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The Doctor and Mrs. A.: Ethics and Counter-Ethics in an Indian Dream Analysis. Sarah Pinto. New York: Fordham University Press, 2019, 256 pp. \$28.00, paper. ISBN 9780823286669.

Freud's patient Dora's case history, as an exemplar of psychoanalytic method laying bare kinship, sexuality, and power, has been a crucial text for theorizing gendered desire and subjectivity. While the title of Sarah Pinto's *The Doctor and Mrs. A* evokes this iconic association, it opens up very different contemplations generated by psychoanalytic process, notably ethical action and political vision shaped through myth-building. At the center of the narrative are two figures well nigh forgotten to history: the young military

psychiatrist Dev Satya Nand, trained by reputed figures, keen to develop a new theory of memory work and ethics, but ultimately leaving little influence on the field, and a 21-year-old married woman in a town in Punjab, part of the new urban bourgeoisie aspiring to modernity. The analysis takes place toward the very end of British colonial rule, referencing heady nationalism, heroic political figures, and ideals of service to the postcolonial nation.

As Pinto narrates, Indian psychoanalysts in colonial times ranged between those who incorporated elements of European models and those who resisted them as being inadequate for diagnosing Indian situations; they utilized a range of therapies and practiced psychiatry through the large institutions then called “lunatic asylums.” Satya Nand also had hospital work and a private practice but deemed himself to be a different sort of figure. He sought to develop an “oriental” method that would serve as a universal technique, an attempt to “provincialize” psychoanalysis (to use Dipesh Chakravarti’s formulation). He focused on “daydreams,” that is, a “dream smudge” developed in the patient’s conscious mind and then worked on together by patient and doctor, drawing out associations with a range of Indian and European religions and archetypes, with the goal of achieving a kind of reconceptualization, “a mode of experience as realization” (p. 10). Pinto’s engrossing book takes us on a journey of elucidating these associations, layering the conversations of the doctor and Mrs. A with ethnographic and historical explorations of mental states, the jurisprudence of mental health, literary and cultural archives animating myths, feminist retellings, and more.

The Doctor and Mrs. A brings us a portrait of its times, even as it lays out a theory of “imaginative ethics, a way of remembering the future” (p. 4) for our present. A stark contrast to the current atmosphere of identity politics based on religious nationalism, their conversation (between a Christian man whose parents were born Hindu and Muslim and a Hindu woman immersed in Sikh culture) exhibits the expansive possibilities of building onto mythological narratives and thinking across religions to design personal ethics. Political fantasies are layered onto mythical scapes. The patient and doctor often draw very different meanings from the scenarios, with the dissonance being preserved in Satya Nand’s dialectical notes. Thus, Pinto relates the Ahalya story in terms of its contiguities with narratives of dissociative states and memory loss in the shadow of sexual assault, while also juxtaposing Satya Nand’s interpretation of the story as a parable of conversion to his goal of “Hindu socialism” (combining the political goal of social democracy with reform of extant Hinduism), and Mrs. A’s emphasis on Ahalya as a figure of “reconversion” (p. 133). Similarly, Shakuntala represents a way of understanding (psychic or political) recognition to the doctor, whereas Mrs. A is drawn to the ideas of retreat and the refusal of recognition as a route of self-discovery (p. 89). Nehru, whom Mrs. A devotedly describes as her “Guru,” appears in many of these dreamscapes as Ramakrishna, combining “the message of Rama and Krishna” (p. 133), or as Shakuntala’s father-substitute, in whose care she raises Bharat (India).

Through these attempts to wrestle with possibilities of agency and resistance, Pinto provides a deeply nuanced portrait of Mrs. A’s gender, class, and caste. Mrs. A’s lively

interpretation is shot through with a poignant account of kinship troubles that the modern married woman has not left behind, the anxieties of sex, and the limited possibilities of public service as sublimation. Particularly powerful is Pinto's analysis of Mrs. A's class privilege, exemplified in her accounts of servant bodies as repositories of polluting sexual information, but also the ways that such bodies refuse Mrs. A's attribution and demonstrate the limits of her ethics and politics.

As with Satya Nand's method, this monograph resists a location in genre and method. Pinto's prose is elegant and forceful, her tone disarmingly tentative as befitting the smudgy, contested dream material. The book deftly juggles many fields of scholarship, even as it brings us very close to the infinite ripples of one woman's daydream.

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