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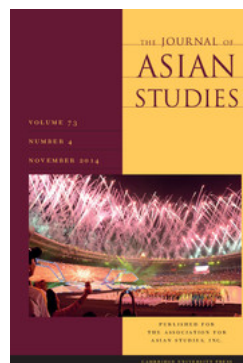
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***The Pity of Partition: Manto's Life, Times, and Work across the India-Pakistan Divide.* By Ayesha Jalal. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013. xv, 265 pp. \ \$27.95 (cloth).**

Sanjay Joshi

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1881 and the Krishnasagar Dam that provided electricity and public lighting to Bangalore city to support for indigenous manufactures such as sandalwood soap and silk crepe saris. As in European and American cities and Bombay, in the early twentieth century the Wodeyar family cleared the congested Fort area to provide better light, air, and sanitation for its inhabitants and established suburbs called extensions. Simultaneously Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV (r. 1894–1940) manifested his orthodoxy with diverse temples within the newly opened spaces surrounding his new palace. More dramatic was his sacral participation in the Dasara festival that celebrated the village goddess Chamundi's slaying of the buffalo demon. The Wodeyar synthesis of sacred and secular, orthodoxy and modernity is evident with the Representative Assembly convening immediately after Dasara and the European Darbar where the Wodeyar ruler received British officials and other Western guests after his sacred duties ended.

Although Ikegame skillfully engages with the extensive debates among anthropologists on caste in South India, her chapter on “Marriage Alliances in Imperial Space” is particularly innovative. To gain new blood for the royal family and possibly affirm their *kshatriya* status, shortly before his death Chamarajendra Wodeyar X sought a north Indian, Rajput bride for his son, the future Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV. Utilizing the colonial network, his widow Vani Vilas asked the British resident to solicit his colleagues in north and western India for suitable candidates. Because of their custom of uncle-niece marriages, the Wodeyars were unwilling to send a bride north in exchange for the desired Rajput bride to come south. Consequently Krishnaraja had to be content with a bride from a miniscule Kathiawar state who triggered some popular dissatisfaction because of her “foreign” blood.

Although not all Wodeyar initiatives, such as their marriage negotiations or steel mill, were successful, Ikegame has cogently demonstrated that the acceptance of colonial practices, such as Western education and urban planning, by the Wodeyar princes enabled them to recast “traditional” practices into new forms of sovereignty. Her monograph is a theoretically sophisticated, accessible, and significant contribution to the historiography of princely states and South India.

BARBARA N. RAMUSACK
 University of Cincinnati
Barbara.ramusack@uc.edu

The Pity of Partition: Manto's Life, Times, and Work across the India-Pakistan Divide. By AYESHA JALAL. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013. xv, 265 pp. \$27.95 (cloth).
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Ayesha Jalal's first book changed the way historians understood “high politics” surrounding India's partition. Saadat Hasan Manto, the subject of this book, is arguably one of the best chroniclers of the human drama of partition. In *The Pity of Partition*, Jalal seeks to meld her earlier interests and those of her subject, to “connect the micro history of an individual and a family with the macro history of communities and states” (p. xii). Manto is also special for the author because he was a close family member. Although he died a year before Jalal was born, she grew up “with Manto's conspicuously absent presence in our joint family” (p. xi). That relationship also makes this book a family history of sorts. Subjects as controversial as Manto or partition, particularly

when they reflect on one's own family, are not easy to write about. It is a testament to Jalal's skill that she manages to do so and produce this thoughtful, yet eminently readable study.

The book is divided into three thematic sections, each roughly corresponding with phases of Manto's own life. In the first section, Jalal uses Manto's stories as a narrative thread to link his early life to its historical context. We see someone who combined irreverent iconoclasm, fierce independence, with hypersensitivity to perceived slights—qualities that were evident throughout Manto's life, and which undoubtedly contributed to his financial insecurities. But they helped shape the cosmopolitan humanism evident in Manto's work. He was, as Jalal points out, interested in people rather than reified labels of political identity. His stories undermined the religious and nationalist identities being created by colonial and nationalist politics of his time. Despite his aversion to such politics, it was ironic that Manto's "life and work . . . were to become imperceptibly interwoven in the broader canvas of politics he neither quite understood nor took much interest in" (p. 72).

The identity politics Manto resisted crystalized into harder boundaries in the 1940s, leading to the horrors that followed. The second part of *Pity* takes us through Manto's life in Bombay, his work for the film industry, his abrupt decision to move to New Delhi in late 1940, and in 1942, a move back to Bombay. By the end of 1947, Manto left Bombay to move to Pakistan. Through Manto we get a glimpse of the literary and creative milieu of Bombay and Delhi—the generosity and creative bonhomie, as well as the unfortunate pettiness of literary politics. While Manto was clearly unhappy with the growing Hindu-Muslim divide, there is no evident watershed event that precipitated Manto's sudden decision to move from Bombay to Pakistan. Perhaps, like many of his earlier relocations, this decision too came from feeling that his genius was not being sufficiently appreciated by his employers (p. 130). Perhaps, like others who left their homeland in 1947, Manto did not quite comprehend the reality of the borders created.

The third section of the book focuses on Manto's life in Pakistan. The borders between the two states were only too real. Perhaps it was the recognition of this new reality that drove Manto to write his most searing indictments of partition in his early days in Pakistan. Life was hardly easy, and Manto's irreverence and iconoclasm were not appreciated by either the religious orthodoxy or the jingoistic partisans of his new state. Money was tight. Worse, there was a rift even with his friends among the Progressive Writers Association. Though labeled a reactionary by the left, and uninterested in politics by his own admission, Jalal argues, using Manto's "Letters to Uncle Sam," that he was prescient in his understanding of the emerging geopolitical realities. The same "Letters" also reveal Manto's increasing sense of despair, which led to alcoholism and his untimely death in 1955.

At times, Jalal's close relationship limits analysis of her subject. From his youthful indiscretions to his falling out with the Progressive Writers Association in post-independence Pakistan, Jalal offers readers mostly a defense or justification of Manto's positions. But she provides us with enough evidence to draw different conclusions too. Criticizing an internationally renowned literary icon is difficult enough, and unimaginably so if the subject is someone you grow up calling "Manto Abajan" (literally, father) as Jalal did (p. x). Less explicable is the total absence of gender as an analytic lens for understanding either Manto or partition. Manto has been valorized as a feminist and pilloried for perceived misogyny. With the documents and family-as-archive Jalal had at her disposal, she may have missed an opportunity for moving that debate in new directions.

Some readers might be disappointed at not learning more about Manto the brother, the son, the husband, or the father. Others might ask for more about Manto's reasons for

moving to Pakistan, and his ambiguous relationship with India and the Pakistani state after the move, or indeed about Manto's difficult relationship with his faith. The truth is no one will ever be entirely happy with any narrative about partition. Too much happened for stories not to be left untold. There was too much that was simply ineffable about the times, at least to relate in traditional prose. Perhaps Manto knew that before most scholars. Could that be the reason behind the incomprehensible hybrid of words spoken by Bishan Singh in Manto's best-known partition story? Jalal says she loved that prattle even as a child.

SANJAY JOSHI
Northern Arizona University
Sanjay.joshi@nau.edu

South Asian Feminisms. Edited by ANIA LOOMBA and RITTY A. LUKOSE. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012. 422 pp. \$99.95 (cloth); \$27.95 (paper).
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In a collection of essays that builds on the legacy of earlier feminist collaborations, Ania Loomba, Ritty A. Lukose, and a host of scholars take up the challenge of charting out a new terrain of feminist politics and activism to reframe a new engagement with political action. This framing productively coheres the essays in this insightful collection, which range widely between theme and region. The collection recognizes the achievement of late twentieth-century feminist interventions that transformed colonial and post-colonial readings of the Indian past, but also moves beyond the tropes of empire, nation, and community into the critical political assemblages of contemporary South Asia in theory and praxis.

The book is divided thematically into six sections to highlight different modes of dialogue between feminists. The book begins with a piece by Flavia Agnes on the legal construction of Islamic female subjectivity, stressing the need for an intersectional reading of religion, caste, class, and community that reveals the mechanisms behind the push for a legal definition of "Islamic." Amina Jamal picks up on these themes in an exploration of the false dichotomy of religious versus secular in Pakistani women's organizing, and argues instead for a religious agency that reflects the subjectivity of women and activists. Areyee Sen contributes an essay on the historical construction of Marathi martial womanhood to mobilize slum women in Gujarat, and artfully articulates the difficulty of assigning to right-wing women a political validity vis-à-vis the mobilization of women.

The next two sections take up an engagement with the global in framing the work that women do in South Asian publics the world over. In the section on labor and globalization, Sonali Perera surveys the centrality of Sri Lankan garment workers to the construction of an NGO discourse of empowerment and juxtaposes this image against garment workers' self-narrativization of their own subjectivity. Annanya Bhattacharjee, in a piece grounded in the trajectory of her politicization as an advocate for workers, spells out the centrality of specific iterations of class, labor, and migration to the larger project of organizing globally. In the third section, on feminism, war, and peace, Vasuki Nesiah evaluates the impact of UN and other internationalist language around gender and war on the fashioning of Sri Lankan women's struggles, and the limits of this language in thoroughly addressing the broader concerns of women beyond conflict. Malathi de Alwis explores the ways in which the "political" has been constituted in Sri