

ain on the social status and electoral strength of the Indian diaspora as a whole, and the political polarization of the Indian community; the restrictive Indian foreign investment policy, and the decline of British aid to India. Although there are further interesting chapters ("British Aid to India", "Trade, Investment and Technology Transfer", and "The Role of the Media"), it is basically the evidence presented in the chapter on the Indian diaspora in Britain that explains why Indo-British relations have a very high profile in some respects, even though they are weak in regard to trading, economic and political links. Malik acknowledges the 'thinness' of Indo-British relations in the international sphere, but argues that 'thick' relations still prevail "due to history, language and other informal linkages" (p.234). As Malik ably shows, the role of the Indian diaspora in Britain is pivotal in regard to the latter. He concludes his assessment of the Indo-British relationship on a positive note, pointing out that "cultural interactions at popular points of contact played a vital role in developing binding links in the context of otherwise thin relations" (p.264). However, he is also well aware of an important change: "from an anglophone India to one where US influences are now all pervasive" (p.267). He aptly rounds off his analysis with a final quote from the commemorative issue, "India - The Golden Jubilee", of the British quarterly *Granta*: "Perhaps for the first time, an averagely prosperous western visitor can feel poor here, at least in parts of Delhi and Mumbai. Certainly, he can no longer think himself as an advance party for changing tastes of the west. These have already reached here from California, without stopovers in Europe. America is the model now, slowly, inevitably, the old Anglo-Indian upper class, the anglophone India which had such an attractive gentleness - voice courtesy of the BBC, pipes by Dunhill, politics from the Fabian Society - is retreating towards its pyre. An MBA from Harvard is worth three BAs (Oxon)."

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CHRISTIANE BROSIUS, MELISSA BUTCHER (eds.), *Image Journeys: Audio-visual Media and Cultural Change in India*. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London 1999: Sage Publications, 1999. 336 pages, Rs 450.00 (Hb), ISBN 0-7619-9325-8; Rs 250.00 (Pb), ISBN 0-7619-9326-6

Almost ten years ago, India was confronted with tremendous change in its media landscape. In 1991, with the rise of satellite broadcasting, foreign, mostly transnational television channels started to be on the air in the country. This caused a lively national debate: not only about role and content of conventional as well as of newly emerging forms of audio-visual media, but also about the influence of the latter on India's culture and self-understanding. In their volume *Image Journeys: Audio-visual Media and Cultural Change in India*, Melissa Butcher and Christiane Brosius have compiled ten articles which, taken together, try to shed light on the most important of the very diverse aspects which are relevant to these processes and debate. Bringing together authors from academia and media production alike, the book covers topics as broad as media impact, identity formation, political iconography and political action.

Criticizing the rather simplistic model of communication put forward by Direct Impact theory, which holds that a sender passes a seemingly clear message to an otherwise passive receiver (p. 15), a model which has until recently dominated discussion on media impact in India, the authors shift theoretical ground. Focusing on very different aspects of television or cinema in India, they all share the view that agency should be attributed to the receivers as well: "When interrogation of media practices begins, questions on the nature of production and dissemination of images and narratives, audience choice and interaction arise. This activity, located in a context which is marked and changed by a variety of global and local practices, by physical mobility (e.g. migration) and by communication (e.g. audio-visual media), can be described as *agency*" (p. 12), according to the editors in their introduction. And they continue: "As we examine the agency of audiences in the consumption of audio-visual media, it is always with the notion of limitations and constraints upon audience choice. However, there is evidence that cultural messages, including transnational imagery, are differentially received and interpreted by audiences in a variety of ways" (p. 15). What this could look like is demonstrated by Melissa Butcher in her chapter "Parallel Texts: The Body and Television in India". Focusing on the reception of Ruby Bhatia-Bali, a former Miss India-Canada who came to India in order to work for Rupert Murdoch's STAR TV-owned satellite music Channel[V], and who, with her "international look" (p. 174), not only hosted shows but served to represent this channel which "perceived itself as a reflection of the in-between-ness of being neither East nor West, modern nor traditional in academic definitions of the terms" (p. 170), Butcher intends to demonstrate that "it is through discussion of television software, that behaviour and values can be transmitted, interpreted and assimilated into everyday life" (p. 169). While looking 'international' and thus standing for modernity, Ruby was at the same time "placed in a context to remind the viewer that it is an Indian body: speaking Hindi, Hinglish, surrounded by Hindi pop and film music" (p. 174). According to Butcher, this kind of "representation of a 'new' identity ... anticipates a struggle over the definition of what it is to be Indian" (p. 177). Ruby/Channel [V] were perceived as "a mirror of *Indian* youth" (p. 180) rather than dismissed as being a means of cultural imperialism.

This is not at all the case with all the other new images which can now be watched in India. Both Shoshoni Gosh ("The Troubled Existence of Sex and Sexuality: Feminists Engage with Censorship") and Christiane Brosius ("Is This the Real Thing? Packaging Cultural Nationalism") describe ways in which recent media representations have provoked not only clear disapproval, but also very diverse forms of political action against them. Gosh not only analyses in which respects the protests against sexualized media images by the Hindu right and by the secular women's movement converged and in which respects they differed, but also gives an account of inner-feminist debates about the most sound way of reacting to those images. While India's women's movement perceived women as mere victims of sexualized images and thus called for censorship, Gosh, holding that "the impact of the media is not direct, linear, unitary, universal, absolute, predetermined or predictable" (p. 251) takes a Judith Butlerian stand on the issue and suggests that „prob-

lematic speech and representations are best countered not with curtailment but with more representations and speech" (p. 236). Different women would have different perceptions of which sexual representations are sexist and thus problematic; feminists should therefore not fight *against* sexual representations, but „struggle to create space for consensual erotica in which women are willing and active agents“ (p. 255). Christiane Brosius focuses on audio-visual media software produced by activists connected to the Hindutva movement. With those productions, members of the Hindu right not only take a stand against what they perceive as a cultural invasion (p. 103); they also attempt to counteract the depiction of modernity as Western, and thus opposed to Indian and traditional, for which they criticize the new channels. “Modern does not mean western, but something related to the environment today“ (p. 103), Brosius cites the head of the World Hindu Council in Bombay. And she continues to explain that “rather than breaking with the past, that is, with tradition, the Indian version of modernity is often a reinterpretation of tradition and the effort to appropriate ‘modernity’ into an Indian value system” (p. 103).

Britta Ohm, for her part, warns us not to focus *exclusively* on the receiver’s agency when studying audio-visual media: “Recent approaches in the tradition of the ‘power of usage’ pay hardly any attention to the power of the sender” (p. 69), she writes in her “Doodarshan: Representing the Nation’s State”. And she goes on to state that “nothing much, however, has changed regarding the fact that those parts of the society who invent and own the media also have the power to form and distribute the message” (p. 70). Focussing on the senders, Ohm describes the ways in which Doodarshan, the state-owned and until 1991 the only television channel in India, saw itself forced to react to the new situation by adjusting its outdated programs. Ohm comes to the conclusion that the satellite channel’s “entrance and establishment would not have been so easy, had there not been a communication vacuum between the centralised state [and its medium Doodarshan, I.K.] and the fragmented nation. The state, having been concerned with itself for decades, officially took an offended stand while at the same time taking advantage of the situation by imitating the behaviour of the private commercial channels.” (p. 92)

Taken together, the various chapters of this volume not only provide a good overview of relevant issues concerning the recent change in India’s audio-visual media landscape; they also offer an interesting introduction to current trends and debate in Indian society for anyone not yet familiar with the country.

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OSKAR GANS, ELKE FRIEDEWALD (eds.), *Die südostasiatische Wirtschaftskrise. Diagnosen, Therapien und Implikationen für Südasiens*. 9. Heidelberger Südasiengespräche. (Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung 185). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999. VIII, 97 pages, DM 44,-. ISBN 3-515-07652-2

Every summer since 1990, Heidelberg University’s South Asia Institute has provided to academics, politicians and business men a forum for the informal discussion of issues related to South Asia (“Heidelberger Südasiengespräche”). 1998’s