

the master narrative on violence but wound up concluding that the description of the various narratives itself is for the author a human endeavor or a procedure to become human.

With chapter five begins the second half of the book. Here he contrasts beauty with pain, and, by using Pierce's opposite terms "qualisigns (qualisignificant)/sinsigns (sinsignificant)," he categorizes the pain that comes with violence. In chapter six he shifts his focus of study to refugees who went to England from Sri Lanka. He points out that for refugees the nation-state is not "the ultimate unit of protection," as it is generally thought, but functions as a device of oppression and violence. In the seventh and final chapter, the author strongly emphasizes that reflection on violence is no longer a reflection on a particular problem but is a reflection on human beings, or more precisely, on human beings who have undergone the process of civilization.

As the author himself asserts, this volume's content is complex like a tetrahedron composed of many sides. Although readers will be intrigued by the variety of analytical terms appearing in each chapter and by the author's brilliant rhetoric, I suspect that they will find it considerably difficult to grasp the points the author tries to make in his arguments. There will, most probably, be disagreement about whether a scheme of binary or ternary oppositions as the author likes to use them really helps to better understand the issues involved.

As compensation for the complexity encountered in the reading of this book, powerful "ethnographic" descriptions are given. Perhaps the author felt such compensation was desirable when describing at the end of the book a meeting between a Tamil gentleman and a Kandyan Sinhala woman (211–12). Ironically, it is the ethnographic descriptions of events in the book that have the power to reveal the anthropographic problematic addressed and to criticize the very structure of the present world.

It should be added that Sri Lanka's strife cannot be solved any longer as an internal affair; it is situated in a web of intricate international relationships, behind which the dark structures of the present world come in and out of sight. This strife, furthermore, is related to factors that are all inextricably linked with capitalism: Sri Lanka's historical contacts with India, and Sri Lankan relations with terrorist leaders based in foreign countries and with countries exporting arms. Criticism of the strife in Sri Lanka, therefore, must be seen as a criticism of the capitalist system and implicitly of all capitalist societies.

In conclusion, it can be stated that what the author calls "anthropography of violence" can only emerge through a discussion that is philosophical and speculative as well as historical and political.

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HONKO, LAURI. *Textualising the Siri Epic*. FF Communications No. 264. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1998. 695 pages. Hardcover FIM 300; ISBN 951-41-0812-4. Paper FIM 275; ISBN 951-41-0813-2.

HONKO, LAURI in collaboration with CHINNAPPA GOWDA, ANNELI HONKO, and VIVEKA RAI. *The Siri Epic as Performed by Gopala Naiḱa*. Part I. FF Communications No. 265. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1998. lxx + 492 pages. Hardcover FIM 250; ISBN 951-41-0814-0. Paper

FIM225; ISBN 951-41-0815-9. Part II: FF Communications No. 266. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1998. x + 400 pages. Hardcover FIM 185; ISBN 951-41-0814-0. Paper FIM 160; ISBN 951-41-0815-9.

The publication of the Siri Epic adds another work to the list of monumental Indian vernacular oral literary works, which are becoming known to the wider scholarly community in India and the West. The Siri story is situated in Tulunad, a minor Dravidian district in South Karnataka (South India), along the shore of the Arabian Sea. Tulu is a non-literate language with approximately two-million speakers. The story, referred to in Tulu as a *paḍḍana* ("song"; see CLAUS 1978), tells about the history of a family for three generations, in which all the main members of the family have violent deaths. Upon their deaths, they were deified and a ritual for their worship was created. During the ritual the deities take possession of their devotees. The story belongs to a large group of works widely distributed throughout India. Twelve such stories are described in BLACKBURN et al. 1989, Part Two. The existence of dozens and even hundreds of similar stories are reported in South India (by BLACKBURN 1988, xxii–xxiii and CLAUS 1991, 136) and each year brings new discoveries. Some of these stories belong to the ethnoepic center of martial epics, others to the genre of sacred legend. Both kinds can be performed in various other ethnoepic genres. Single episodes or smaller scenes of the story, live (i.e., are performed) in many generic forms (e.g., as rituals, work songs, prayers, invocations) and are performed by either sex.

The three volumes reviewed are the result of long years of intensive hard work by the folklorist Lauri Honko (Finland), the linguist Anneli Honko (Finland), the philologists Chinnappa Gowda and Viveka Rai (both from Tulunad), and the artist-performer-priest and leader of the ritual, Gopala Naika (of Tulunad). This team of two nationalities (which is in itself an innovation!) has presented the scholarly world with an exemplary excellent edition of the text, including a translation from Tulu into English, as sung by Gopala Naika (15,683 lines long!); Lauri Honko wrote the introduction, which fills the whole of vol. I and some of vol. II. In it he describes in great detail the performative context of the poem and ritual, the techniques used by the performer, and the processes of textualization (what may be called "text critique").

The text is presented and the performance described in a way that any other scholar can use it for his or her own research. Among the most important aspects of the reviewed publication are the descriptions of the singing/composing process, the singer's abilities, his knowledge, and his strategies and techniques of improvised composition, all of which were paid only summary attention by most other investigators. This description will serve future research both as a model of good, solid work and as a tool to analyze other performers and other traditions.

Lauri Honko presents the reader with detailed and exact observations, and gives a description of the scholar's working process. On the basis of the observations and working process described, Lauri Honko reviews some previous publications of various traditions in a rather critical manner (see vol. I, section B).

The process of the work's recording, the transcription of the sound tapes, and the translation of the Tulu text into English, as well as the complexities involved at every stage and the decisions demanded at each step are all meticulously described for the reader. Set out and learn from this experience! This detailed description seems at times almost trivial; but let us not be fooled! It is not trivial. For the first time it brings home in print the difficulties of transforming an oral performance into a printed page and teaches us how to evaluate texts published from other traditions for which such records do not exist; in other words, it teaches us to exercise the much needed textual criticism of the folkloric materials that we use, which are

often taken for granted.

Let us congratulate the scholarly team for their excellent work.

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RAMANUJAN, A. K. *A Flowering Tree and Other Oral Tales from India*.

Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. xv + 270 pages. Glossary, bibliography, list of tellers and collectors, list of tales. Cloth US\$48.00; ISBN 0-520-20398-4. Paper US\$17.95; ISBN 0-520-20399-2.

This book, published posthumously and edited by Stuart Blackburn and Alan Dundes, is a collection of Kannada folktales, collected by A. K. Ramanujan and some other scholars from both published and oral sources. Kannada is one of the four major Dravidian languages spoken in Karnataka in South India. During the past two decades folktales from Karnataka have been extensively collected and published in the Kannada language. There are very few collections, if any, in English. Ramanujan's nice collection is, therefore, timely and welcome.

Although some of the tales in the present work have parallels in other Indian languages and even other countries, all of the seventy-seven tales listed in this work have been collected in Karnataka. Therefore, the title of the book is somewhat of a misnomer because it includes no tales from any other region of India. The tales in this book were mainly collected in northern and southern parts of Karnataka from Kannada sources, either directly collected from Kannada speaking narrators or from already published texts. No folktales from other communities who speak Konkani, Tulu, Kodagu etc. are included. So strictly speaking, this volume is neither a representative collection of folktales of India, nor of Karnataka. But it still is a good collection of folktales.

Most of the tales Ramanujan did not collect himself but took from earlier published works on Kannada folktales in the Kannada language. However, he seems to have translated all these into English himself. Being a skilled translator, he has excelled in this task. Some of the published works he used are as follows: J. S. Paramasiviah, *Dakshina Karnataka Janapada Kathegalu* (Folktales of South Karnataka; 1977), Simpi Ninganna, *Uttara Karnataka Janapada Kathegalu* (Folktales of Northern Karnataka; 1988), H. J. Lakkappa Gowda, *Janapada Kathavali* (Folk Narrative; 1971), Ragau, *Karnataka Janapada Kathegalu* (Folktales of Karnataka; 1969), Dhavalasri, *Janapada Kathamsta* (Folk Narrative; 1968), Dr. Lingayya, *Padinellalu* (Shadow; 1971). Interestingly, some of the tales included in this volume have also appeared in an earlier collection of the author—namely, the *Folktales from India* (New York: Pantheon, 1991).