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Review of *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay*, by Thomas Blom Hansen

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independence politics. The point is supported by evidence drawn from a number of different contexts, such as the divergent concerns of different social groups involved in the development of *akbara* culture (pp. 226–27) and the development of festivals such as the Ramlila, not as sites of community affirmation, but precisely as sites of contestation among groups within that imputed community. As Gooptu states, the urban Ramlila emerged as “multi-vocal, registering varied levels of social construction of meaning” (p. 237).

As with most classic works of history, at the heart of this book is a meticulous approach to the historian’s craft. Several years of zealous archival work have furnished Gooptu with some fascinating primary material on which to build. This material ranges from official publications and documents to vernacular newspapers, locally produced pamphlets, and interviews with key individuals. In particular, she has plundered the Weekly Police Abstracts of Intelligence of the Government of the United Provinces to great effect, extracting a host of valuable points on issues such as the conduct of Adi Hindu Sabha meetings, the increasingly martial character of Holi festivities, and the surfacing of class-based tensions around the activities of *tanzeem* organizations. This kind of material not only provides a valuable resource for students and scholars, but it also points the way for further research.

In addition, Gooptu has examined a broad range of secondary material, using it or challenging it judiciously in the course of her argument (Sandria Freitag’s work on the development of community identities is critiqued to particularly good effect). In addition to the latest secondary sources, Gooptu uses relevant material from older and rather more obscure works such as biographies of the untouchable leader Swami Acchutanand and the evangelical town planner Patrick Geddes. The latter yields the priceless tale of Geddes’s attempt to promote public health through a Diwali procession in Indore in 1917. In this procession, Ravana was depicted as “the Lord of Dirt, along with a gigantic model of a mosquito crawling with malarial microbes and ‘a colossal rat of the kind it is necessary to exterminate, which was covered with quivering insect forms representing the fleas which were carriers of plague germs’” (p. 81). The book is indeed punctuated by such fascinating images of urban life during the late colonial period, drawn from both primary and secondary sources. Gooptu demonstrates a real sense of how to bring these urban spaces to life—suggesting that her close attention to the sources has been augmented by a direct knowledge of the spaces themselves.

Overall, I can only reiterate that this is a book of rare quality which constitutes a vital contribution to our understanding of the colonial era in India. No graduate-level course on the development of modern Indian politics would have a complete bibliography without it.

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Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay. By THOMAS BLOM HANSEN. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. 312 pp. \$55.00 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper).

In *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay*, Thomas Blom Hansen traces the crystallization of plebian identities and politics in democratic, postcolonial Bombay, focusing on the spectacular rise in the latter third of the

twentieth century of the Marathi Shiv Sena movement to political prominence and then electoral power. Hansen elaborates both an argument and a model for thinking about the “importance of social imaginaries, of desires of recognition, and the attraction of the public spectacles of violence and assertion” (p. 7) for understanding the late-twentieth-century emergence of the populist-nativist movement in Bombay, a huge linguistically, culturally, socially, and economically heterogeneous and critically resource-strapped city, the capital of the state of Maharashtra (a concession to linguistic nationalism in 1960), and also, arguably, a crucible of the modern nation. Hansen compellingly argues that the vivid, often violent public spectacles through which Shiv Sena made its “every [Marathi] man” critique of municipal corruption and governmental negligence were crucial not only to its success but also to understanding the transformation of the city’s political society, exemplified in the city’s 1995 renaming to Mumbai.

In “Deccan Pastoral: The Making of an Ethnohistorical Imagination in Western India,” Hansen traces the consolidation of the historical discourse on identity, territory, and masculinity that the nativist Shiv Sena has so effectively mobilized in the past quarter century. In “Bombay and the Politics of Urban Desire,” Hansen demonstrates how the Sainites’ critique of corruption in the city’s municipal government (cast in terms of religious, class, and caste privilege and voiced in an insistently anti-elite, anti-intellectual, hybrid urban vernacular) successfully subsumed other, conflicting strands of Marathi linguistic and cultural striving along with the historical claims of authors to authority and privilege in the city. These various alternatives were effectively sidelined by Shiv Sena’s aggressively “nativist” populist rhetoric and by its disciplined and belligerent cadres, whose participation in violent assertions of the leadership’s communalist will cemented individuals’ status locally, along with their claims to the movement’s patronage at a time when other resources—such as the jobs and educational opportunities privileged by the postcolonial statist political formation—seemed to be scarce or (for the Marathi speakers to whom it appealed) ominously inaccessible.

Hansen argues that those largely Marathi-speaking men representing Shiv Sena in elections and in neighborhoods have been “young men from slum areas or lower-middle-class backgrounds—many of them without stable employment and with only limited education.” The organization raised them to public prominence, privileging Marathi speakers from slums to boardrooms in a political landscape (municipal, regional, national) increasingly dominated by party machines (notably, the Congress Party) and their dynamics. “If Shiv Sena was a vehicle for anything,” Hansen writes, “it was for a democratic revolution that introduced a new type of popular leadership and of ‘plebian’ politics into Bombay’s political culture” (pp. 68–69).

Hansen suggests that this “plebian politics” crucially informed the conditions surrounding the devastating violence in Bombay from December 1992 through March 1993 following the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya (hundreds of miles away) by Hindus. He persuasively argues that the anti-Muslim violence, lubricated by years of Shiv Sena activity and discourse, consolidated—rather than emerged from—the movement’s power in the city. He argues further that both the violence and the spectacle of the two official inquiries that followed discredited the municipal government and its agencies, most notably the demoralized and sometimes complicit constabulary, and paradoxically set the stage for the Shiv Sena’s electoral triumph in Maharashtra in 1995.

The chapter “In the Muslim Mohalla” sketches some of the disruptions of older social hierarchies and political accommodations among Bombay’s heterogeneous

Muslim communities by overlapping and interrelated developments such as the reorganization of the textile industry, immigration into the city of co-religionists with different practices and linguistic traditions from northern India, and cash remittances from overseas labor migrants (notably to the Persian Gulf states). Hanson suggestively argues that the aggressively masculine, plebian style that characterized the Shiv Sena also emerged in the city's plebian Muslim neighborhoods and that the crisis of the paternalist state that enabled the Shiv Sena was mirrored in the crisis of elite, established, patriarchal authority in Muslim Bombay and was intensified in plebian confrontations with both a historically hostile constabulary, and organizations such as the militantly anti-Muslim Shiv Sena.

Hansen is well aware that the city encompasses an infinite number of environments other than those that nurtured Shiv Sena: the Dalit movement, for example, since the mid-twentieth century, has provided a "strong antidote" to Hindu nationalism for several decades (p. 233). Another absence in this study—to which the ongoing production, performance, and defense of masculinity is so crucial—is women: the wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, and girlfriends of the plebian youths and young men to whom the Shiv Sena appealed. I wonder, at the end of *Wages of Violence* and of this necessarily sketchy review, what are the affinities and ruptures between players' domestic and public performances of authority, masculinity, and entitlement? What are the implications for men and women, for the experiences and categories of domesticity and the public sphere, for home and the world, in Mumbai and in criticism?

Wages of Violence deserves close reading by anyone interested in historical practice, modernity, and power, and in the city as the leading site on which they are deployed, contested, and produced. In the pages of this book, Bombay/Mumbai emerges as not so much a single, contested stage for which various constituencies compete to perform and dominate but, rather, as a kaleidoscope of stages (material and virtual, and local, national, and transnational) on and from which the postcolonial business of democratic governance is enacted, corrupted, critiqued, and claimed.

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Politics in Sindh, 1907–1940: Muslim Identity and the Demand for Pakistan. By ALLEN KEITH JONES. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002. 240 pp. \$24.95 (cloth).

Islamic Leviathan: Islam and the Making of State Power. By SAYYED VALI REZA NASR. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. 248 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

Both of these books deal with state formation among Muslims, although their ambitions and scope differ. Allen Keith Jones provides a detailed portrait of the Pakistani province of Sindh prior to 1940. Despite its subtitle, his book says very little about Muslim identity or the demand for Pakistan. It does tell a great deal indeed about the background, motives, and political manipulations of the major Sindhi Muslim leaders and powerbrokers during the crucial era leading up to partition.

The book was written in 1977 as the author's doctoral dissertation, and there has been no effort whatsoever to update the references or bolster the theoretical armature,