

Review of: "Social-Cultural Anthropology in the Oldest Department of Anthropology in India: Writing History or the Suppression of Records?"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I believe Dr. Guha's paper is, above all, entirely necessary, since it allows a wider audience to get in touch with a long and productive tradition of research in anthropology, such as the one in Calcutta. For me, and from a Latin-American perspective -so used, because of neo-colonialism, to assume European and North-American anthropology as the "only" one that deserves to be historicized-, this paper was both illustrative and refreshing. It is well written and systematically ordered, and it allows the reader to know -or to re-value- an important number of Indian anthropologists.

I have only a few suggestions for the author: the first one is that it begins and ends with a strong critique towards a tweet by another author; while it is understandable that Chatterjee's assertions triggered and motivated Dr. Guha's writing, I believe it would be more interesting to deepen into the reasons for this "suppression of records" when it comes to writing the history of Indian anthropology. Is this an individual mistake by Dr. Chatterjee, or is this part of a more generalized trend, within the politics of history in nowadays India? I believe this questions would make the introduction and conclusions of the paper much more powerful and engaging.

My second suggestion has to do with historical context; I believe it is especially important, at the time of writing about a topic which is not all that well-known by a wider, global audience, to provide a little more general historical context on the history of XXth century Indian anthropology in relation to the strong political changes that the country endured; it doesn't need to be a long and detailed review, but rather a schematic paragraph that allows the reader to familiarize with the topic, specially in chronological terms.

My third suggestion, related to the second one, is to provide, maybe in the Conclusions, a few hints about the history of anthropology at Calcutta University in relation to those socio-political and historical changes. Although my knowledge of Indian history is extremely schematic, I dare to suggest that the struggles between colonialism and nationalism would be an interesting departure point to reflect on the transformations of discourses and representations inside the long and proud history of anthropology at Calcutta University and -maybe- in India in broader terms. I also believe that the inclusion of this debate would allow the author to dialogue with a broader trend that is growing stronger, in those regions of the world that suffered from European colonialism, to better understand the relations between anthropology and coloniality. Authors such as Nick Shepherd in South Africa; Crisotbal Gnecco, Alejandro Haber, Ivana Jofré or Mario Rufer in Latin America; or Yannis Hamilakis in Greece, would provide some interesting material to suggest future comparisons and



reflections. This dialogue becomes all more natural since, in the specific case of Shepherd, for example, there is a direct theoretical link to Indian postcolonial thinkers such as Gayatri Spivak or Dipesh Chakrabarty.