

covery of Indian literature by Europe are considered, and the history of Indo-logical research is outlined.

A bulky volume within the limitations imposed by the series format, this literary history summarizes the state of present knowledge. All parts are well provided with bibliographical notes, allowing both the non-academic reader and the specialist student access to further reading: editions and translations are listed as well as the more important studies. Obviously, these notes cannot aim at completeness and reflect the personal choice of the author. While one can hardly quarrel with the importance of the references given, one must regret at times the non-inclusion of others. One may also differ from some comments and judgements - this is inevitable, but cannot detract from the high quality and readability of this history, which succeeds admirably in providing an up to date introduction to the rich heritage of classical Indian literature, and deserves wholehearted recommendation.

Hartmut-Ortwin Feistel

Neue Indische Bibliothek (NIB). Sammlung von Direktübersetzungen aus den Literaturen Südasiens. Herausgeber Lothar Lutze. Freiburg i. Br.: Verlag Wolf Mersch.

Band 1 (1983): Der Ochsenkarren. Hindilyrik der siebziger und achtziger Jahre. Zusammengestellt von Vishnu Khare und Lothar Lutze. Übersetzt von Lothar Lutze. 124 pages, DM 16.-

Band 2 (1983): Phanishwarnath 'Renu', Pfauentanz. Dorfgeschichten aus Bihar. Aus dem Hindi von Hedy Sadoc und Lothar Lutze. 78 pages, DM 16.-

Band 3 (1984): Arun Kolatkar, Jejuri. Gedichtzyklus. Englisch und Deutsch. Aus dem englischen Original übersetzt von Giovanni Bandini. 131 pages, DM 20.-

Good things take time. Lothar Lutze published a first article in Vol. I of our journal (1970, 585-594); it was a literary portrait of an Indian author, Kailash Vajpeyi. One year later he wrote an essay on the sociology of literature and its relationship to communication theory (Vol. II, 515-523); this was an early attempt to explain the relevance that poetic "fiction" has to correct our socio-"scientific" images of Third World societies. As editor of a "New Indian Library" (Neue Indische Bibliothek) Lothar Lutze has now found the adequate forum for sharing with a wider (German speaking) audience his (not only literary) concerns regarding things South Asian. (The NIB is intended to include contemporary literature from the whole sub-continent.) In his editorial he explains the crucial role that modern (of course not only written!) lit-

erature has come to play in South Asia (and not only there). It is an important and most probably the main medium through which post-colonial societies are trying to define a new identity. For us as outsiders it might therefore function as a magic key that unlocks the hidden layers of South Asian people's mental palimpsest?

Having lived for altogether some four years in South Asian countries I have come to the (personal) conclusion that as a social scientist I cannot get deeper than I have so far in my attempts to understand and explain what I have seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched and mentally felt among its people. And how superficial are these explanations! Therefore I have indeed been looking forward to some project like that which Lothar Lutze and Wolfgang Mersch are trying to realize now, namely to translate and publish for us authentic "views from within" which we as outsiders can use to expand and correct our superficial perspectives.

A first glance through the three booklets published so far is certainly reassuring. Most of the moods expressed in the poems of volume one and three, and most of the scenes and problems described in the three village-stories (Bihar) of volume two seem familiar, but at the same time they decipher facets of Indian life and its self-interpretation of which I was unaware when I was exposed to similar situations. So I seem to be able to realize messages that had been hidden in the garbage of my self-centered observations. But can I go beyond this storage of my own sub-consciousness, can "the authors from the region" reveal to me new insights?

And what about those readers who have no experience of South Asia at all? Will, except for the names, Renu's stories (Vol. II) about village life in northern Bihar not sound rather "Russian" for an average German reader, i.e. relate to what he has "learned" about social conditions in Tsarist Russia from this country's great classics? I maintain that it is virtually impossible to "translate" the vernacular of a North Indian village into standard German - no matter how hard we try. The ironic wittiness of the actors of an illiterate and therefore very expressive society in which face-to-face relationships and corresponding performance still matter must get lost. "Mataji" for instance is certainly not "Mütterchen" - though I would not know how better to translate this phrase and all its vibrations. And who, if he has never heard North India's village-women calling each other over long field-distances, can realize the special connotations of "Phulpatti reeee!"?

Or take for instance Arun Kolatkar's penetrating description of facets of the scenery of a railway-station near Jejuri and the road leading towards it. (Vol. III, pp. 53). You imagine you have experienced similar views and related feelings for/against a totally unrealistic time-table, the notorious station dog, a greasy tea-stall, and an unconcerned stationmaster time and again - be it in Patna or in Madurai, in Pathankot or in Londa. It is only when you read Günther D. Sontheimer's short yet very telling comments that the disillusioning feeling of "understanding" fades away: you suddenly begin to suspect how much you must miss since you can never dream of having the same mental background

as the author was able to relate to when he wrote - and he certainly did not write for you! But this is of course a general problem of verbal interaction that goes beyond the "Neue Indische Bibliothek" and its attempts at inter-cultural communication. "We have the atmosphere that you have in mind" is the warning that greets the visitor to the main building of the "Island Hermitage" in Polgasduwa lake in Sri Lanka.

The publisher has promised to bring out four books per annum, a very ambitious target indeed. Let us hope that he and the editor are able to fulfill it; and let us for the time being imagine that the NIB will help us to come closer to South Asian realities as they are experienced by all those who re-create them through daily acts of personally meaningful behaviour.

The next titles to be brought out in autumn 1984 are:

Keshav Meshram, *Jatayu. Zwei Erzählungen, aus dem Marathi übertragen und mit Erläuterungen versehen von Günther D. Sontheimer.*
 Biharilal, *Liebesgedichte. Eine Auswahl aus der Satsai. Aus der Braj-bhasha übersetzt von Lothar Lutze.*

Detlef Kantowsky

JOACHIM BETZ: *Wirtschafts- und Entwicklungspolitik in Sri Lanka seit 1977.* (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde, Nr. 129). Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1982. 108 pages, DM 18.-

The author of this little study on 'Sri Lanka's Economic and Development Policies since 1977' is a political scientist by training. He completed his manuscript around 1981, i.e. it would be unfair to judge his work by the most recent developments on the 'Island of Righteousness', as Sri Lanka's Sinhalese politicians like to describe 'their' country. Yet even so one wonders why a political scientist dealt with the socio-cultural context, in (or against?) which any development policy has to be implemented only in the most general way. The reader is led to believe that Sri Lanka is a kind of neutral and value-free laboratory for testing liberal policies.

Joachim Betz's aim was to evaluate ex post the fact that four years after the UNDP came to power (1977) and opened the country to foreign investors and consumer goods, its economy has become entirely dependent upon foreign aid (p. 13). He looks for the answers within the frame of reference of liberal economics, since he believes that an export-oriented country like Sri Lanka has no alternative but to adhere to the rules of that game. Accordingly he looks into the traditional export sector to find out whether there is some hope that it might regain its colonial strength; he then discusses the performance of the modern export industries and compares both these sectors with the import bills that have been piling up. Then comes the government sector and its ambitious projects, i.e. among others the Free Trade Zone, the Mahaweli Irrigation Scheme, the Housing and Urban Renewal Project and other minor