The bar, we can say, has been decisively raised. Indology can no longer be decontextualized or treated as ahistorical. Nevertheless, one thing is curiously missing from this very high-level volume: a response by Sheldon Pollock himself. Perhaps his students and peers speak for him well in a volume that should confer on him considerable pride.

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Global Icons: Apertures to the Popular. By BISHNUPRIYA GHOSH. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011. xiii, 383 pp. \$94.95 (cloth); \$25.95 (paper).

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In *Global Icons: Apertures to the Popular*, Bishnupriya Ghosh investigates the ways in which iconic images come to represent global aspirations. Ghosh sees icons as important sites of mediated communication and contestation, and rightfully wants icons to be a field of inquiry within her discipline of media studies. In making this case, she attempts to renew and reinvigorate a materialist theory of the icon informed by feminist theory. She understands an icon to be a “sensation provoking art object that ever enfolds the subject into its form” (p. 8). Icons, she tells us, because of their repetitive circulation, serve to link individual subjects to global social networks with shared aspirations. But these aspirations are plural, and icons “cannot represent only one aspiration” (p. 256). Ghosh focuses upon the controversies and contests that surround the ways in which different publics appropriate icons to represent their own aspirations.

She applies her perspective to interpret the “bio-icons” of Mother Teresa, Phoolan Devi, and Arundhati Roy—the iconic “saint,” “outlaw,” and “activist.” These women have become iconic “star images,” where particular visual