

online boasts that he receives enormous funding for his contributions to psychology. This funding and patronage by the wealthy, Seligman claims, has rendered classical psychoanalysis useless since Freud, according to Seligman, is too deterministic.

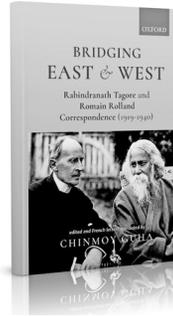
Positive psychology is preached by Seligman as 000 is touted here by Harman as the much awaited tectonic shift in both American and European philosophy. All because 000 has implications in the real world like nothing before 000 had. However, nowhere in this book does Harman explain what he means by the 'real' and how are we to access this 'real'? Within the economy of the Latour-Harman bind which Harman thinks exists, Harman takes it for granted that some non-sentient *dasein*—an impossibility—exists apart from consciousness. Thus, in one stroke Harman purports to destroy centuries of phenomenological discourse beginning with Plato, through Hegel, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and to Hans Georg-Gadamer. Then how is 000's methodology correct in assessing Lawrence's non-existent ontic comprehension of Trika praxes and right in proving Simone Weil's assessment of Marxists of Marx's generation as 'dupes'? (See Simone Weil, *Oppression and Liberty* (London: Routledge, 2004), 179).

000, which is so dismissive of previous modes of philosophising like positive psychology is dismissive of most psychological theories before Seligman had his eureka moment(s), has nothing to do with those questions which were raised in the beginning to prove the vacuity of 000 and thus, the book under review.

A simple engagement with Trika practitioners will expose Lawrence's superficial armchair Trika. A little historical sleuthing proves Weil correct. 000 is redundant in these analyses since Harman, and the Latour Harman presents to us, are both insufficient in their exposition of ontology and the being or whatness of objects and of perception.

000 would not be a failure as a philosophy were Harman to pay heed to Gadamer's warning in the second edition of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*. Thought objects are never to be put to applied uses in the real world. Then objects, orientations, and ontologies lose meaning.

Subhasis Chattopadhyay



***Bridging East and West:
Rabindranath Tagore and
Romain Rolland Correspondence (1919–1940)***

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In the last issue of this journal, this reviewer had pointed out the prescience of Walter Benjamin in connecting the rise of fascism with the rise of what now goes by the name of popular culture, which in one of its variants is 'nobrow' as Peter Swirski points out in his *From Lowbrow to Nobrow* (2005). It is at this crucial juncture when we see a global resurgence in mass histrionics around the 'nobrow', which is a marker for the rise of extremism, that we have Chinmoy Guha intervening through the book under review. Guha's cultural intervention has been through translation, editing, and compiling with illuminating endnotes, the correspondence between Rabindranath Tagore and Romain Rolland.

In the aforementioned context of Walter Benjamin, aesthetics, and the nobrow which stoke the fires of fascism, we need to quote Tagore's letter to Charles Andrews reproduced in its entirety in this book (45–50). Guha's meticulous scholarship adds that this letter was written by Tagore from Hôtel Bristol, Vienna on 20 July, 1926: 'In Rome I [Tagore] came to know a professor of a genuinely spiritual character, a seeker of peace, who was strongly convinced not only of the necessity but of the philosophy of Fascism' (47) and then, while Tagore goes on to relate to Andrews his two encounters with Mussolini, in this same letter Tagore is ironically weary of his own impressions of Mussolini since, 'There have been times when history has played tricks with man and ... magnified ... small persons into a parody of greatness' which 'produces a mirage that falsifies the real and startles our imagination into a [misplaced] feeling of awe and exaggerated expectation' (50). The letter is relevant to our zeitgeist since the alt-right and powerful economists like Nial Ferguson are

calling out non-First World nations and people to be again dominated by forces that no longer care for the call of the falconer.

Guha's intervention is a theological intervention in the lines of both Father Raimundo Panikkar and Father Michael Amaladoss SJ. The late Panikkar was a pacifist who saw in the dialogue between the East and the West, the only road ahead to eradicating systematic injustices. Amaladoss continues to advocate dialogue in every possible forum. Guha's corpus in French, Bengali, and English is a testimony to his inner anthropomorphic call to be a bridge-builder himself. Through this book, he carries on the process of theological inculturation so much desired by Rolland, Tagore, Ramananda Chatterjee, and Kalidas Nag. To consider this book as mere correspondence between two great men is to misread it. Guha's writings, including his doctoral work on T S Eliot, shows that he has, over a long period of time, infused the numinous within literary studies. This numinosity is lacking in Indian letters today.

The fallacies of Rudyard Kipling's notion of continental differences and of Samuel Huntington's divisive rhetoric are erased by the letter that Rolland wrote to Tagore on 8 July 1926 (39–40) where Rolland writes of missing Tagore's presence though he followed Tagore 'in silence', for according to Rolland, Tagore's 'was a soul immersed in God' (40). Nonetheless, Tagore saw through the superficial spirituality of the professor Tagore met in Italy mentioned above. Tagore's letter to Andrews quoted above proves that Tagore knew of his own clay-feet and reasserts Tagore's humility. Mystics are humble but not always infallible. Thomas Carlyle's warning against hero-worship had an enduring influence on Tagore.

A mystic can never be a fascist. However, a fascist can masquerade as a mystic. Guha's endnote to this letter from Rolland to Tagore (endnote 128, 81–92) is a tour de force in contemporary literary sleuthing, which is sadly no longer practised in Indian universities and centres of higher learning. In this endnote, Guha unearths what Rolland wrote about the Mussolini episode to J R Bloch on 8 July 1926 (86). Guha does not shy away from representing honestly the problematics posed by Tagore's apparent fascination with Mussolini. Guha in

this same endnote, faithfully presents the 'strongly worded letter' by Guglielmo Salvadori to Tagore dated 16 July 1926 (89–90) where Salvadori, possibly mistakenly, felt that Tagore 'greatly damage[d] ... [their anti-fascist] Cause' (89). Guha then proceeds to show how Tagore was misunderstood by his friends (91) even after Tagore spoke of his need for 'purification' after meeting Mussolini (90).

Guha's unearthing of Tagore's correspondence with Ramananda Chatterjee and Rani Mahalano-bis's letter to Amal Home (91) opens up new vistas for future research within the dual domains of Bengal Renaissance studies and also, within Tagore studies. It is not an understatement that each of Guha's endnotes is thought-provoking and they repeatedly assert the singularity of literature and the arts over other socio-cultural qualia. For instance, in endnote 149 (95), Guha briefly comments on Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. Only Guha can point out the relative anonymity of this piece by Beethoven and the need for annotating *Missa Solemnis*. Classical music is manifest-mysticism. Reading Tagore and Rolland as represented here, one understands what Rudolf Otto meant by the sense of the holy. Rolland's 'oceanic feeling' is palpable in this correspondence.

Guha is in the line of Thomas Johnson, who scrupulously edited and compiled the letters of Emily Dickinson, and of Edward Mendelson, who is still editing the works of W H Auden for the Princeton University. Mendelson's prose editions have been reviewed by this author in earlier issues of this journal. Guha's job is more onerous than either Johnson's or Mendelson's works for three reasons. Guha, unlike Johnson and Mendelson, had to negotiate three languages to prepare this book; he does not have the funding or the facilities that First World white academics routinely receive.

Moreover, Indian universities are notoriously miserly in providing paid sabbaticals to scholars for writing books which are paradigm-shifting. Guha overcame all these three hurdles to give us a book, which is a manifesto for holding the head high when in a Nietzschean transvaluation of values, many Mussolinis, hyena-like, are now seeking to annihilate both Western and Eastern civilisations.

(Continued on page 630)

among 5,117 families in Puri district from 5 to 30 June. (c) **Puri Mission Ashrama** distributed 4,000 saris, 4,000 lungis, 4,000 towels, and 4,000 mosquito-nets among 4,000 families in Puri district from 5 to 28 June. (ii) **Gujarat**: On 14 June, **Porbandar** centre distributed 1,200 packets of snacks to people who had taken shelter in government-run camps in Porbandar as a precautionary measure against the Cyclone Vayu.

Drought Relief: (i) **Karnataka**: In response to the drought in various parts of Belagavi district, **Belagavi** centre distributed 40.92 lakh litres of water among 5,543 affected families from 4 May to 18 June. (ii) **Maharashtra**: In the aftermath of the recent drought, **Aurangabad** centre distributed 21.25 lakh litres of water in 13 villages of Aurangabad district from 19 May to 4 June.

Summer Relief: (i) **Chhattisgarh**: **Raipur** centre distributed 5,400 litres of buttermilk to thirsty wayfarers in Raipur from 25 May to 21 June. (ii) **Gujarat**: **Vadodara** centre distributed 7,200 litres of buttermilk and 31,000 litres of drinking water to thirsty wayfarers in Vadodara from 1 May to 17 June. (iii) **Tamil Nadu**: (a) **Chennai Mission Ashrama** distributed about 30,000 litres of buttermilk to thirsty wayfarers in Chennai district from 1 to 31 May. (b) **Salem** centre distributed 9,600 litres of buttermilk to thirsty wayfarers in Salem from 14 April to 31 May. (iv) **Telangana**: **Hyderabad** centre distributed 37,024 litres of buttermilk to thirsty wayfarers passing by the centre and in Karimnagar district from 1 May to 10 June. (v) **West Bengal**: **Bagda** centre served cold water, molasses, and gram to 3,879 thirsty wayfarers from 15 April to 16 June.

Fire Relief: **Arunachal Pradesh**: In response to a fire incident in **Aalo** in which 3 houses were completely destroyed, **Aalo** centre distributed 19 blankets, 28 shirts, 19 trousers, 19 jackets, 24 sweaters, 20 belts, and 3 sets of utensils—each set containing a karahi, a pot, a kettle, a bucket, 4 plates,

4 bowls, a ladle, a jug, a mug, a tumbler, and a tea pan—among 3 affected families on 6 June.

Distress Relief: The following centres distributed various items, shown against their names, to needy people: (a) **Aalo**: 769 shirts, 414 trousers, 379 jackets, and 414 sweaters on 5 and 23 June. (b) **Asansol**: 400 notebooks on 22 June. (c) **Chandipur**: 95 saris on 15 April. (d) **Coimbatore Mission Vidyalyaya**: 1,300 shirts and 1,300 trousers from 8 to 21 May. (e) **Cuttack**: 100 shirts, 100 trousers, and 100 tops from 19 to 26 May. (f) **Kamarpukur**: 900 shirts, 900 trousers, and 600 tops from 30 November to 5 March. (g) **Koyilandy**: 150 school bags, 150 umbrellas, 5,280 notebooks, 560 pens, and 280 pencils from 15 to 27 June. (h) **Madurai**: 3,375 notebooks on 21 June. (i) **Narottam Nagar**: 50 bicycles on 18 June. (j) **Ramharipur**: 5,000 shirts from 12 April to 30 May. (k) **Shyamsayer, Bardhaman** (sub-centre of the Headquarters): 1,000 shirts and 500 trousers on 27 January and 8 March.

Economic Rehabilitation: Under self-employment programme, **Chandipur** centre gave a sewing machine to a poor and needy person on 15 April. 

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As Guha points out in his 'Introduction' (xxi-lxxi): 'This dialogue between Rolland and Tagore was much more than an interface between a mythical East and a mythical West ... [it was a disruption of] the Orientalist discourse ... leading to a serious falsification of human history [had not Tagore and Rolland met and carried on their correspondence]' (li).

This book, whose photos have been curated by Pinaki De (xv), as acknowledged by Guha, makes for an indispensable sourcebook about both Tagore and Rolland. Guha has provided both Rolland and Tagore in the English speaking world, a shared room of their own.

Subhasis Chattopadhyay