

## Research article

Armin Chiocchetti\*

# Peter Paul Ekka: Romanticism and ‘othering’ in the land of princes

<https://doi.org/10.33063/os.v74.717>

**Abstract:** This article discusses some short stories by Peter Paul Ekka, an Adivasi author from Jharkhand. Initially, it aims to demonstrate how – through the use of romantic and stereotypical descriptions – the Adivasi characters emerge as ‘others’ in relation to non-Adivasis as well as to the author himself. This urges us to further discuss and problematise the Adivasi/non-Adivasi binary. Thus, the article challenges the notion of cultural ‘otherness’ based solely on cultural terms and, specifically, on membership in certain groups that arises in contemporary forms of identity politics and in relation to marginal/subaltern literatures. Finally, the article expands its critique by referring to some foundational texts of postcolonial theory that, despite their authors’ intentions, have been absorbed into the call for subjectivity and rigid readings of culture that underpin the kind of identity politics that is mentioned and criticised here.

**Keywords:** Adivasi literature, Peter Paul Ekka, otherness, postcolonial theory

## Introduction

In the context of subaltern/marginal literature(s), terms that in India have come to refer especially to Dalit<sup>1</sup> and Adivasi<sup>2</sup> literatures, there is a lively discussion about identity and representation. Several critics and authors alike proclaim the sole capability (and right) of Dalit and Adivasi authors to write about their communities authentically.<sup>3</sup> In both cases, the discourse on authentic representation is permeated by the idea that Dalits and Adivasis are systematically misrepresented by the ‘others/out-siders’, whose writings are based on second-hand knowledge rather than personal experience. It is therefore argued that in order to write about Dalits and Adivasis one needs to be a Dalit or an Adi-

- 1 In India, the term Dalit refers to a person belonging to one of the many sub-castes (*jāti*) in the lowest layers of the caste system. Literally meaning ‘torn, crushed’, this has become the preferred term among Dalits themselves due to the severe oppression and discrimination they experience. Formerly, they were known by other names such as ‘untouchables’ (now something of a taboo word), ‘outcastes’ (referring to the fact that they fall outside the traditional four varnas of the Hindu social system) and *harijan* (a term popularised by Gandhi, literally meaning ‘children of God’). The official name is Scheduled Castes, although there is still disagreement about which castes shall be officially recognised as such.
- 2 Literally meaning ‘first inhabitant’, the term was first used in Chota Nagpur (then South Bihar, now Jharkhand) as an equivalent of ‘aborigine’ to designate several communities (also referred to as ‘tribes’) identified as the indigenous population of the subcontinent. As with Dalits, the nomenclature for Adivasis is diverse. Other common appellations include *mūlvāsī* ‘autochthonous, indigenous’ and less flattering terms such as *vanvāsī* ‘forest dwellers’, *jaṅglī jāti* ‘jungle castes’ and ‘Backward Hindus’. In the Constitution, they are recognised as ‘Scheduled Tribes’ (*anusūcit janjāti* in Hindi), and there are similar difficulties of identification as already mentioned for the Dalits.
- 3 ‘Communities’ refers here to the Dalit and Adivasi communities in general, rather than to the individual castes and ethnic groups. The same arguments are never advanced at an inter-caste or inter-ethnic level, as it is believed that such groups, despite their internal diversity, share a collective experience. Given the breadth and diversity of these communities, one can sense a problem related to this assumption. Transposing the argument to national identities, it would be like saying that only an Italian can write authentically about Italians.

\* Department of Linguistics and Philology, Uppsala University, Sweden, E-mail: arminchiocchetti@gmail.com

vasi oneself, because only self-representation, based on personal knowledge and first-hand experience (*anubhūti* in Hindi) can convey an authentic representation, in contrast to depictions produced by members of other groups based on empathy and sympathy (or *sahānubhūti*).<sup>4</sup>

Both cases thus share the same epistemological problem: 'Does one need to be Caesar in order to understand Caesar?', a question early sociologists and anthropologists answered affirmatively<sup>5</sup> until the so-called 'subjective turn', the paradigm shift that launched the postmodern trend in the humanities.<sup>6</sup> However, in these debates, the epistemological stance *de facto* becomes an ontological one, as the impossibility of 'knowing' is believed to originate from a fundamental difference in 'being' based on the radical alterity of the Dalit/Adivasi 'other'.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, some scholars add an ethical dimension to the matter, situating the entire discussion on the plane of 'the right' of Dalits and Adivasis to speak for themselves.<sup>8</sup>

In the context of Adivasi literature, non-Adivasi authors are often criticised for stereotyping the Adivasis by stressing their physical features, superstitious beliefs and psychological characteristics, which taken together create representations that are distorted in either a romantic or a primitivist manner and demonstrate a lack of ethnographic knowledge (cf. Chiocchetti 2025: 81–82). Building on this premise, I attempted in a previous study (Chiocchetti 2021) to highlight the romantic conceptions and the stereotypes present in the work of an early Adivasi author (Alice Ekka), arguing that by adopting these elements the author was moulding a representation of the Adivasis as 'other', even, and tellingly, with respect to herself. This was imputed to her perspective as an educated, middle-class writer embedded in mainstream culture and literature. Building on this same thesis, the aim of the present article is first to provide further evidence taken from another case, and secondly, to further articulate the discussion of the idea of 'other' and 'othering'. The thesis to be presented here suggests that the basis upon which 'otherness' rests is multifaceted, and can hardly be encapsulated in *radical* cultural readings stressing membership of a specific group as the only relevant factor, nor must 'othering' – in the sense of making, perceiving or constructing someone as an 'other' – necessarily be imbricated with power and violence. Proceeding from the analysis of Adivasi literature and the resulting debate, the article investigates some of the possibilities of what 'being the *other* of someone' can mean.

In pursuing this aim, I will focus on the Adivasi author Peter Paul Ekka (1953–2018), whose stereotypical representations of Adivasi characters, frequent indulgence in exotic and erotising descriptions of their bodies, and still more importantly, attribution to them of childlike if not primitivist features, reflect precisely the sort of representations that are condemned when found in the works of non-Adivasi authors. This makes Peter Paul Ekka an especially relevant case to investigate in the light of the ideas briefly presented above. Furthermore, as Ekka's literary production predates the de-

4 Elaborations of these arguments can be found in Wessler 2020, Chiocchetti 2021, and Chiocchetti 2025: ch. 1.

5 The aphorism 'one need not be Caesar in order to understand Caesar' goes back to Georg Simmel's *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie* (1905), later adopted and popularised by Max Weber (1913) in the theorisation of *Verstehen*. This approach characterised most of the social sciences during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and until the 1970s. Consider, for instance, these lines by Lévi-Strauss on the similarity between history and ethnography: '[Both history and ethnography] are concerned with societies other than the one in which we live. Whether this otherness is due to remoteness in time (however slight) or to remoteness in space, or even to cultural heterogeneity, is of secondary importance compared to the basic similarity of perspective. All that the historian or ethnographer can do, and all that we can expect of either of them, is to enlarge a specific experience to the dimensions of a more general one, which thereby becomes accessible as experience to men of another country or another epoch. And in order to succeed, both historian and ethnographer, must have the same qualities: skill, precision, a sympathetic approach and objectivity' (1963: 16).

6 Merton 1972 traces a concise account of the prehistory of this issue. See also Kuper 1994 for a later elaboration.

7 Similar dynamics are also visible in the post-2000 developments within anthropology known as the 'ontological turn'. See Heywood 2017 for a brief exposition.

8 For the specific case of Dalits and Adivasis, see Guru and Sarukkai 2012.

bates about Adivasi literature that have emerged in India in the last two decades, it follows that his writings were less influenced by received ideas (although they may have been circulating before they were printed), which gives them a certain spontaneity not necessarily present in the works of later authors. The analysis will consider some of Ekka's earliest short stories published in the collection *Rāj Kumārōṃ ke deś merī* 'In the land of princes' (1986).<sup>9</sup>

In a sense, the figure of Peter Paul Ekka is somewhat prototypical of the Adivasi authors that have emerged in Jharkhand thus far; however, at the same time, he seems to have taken some of the features he shares with other authors to extreme lengths.<sup>10</sup> Despite being born in a small village (Samtoli in the Simdega district) into a humble family of the Oraon community, he managed to receive an education. However, his studies were far outside the ordinary, in terms of both their length and scope. After graduating in chemistry from St. Xavier's College (Ranchi) in 1979, he attended Loyola College (Chennai) where he obtained a post-graduate degree in chemistry in 1981. He then studied philosophy in Pune at De Nobili College (1981–1983) and theology in Delhi at Vidya Jyoti College (1984–1987). After this he left India for the United States, where he continued his studies in chemistry at Marquette University (Wisconsin). Finally, he returned to Jharkhand, where he obtained his PhD in chemistry at Ranchi University and began working as a chemistry teacher at St. Xavier's College (Ranchi), while also holding administrative positions as Registrar and Vice Principal. He remained there until his transfer to Tezpur (Assam) in 2017, just one year before his premature death.

The outstanding nature of his academic career was matched by his profound, 'above-average' devotion to the Christian faith (the religion of several Adivasi authors from Jharkhand), which led him to join the Jesuits as a novice in 1973 and take the vows in 1987. As a writer, Peter Paul Ekka also displayed remarkable productivity, publishing four novels, four collections of short stories and a biography during his student years and while working as a teacher. The prototypical features of Adivasi writers mentioned above also include the themes that Ekka explored in his writings, with most of his works revolving around the exploitation of the Adivasis and the ecological disruption they experienced, which have become the central tropes of Adivasi writing.<sup>11</sup> Ekka's earliest works date back to the early 1980s, making him possibly the first Adivasi author after Alice Ekka to write literature in Hindi about the Adivasis.

## The moulding of the Adivasi 'other': Some cases

### In the land of princes

Perhaps one of Peter Paul Ekka's most poignant and iconic short stories, *Rāj Kumārōṃ ke deś merī* is a tale of the ferocious exploitation of Adivasis and the lands and forests where they reside. It also raises awareness about the troubled relationship between Adivasi communities and the Forest Department.<sup>12</sup> The plot operates on two levels, depicting the distress of the entire community on the one hand, and zooming in on a specific character, the daughter of the village healer, on the other. The story is told as a personal recollection of events that occurred during the narrator's childhood and adolescence. The son of an employee of the Forest Department, the narrator grows up in an Adivasi village to which his father was transferred. He befriends Mangalu Kaka, the village healer, who saves

9 Note that most of the stories contained in this publication had already appeared in the earlier collection *Partī zamin* 'Fallow land' (1983).

10 The biographical information about Peter Paul Ekka supplied in the following paragraphs comes from Patel n.d.: 72–73, Baraik 2018: 3–5, and the website of the Jesuit Alumni Association of India (JAAS).

11 This must be understood with regard to Adivasi writing in Jharkhand, since, as I argue elsewhere (Chiocchetti 2026), such themes constitute elements of novelty in the broader context of mainstream Hindi literature, and thus are an original and valuable contribution.

12 About this topic, see Gadgil and Guha 1992, and Rangarjan 1996.

his life after he is bitten by a snake by curing him with some herbs.<sup>13</sup> After the accident, the child spends a great deal of time at the home of Mangalu Kaka and his wife, becoming a family friend despite being an outsider. He also becomes very fond of their daughter, Chanda.

For some years he leads a happy life, but things start to change when he and Chanda enter adolescence. It becomes inappropriate for them to meet freely as they used to do. Furthermore, Mangalu Kaka is concerned about Chanda's future, as they apparently cannot find a groom for her. The situation worsens when a coal mine opens; outsiders come and settle in the village, the fields are destroyed, and much of the compensation ends up in the pockets of the sarpanch (the village headman). Mangalu Kaka's life is turned upside down. His relationship with the young boy deteriorates, as he blames the boy's father for everything that is happening: 'Now, *Babuā*,<sup>14</sup> we will have to leave the village. [...] Your father is having the jungle cut down' (Ekka 1986: 5–6).<sup>15</sup> Along with the new settlers comes violence and delinquency. The boy is now a college student and only visits the village sporadically, even though he still thinks of Chanda. One evening, during the Magh Mela<sup>16</sup> celebrations, three men, including the pandit and the police inspector, go to Mangalu Kaka's hut and rape Chanda. Mangalu Kaka prepares a drink with which he fatally poisons himself, his wife and Chanda.

The story is set within the social and historical context of modern Jharkhand. However, rather than discussing the dynamics of exploitation or the ecological implications here, I will pay attention to the portrayal of the Adivasi characters. The story makes widespread use of romantic and stereotypical imagery. This can be observed on two levels: in the descriptions of bodies and of characters' minds and temperaments, particularly regarding female characters. Consider the following extract, where the young narrator describes his impression of Mangalu Kaka's wife and her daughter Chanda:

She was wearing that typical garment of the local Adivasis, a loom-made, thick sari that covered her entire body. Around her neck, who knows what kind of garland; tattoos all over her dark body. How lovely it felt. I was looking at this when Chanda came from the same side. Perhaps she had been at the river to fetch water. Atop the knot of hair behind her head, some jungle flower was smiling. I had never before seen such an innocent, beautiful statue; her body was ever so fair and had fewer tattoos than her mother's. I just kept watching her for a while. (Ekka 1986: 2)<sup>17</sup>

The appearance of these two characters evokes in the child a sense of looking at something different and foreign to him. On the one hand, this passage reveals his cultural distance from these people. This is evident in the narrator's unfamiliarity with the garland worn by Chanda's mother: 'Who knows what kind of garland?' Together with her many tattoos, this forms a pattern that is unfamiliar and exotic to him. On the other hand, the vision of Chanda goes beyond the sense of unfamiliarity with her culture, leaving room for the exoticisation and even eroticisation of her body.

However, rather than her foreignness and beauty, it is the innocence attributed to Chanda, conveyed through the adjective *māsūm* (*māsūm ... pratimā*), that has a seemingly stereotyping undertone – something that will be repeated several times in the narration. In fact, another passage describes Chanda's eyes as innocent (*bholī-bhālī ām̐khor̐*) (Ekka 1986: 4), and when speaking of the happiness of young girls when they are given ribbons, bangles, combs and bindis, it is stated that: 'For those simple-hearted, innocent Adivasi young girls, no gift could be better' (Ekka 1986: 5).<sup>18</sup> Here, the adject-

<sup>13</sup> However, it is unclear whether the snake was poisonous.

<sup>14</sup> A title of respect typical of the eastern dialects, corresponding to standard Hindi *bābū*.

<sup>15</sup> *Ab to babuā, gārv chor deve [sic] hogā. [...] jaṅgal to tumhāre bābūji kaṭvā rahe haiṁ.*

<sup>16</sup> A Hindu festival.

<sup>17</sup> *Sthānīy ādivāsīom̐ ke usī cir-paricit paridhān meṁ karghe kī bunī moṭī-sī ek sārī pūre tan-badan ko dham̐ke hue thī. Gale meṁ jāne kaun sī mālā thī, pūre sārīvale tan meṁ godnā gudā thā. Kitnī pyārī acchī lagī thī. Abhī yah dekh hī rahā thā tab us or se Candā ā gayī thī. Śāyad nadī se pānī bharne gayī thī jūre meṁ koī jaṅglī phūl haris rahā thā. Isse pahle vaisī māsūm, sundar pratimā dekhī na thī thorā-thorā sā gorā badan mām̐kī [sic] apekṣā tan par godnā kuch kam thā. Do palom̐ ke lie bas dekhtā rah gayā thā.*

<sup>18</sup> *Bholī-bhālī, māsūm ādivāsī bālāom̐ ke lie inse bar̐kar acchī saugāt tab aur kuch ho nahīṁ saktī thī.*

tives *māsūm* and *bholā-bhālā* are used again. Both of these terms can indeed be translated as 'innocent'. *Māsūm* bears the primary sense of 'not being guilty', which by extension often means 'guilelessness', and thus describes a more generalised state of being 'without sin or blemish', as children are (cf. Verma 2007a: 354). *Bholā-bhālā* largely shares with the former the meaning of being innocent in the sense of being guileless, and simple- or pure-hearted (cf. Verma 2007a: 248),<sup>19</sup> which in English can also be rendered as 'simple' or 'silly' (cf. McGregor 1993 775). This again brings to mind an association with the innocence and purity of children – the quintessential manifestation of such qualities. Indeed, thus far, the references to 'innocence' have referred to children (with Chanda occupying a grey zone, as she has just entered adolescence), which could justify the choice of such adjectives.

However, in the evening, when the narrator assists at the dances, the same impression is extended to all the people: 'While I was mesmerised watching those innocent [*bhole-bhāle*], happy, worriless people dancing, it felt like they didn't have any concerns' (Ekka 1986: 4).<sup>20</sup> Thus, innocence appears to be a feature shared by all the Adivasis. Tellingly, in addition to innocence, an absence of worries is attributed to them.<sup>21</sup> Yet, although he enjoys watching the dance, he refrains from participating: 'But I didn't go; some sense of self-pride, some phony sense of pride [acquired when] studying in the city [restrained me]' (Ekka 1986: 4).<sup>22</sup> The Adivasis' supposed state of innocence and carefreeness is thus contraposed to that of the narrator, who, as an outsider and now also a city-dweller, cannot be innocent and carefree himself.

The contraposition between the Adivasis and the narrator thus seems to be juxtaposed with a rural/urban binary, which is well represented by the cultural gap between the villagers and the narrator. This cultural gap emerges in different ways, for instance, through the narrator's unfamiliarity with village activities such as the gathering of forest fruits and roots, a practice that is alien to him and that he observes with interest from afar:

Whenever Chanda got angry, what flowers and fruits I have tasted! Mahua, persimmon, jackfruit, mango. Who knows where Kaki brought them from. During the rains, who knows what potato-like tubers she dug up, brought over, boiled and cleaned. Even an extremely unpalatable tuber tasted sweet when served. Kaka spent two or three days a week in the jungle, and Kaki also went along to search for medicinal roots, herbs, and different kinds of edible roots. Together with Kaki, Chanda became quite familiar with roots and herbs. (Ekka 1986: 3)<sup>23</sup>

While this may be a literary expedient to provide information about rural culture, it should be noted that this activity, undoubtedly routine for communities living close to the jungle, is itself presented in a romanticised manner: 'For the livelihood [of the Adivasis/villagers] the whole jungle was like Mother Earth: generous, worriless and open' (Ekka 1986: 3).<sup>24</sup>

Interestingly, in contrast to these romantic representations, the character of Mangalu Kaka is rendered more realistically. The narration provides no physical description of him, and his ideas seem driven by purely pragmatic thinking (and his worries) rather than the innocence attributed to the villagers in general. He has intentionally prevented his daughter from receiving an education in order to

19 Thus, 'simple-hearted' seems to be a convenient translation to avoid repetition when Ekka uses *bholā-bhālā* and *māsūm* together.

20 *Mantramugdh-sā un bhole-bhāle, khuś, befikr logorū ko nācte dekhtā, to yah nahīm lagtā unherū kisī kī cintā hai.*

21 Hindi *befikr* can quite straightforwardly be translated as 'worriless', which is further specified in the text.

22 *Kuch ātmābhīmān, kuch śahar ke hāiskūl merū parhne kī jhūṭhī śān.*

23 *Kabhī Candā ruthne lagtī jaṅgal ke kaun se phal-phūl tab hamne nahīm cakhā thā – māmhuvā, tendū, kaṭhal, āmjāne kākī kahām-kahām se dhūmḍh lātī thī. Barsāt ke dinorū ālū kī tarah jāne kaun sā kand khod lātī, ubāl kar, dhokar jab parostī to nihāyat rīte kand bhī mīṭhe lagne lagte saptāh merū do-tīn dīn kākā jaṅgal jātā thā – sāth merū kākī bhī jarī-būṭī cunne jātī, sāth merū jaṅgal ke kand-mūl bhī kākī ke sāth candā ko bhī jarī-buṭiyorū kī acchī pahcān ho gayī thī.*

24 *Jīvikā ke lie sārā jaṅgal dhartī mātā kī tarah udār, befikr, khulā thā.*

keep her marriage from becoming an even more difficult enterprise. A brief exchange of words between him and the narrator clearly illustrates this.

Sometimes I would think of Chanda and become restless. If only she was educated.

'Why educate my daughter, *babuā*? To make her literate like you people?'

'Don't say such things, Kaka. The world is changing. The jungle and mountains, the fields and granaries, the villages and the houses – aren't they changing?'

'It is so, *babuā*, but my daughter will have to take care of the household, otherwise how will she get a groom?'<sup>25</sup> (Ekka 1986: 7)<sup>26</sup>

Mangalu Kaka's stance is coldly rational, sustained by the awareness that in a rural community (especially considering the time of narration), education will be restricted to very few people, meaning that an educated woman will struggle more to find a husband.<sup>27</sup>

### Raghu the gardener

The short story *San flāvar* 'Sunflower' narrates the friendly relationship between a young writer and the gardener Raghu.<sup>28</sup> The plot consists of dialogues between the two characters interspersed with the narrator's reflections on the nature of Raghu, whose features are depicted in a rather stereotypical manner. Although it is never specified, Raghu is most probably an Adivasi, as the references to his 'dark/black body' suggest.<sup>29</sup> The first encounter between the writer and Raghu takes place in the garden, where Raghu is working while the narrator sits seeking inspiration for a story. Seeing this, Raghu asks what he is doing. Consider the following extract:

Having adjusted his hoe, he tried again to read my face. I was somewhat absorbed in the writing.

'Little *huzūr*,<sup>30</sup> what have you written?'

I stopped writing and looked up. A burst of laughter mingled with wrinkles spread across his face.

'I am writing a story, Raghu'.

'What is a story, *sahib*? ' He moved even closer.

25 *Rāj Kumār* in the original. The author plays with this word, using it in two different senses. In the title of the story, the term is probably meant in its primary sense of 'prince,' albeit in a metaphorical – and arguably romantic – way to refer to the Adivasis as a noble people. Considering the following events, it could also refer to them as the legitimate princes/owners of the lands from which they are eventually dispossessed. However, in this extract and elsewhere as well, Mangalu Kaka uses the term *rāj Kumār* in the sense of 'groom', which is quite common, at least in the eastern parts of the Hindi belt.

26 *Kabhī-kabhī candā kā khyāl ātā to man becaīn ho uṭhtā. Kās vah bhī paṛhtī-likhtī to – 'biṭiyā ko kyā paṛhānā-likhānā babuā, paṛh sake tum log jaise' 'aise bāt nahīm kākā duniyā to badal rahī hai na, jaṅgal-pahār, khet-khalī-hān, gāmv-ghar nahīm badle haiṁ kyā' 'so to hau babuā magar biṭiyā ko culhā hī to phumke hai uske lie kaun sā, kahām se rāj Kumār āve hai jau'.*

27 To better understand Mangalu's concerns, one must consider how getting an education could conflict with marriage. To pursue her studies, Chanda would need to postpone her marriage until a later age, which, in a culture where women tend marry young, is a problem. Not only would she be older at the time of marriage, but many men, the majority of whom are uneducated (or so it can be assumed), would perceive her as an unsuitable bride. The narrator's stance is less clear; we are uncertain whether he wishes for Chanda to be educated so that she can be a suitable wife for him. Even if marriage between them was a possibility, it would not appear particularly problematic for Chanda to remain uneducated.

28 It seems that the young writer is the son of Raghu's employers, and that Raghu has been working for them for a few years. However, the writer's parents do not feature in the story. They have gone to Jamshepur for a few days, leaving the writer alone in the house while Raghu works in the garden. There is also mention of an Anju (probably the writer's sister), who has left home for college.

29 His body is described first as '*sāmvalā śarīr*', i.e. a 'dark body' (Ekka 1986: 11), and later as *kālā*, i.e. 'black' (Ekka 1986: 16). A dark complexion is a typical feature of Adivasi characters in the fictional literature, as members of these communities tend – with plenty of exceptions on both sides – to have a slightly darker skin colour than the people from the plains. See further below.

30 A term belonging to the Urdu register of Hindustani used to address people of high rank. 'Highness', 'majesty'.

'What happens every day in our lives is called a story.'

He thought for a while. His rustic mind was inspecting me.

'Can mine be a story?' Then, as if laughing at his own foolishness, he said: 'But how can mine be a story. Nothing special ever happens in my life.' (Ekka 1986: 12)<sup>31</sup>

The young writer then decides to write a story about Raghu. Later that afternoon, he brings a friend home with him: Sanjay, a talented artist. Sanjay makes a drawing of Raghu, but the young writer feels that it does not fully capture his beauty. Despite some difficulty finding inspiration, the young writer eventually manages to put together a story and hands it to Raghu who, delighted, thanks him and gives him a sunflower.

This brief short story is centred on the character of Raghu, who is portrayed as a rustic but gentle individual. He is illiterate, as becomes clear towards the end when the narrator has finally written a story and given it to him. 'Could he look for his story in those black characters?' the narrator asks rhetorically (Ekka 1986: 15).<sup>32</sup> Raghu's limited education is also shown by his scant knowledge of English. Consider the brief exchange of lines between him and Sanjay:

When he came close, he said '*Good maling!*' I somehow managed to refrain from laughing, but my friend could not. He laughed openly. I felt sympathy for him. I said, 'Good morning, Raghu.' For almost a year I have tried to teach him this much. He used to say '*Salām huzūr*.' Sanjay tried to explain, 'After midday, you don't say "good morning", but "good afternoon."' He gazed doubtfully for a few moments and said – 'In English, you say *good moling*, sahib'. His childlike innocence melted in the air. (Ekka 1986: 13)<sup>33</sup>

It should also be noted that Raghu's lines usually display dialectal features,<sup>34</sup> contrasting with the standard Hindi spoken by the young writer and further indicating the former's poor education. Raghu's dialect is still intermixed with some expressions typical of the Urdu register of the Hindi/Hindustani language. He addresses the narrator by saying '*choṭe huzūr*' and '*salām huzūr*', instead of – given the dialect he normally speaks – the more expected '*bābū*' or '*babuā*' and '*johār*'. Perhaps this is intended to convey extra politeness when Raghu is speaking to the son of his master.<sup>35</sup>

31 *Apnī kudāl ṭhik karte hue usne phir mere cehre ko parhne kī kośī kī thī. Maiṁ likhne meṁ jaise khoyā parā hūṁ. 'choṭe huzūr, kā likho hai?' Mere likhne meṁ virām lag jātā hai. Dekhtā hūṁ, uske cehre par phailī sikan [sic] meṁ hāmsī bhī ghulmī gayī hai. 'kahānī likh rahā hūṁ, Raghū.' 'kahānī kā hot hai, sāheb?' vah aur karīb sarak āyā hai. 'hamāre jīvan meṁ jo har roz ghaṭtā hai, use hī kahānī kahte haiṁ.' vah kuch der soctā hai. Uskā dehātī man hamerī parakhne lagtā hai. 'To phir hamar kahānī ho sake hai?' Phir jaise apnī nādānī par khud hī hāmsā vah kahta hai – 'magar hamar kahānī kaise ho sakā hai, hamar jīvan meṁ kucho bhī khās na hovā he.'*

32 *Un kāle akṣarōṁ meṁ kyā vah apnī kahānī dūṛh saktā hai?*

33 *Jab pās se guzre to bolā – 'guḍ māliṅg!' maiṁne kisī tarah apnī hāmsī rok lī par mere dost se na ho sakā. Vah jī kholkar hāmsā. Hamerī usse hamdardī ho āyī thī. Bolā – 'guḍ māniṅg Raghū.' Karīb sāl-bhar hue hamne hī use aisā karne ko sikhāyā thā. Pahle vah 'salām huzūr' kahtā thā. Sanjay ne use samjhāne kī kośī kī – 'dopahar ke bād 'guḍ māniṅg' nahīṁ, 'guḍ āftarnūn' kahā jātā hai.' Vah kuch palom tak sandeh-bharī nazarom se dekhtā rahā, bolā – 'Enḡrejī meṁ guḍ moliṅg kahte haiṁ, sāhab.' Baccorī kī-sī māsūmiyat havā meṁ ghul gayī.*

34 Raghu's speech is roughly based on a mixture of standard Hindi and some typical dialectal features, such as *kā* instead of *kyā*, and *hot* and *hamār* instead of *hotī* and *hamārī*. These features make his speech slightly more dialectal (probably close to some variety of Nagpuri), but they do not create whole sentences that are in dialect. This strategic use of dialectal forms confers a 'taste' of a rustic speech to the lines, without them actually being in dialect, which otherwise might have posed intelligibility issues for the average Hindi reader. This technique can be compared, though in a more limited way, to that adopted by Phanishwar Nath Renu in *Mailā āncal* (see Hansen 1981).

35 Any suggestion of a Muslim background can readily be dismissed, as neither Raghu nor the young writer appear to be Muslims. Raghu is a Hindu name, and the narrator gives some hints that seem to relate him to a Christian background. He mentions the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (*sekreḍ hārṭ kī mūrtti* [sic]) standing in the garden (Ekka 1986: 15), and later articulates his devotion to it, 'My glances are fixed on the heart of the Sacred Heart [statue] from which...' (Ekka 1986: 16). [*Merī nazreṁ sekreḍ hārṭ ke us dil pe ṭikī haiṁ jahām se...*]. Within the context of the Hindi/Urdu styles, the use of such Urdu expressions does not necessarily signify a Muslim background.

Of course, the mere fact that Raghu is illiterate and speaks a dialect is not sufficient to make his depiction a stereotype, as illiteracy and a poor knowledge of standard Hindi are characteristics associated with the lower working classes, and all the more so at the time when the story was written. It is rather the qualities that come along with Raghu's illiteracy that create the stereotype, namely his childlike innocence, his 'rustic' mindset, and his slowness to learn simple greetings in a foreign language. The stereotypical depiction of Raghu seems to be further reinforced by the view of his life as being static, free of any concerns and novelties, and empty of any feelings, which makes Raghu seem almost like some kind of alien. Consider the writer's reflection:

This was the first time he had experienced anything new [i.e. when he was given his story]. Looking at life passing by in this small locality, it isn't easy to say whether he even feels happiness and sorrow. He is waiting for neither happiness nor sorrow. He is just living his life. (Ekka 1986: 14–15)<sup>36</sup>

However, despite Raghu's illiteracy and ignorance, the writer sees beauty in him:

How clean, stainless, pure and beautiful is the heart in that black soiled body, hidden behind layers of clothing covered by dirt and dust, rugged clothes filled with sweat and bad smells. (Ekka 1986: 16)<sup>37</sup>

Clearly, the beauty that the narrator sees in Raghu is a romanticised beauty, intrinsic to his alleged innocence, which is made to stand out even more by the contrast with his poor appearance. It is a noble savage-like beauty that is difficult to capture in either a drawing or a short story. As the narrator says when Sanjay attempts to draw Raghu: 'He must have drawn pictures of many people, but such a beautiful human being as Raghu could never have been reflected by his art' (Ekka 1986: 14).<sup>38</sup> Similarly, once the young writer has finished writing Raghu's story, he is unsure whether it really is *his* story: 'maybe it was not' (Ekka 1986: 15).<sup>39</sup>

### Rosy and Madhu

The short story *Rozī* 'Rosy' follows a similar pattern to that which emerged in the previous story. Again, the plot revolves around the friendly relationship and interactions between two characters. In this case, the narrator is a traveller (again a writer and a Christian)<sup>40</sup> and the other character is a young girl named Rosy, who earns her living selling jungle fruit on trains. The depiction of Rosy reiterates the same elements seen earlier: being thin and of dark complexion. Interestingly, she reminds the narrator of his sister, suggesting the possibility of a shared ethnic background. Unlike Raghu, Rosy is literate, having attended the village school until the fifth class, when her mother passed away and she had to work in the fields to support her younger siblings. She carried on in this way until the death of her father, which occurred after some quarrels over a piece of land (he may have been killed). Since then, she has been collecting fruit in the jungle and selling it on the trains.

The stereotyping of her character emerges in several passages stressing 'innocence', which is very reminiscent of the characterisation of Raghu. Consider the following extracts:

36 *Yah pahlā avasār thā jab usne kuch nayāpan mahsūs kiyā thā. Is choṭe dāyare meṁ ghūmtī zindagī ko dekhkar yah kahnā utnā āsān na hogā ki use sukh-du:kh ehsās bhī hotā hai. Na use khuśī kā intazār hotā hai na gam kā hī. Vah to bas apnī zindagī jīe jātā hai.*

37 *Dhūl-gardom kī partom se dhāmākā, ṭūte-phūte pahrāve ke silān aur badbū-bhare us kāle maṭmaile śarīr meṁ jo dil chīpā hai – vah kitnā svacch, nirmal, pāvan aur khūbsūrat hai.*

38 *Anekom ke citr khīmācā hogā, par Raghū jaise hasīn insān uskī kalā se kabhī na guzrā hogā.*

39 *Śāyad na bhī ho.*

40 The fact that he is a writer becomes evident in the statement, 'it was the lost and strayed heroine of one of my short stories' (Ekka 1986: 23) [*merī kisī kahānī kī koī bhūlī-bhaṭkī nāyikā thī*], while the mention of his sister studying in a convent clarifies their religious background.



When the train starts to roll again, she will enter the compartment. She will lightly wipe the drops of sweat appearing on her innocent [*māsūm*] face with the border of her sari, and this same thing will be repeated over and over again. (Ekka 1986: 20)<sup>41</sup>

And:

'Next time you come, give me a picture too.' Having said this, her shy, innocent [*māsūm*] eyes looked at me and then turned to the faraway horizon. (Ekka 1986: 23)<sup>42</sup>

At the end of the story, the narrator reflects on the possibility of meeting her again, asking whether time will change her beauty and purity:

Now when will I cross those paths again? And when I do cross those paths again and meet Rosy the jungle fruit seller, what will she be like? Will she still be as beautiful and pure? Or will she be lost in those lanes and alleys, entangled in circumstances, compulsions, life's pains and sorrows? Why this fear arose, I cannot say. At the time, I had faith in Rosy's innocence [*māsūmiyat*], but who can see the future? (Ekka 1986: 24)<sup>43</sup>

The innocence that first appeared as specific features of Rosy's face and eyes emerges at last as a generalised characteristic, together with beauty and purity.

As a final example, the short story *Ek sarak kaccī-sī* 'A dirt road' will be briefly considered. Here, the narrator returns to his village 'after quite a long time (Ekka 1986: 46).<sup>44</sup> As he arrives, he is seized by a sense of foreignness. 'This was the first time I so strongly felt', he says, 'the extent to which my acquaintances, the brown, muddy fragrant smell of the soil, [and] the people around me could be strangers' (Ekka 1986: 46).<sup>45</sup> After looking around and noticing that the mountains have been stripped of their trees, his thoughts immediately go to Madhu, a young girl with a sad family history whom he used to teach English.<sup>46</sup> The whole story revolves around Madhu's life, her hardships and sorrows, as well as the joyful moments she experienced while driving cattle on a dirt road (hence the title of the story) and spending time with the narrator, who helped her with her studies and brought her closer to the Christian faith.<sup>47</sup> Not finding her around, he asks her mother about her and discovers that she has left the village and is working in the city, from where she regularly sends some money home. However, not even Madhu's mother knows exactly what she does for a living. All that Madhu has told her is that she shares a flat with other women workers and wants to bring her mother there soon. The narrator recollects that, before leaving, he had tried to persuade her not to go to the city, as he was afraid she would fall into delinquency. 'There', he said, 'people are not afraid to spoil their bodies and minds for money' (Ekka 1986: 52).<sup>48</sup> One day, when the narrator is back in the city, stand-

41 *Gārī jab sarakne lagegī vah phir ḍibbe meṁ dākhil ho jāegī. Apne āncal se vah apne māsūm cehre meṁ ubhartī pasīne kī būndon ko halke se miṭāyegī aur tab phir vahī punarāvṛtti hone lagegī.*

42 'Agī bār jab āiegā, to hamēṁ bhī ek tasvīr de denā,' yah kahte hue śarmāyī-si uskī māsūm āṁkheṁ hamēṁ dekhkar dūr kṣitij kī or muṛ gayī thīṁ.

43 *Maiṁ ab phir kab un rāhon se guzrūṁgā. Aur jab guzrūṁgā to jaṅglī phal becnevālī jis Rozī se milūṁgā vah kaisī hogī. Kyā vah utnī hī sundar aur pavitr hogī, yā phir paristhitiyon, majbūriyon, zindagī ke dukh-dardon, gamon se ulajhte hue unhīṁ galī-kūcon meṁ kho jāegī. Ye andeśe kyon ubhare, maiṁ kah nahīṁ saktā. Us vaqt to hamēṁ Rozī kī māsūmiyat par yaqīn thā, par ānevālā kal kisne dekhā hai.*

44 *Kāfī arse bād.*

45 *Apnī jānī-pahcānī; [sic] bhūrī-maṭmailī, saundhī-saundhī se dhartī, ird-gird ke apne log kis kadar ajnabī ho sakte haiṁ, yah pahlī bār zorom se mahsūs huā.*

46 Her father died soon after she was born. Her older brother joined the army, was sent to the front, and never returned. Madhu had to drop out of school to help her mother. Later her mother fell ill. They had to sell their cows to pay for her treatment, and Madhu started working as a wage labourer in a nearby village.

47 Although her mother still worshipped the sun god (thus confirming that the setting is an Adivasi village), she exempted her daughter from having to do so, arguably, the narrator states, so that her daughter could study in a convent.

48 *Paise ke lie log tan-man dūṣit karne se sahamte nahīṁ.*

ing with his scooter at a filling station, he notices a truck filled with sand pass by (evidently involved in construction work) carrying a small group of village girls. Among them, the narrator recognises Madhu.

Madhu and the narrator are characterised in essentially the same way as in *Rozī*. However, the description of Madhu here leans more towards a juvenile immaturity than an innocence of spirit. At the beginning of the story, Madhu is described in the following words:

A foolish, carefree mountain-village girl – who paid no attention to her appearance or her mind. She had turned thirteen, but had learned neither shame nor etiquette. She said whatever crossed her mind; if you laughed, she opened her mouth wide and laughed too. If you looked serious, she would put on a pouting face. (Ekka 1986: 47)<sup>49</sup>

These qualities reappear towards the end of the story, but they no longer characterise Madhu:

[...] my eyes recognised my Madhu, who used to live in the village, who used to thrive in nature, who was carefree, foolish, simple and shy, openly laughing and smiling. (Ekka 1986: 53)<sup>50</sup>

Clearly, there is an implication here: the city has changed Madhu, erasing all those qualities that she used to have. The narration thus crafts a binary opposition between village and city, similar to that noted in *Rāj Kumārōm ke deś meṁ*, where the intrinsic qualities of the rural space, condensed in the figure of Madhu, are presented as incompatible with the urban space, in which those qualities are lost. Part of this contraposition certainly derives from the developments in Madhu's life and her descent into an increasingly miserable condition. Even before she moved to the city, when her mother fell ill, the narrator observed how 'the responsibilities and worries had drawn several dusty, criss-crossing lines on Madhu's blooming face'.<sup>51</sup> However, the author still seems to imply there that there is a substantial qualitative difference between the condition of a poor agriculturalist and that of a poor construction worker, clearly suggesting that the former is preferable, as it allows one to manifest all the characteristics found in Madhu: living a kind of 'poor but happy' life that cannot be achieved in an urban setting. Furthermore, while the mother's ignorance about her daughter's occupation may have caused suspicion that Madhu was earning her money from some less respectable activity (which she might have wished to keep secret), the narrator ultimately discovers that this is not the case. There is also no textual evidence that Madhu has fallen prey to delinquency. It should also be noted that Madhu plans to bring her mother to live with her at some point, which means that her mother's life can be expected to be somewhat more comfortable in the city than in the village. Therefore, on the one hand, Madhu's characterisation as foolish (*nādān*) and carefree (*alhar*) (and later, also simple, *sahaj-saral*), as well as her lack of shame and etiquette (and everything associated with them), can still be attributed to her young age and perhaps to the fact that she does not attend school.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, however, it is impossible to completely disentangle these qualities from her being a mountain-village girl and to reject the hypothesis that her characterisation derives from this rather

49 *Gāmv kī pahārī, nādān, alhar laṛkī – jise na apne tan kī sudhī rahtī hai, na man kī. Terah kī to ho gayī par na hayā sikhī na tamīz. Jo man meṁ āyā kah diyā. Hāms do to khud bhī mūnh phāṛkar hāms degī. Zarā gambhīr dikhne lago to ronī-sī sūrat ban jāegī.*

50 *[...] merī āmkhoṁ ne apnī Madhu ko – jo gāmv meṁ rahtī thī, prakṛti-prāmgan meṁ palī thī, alhar thī, nādān thī, sahaj-saral śarmilī thī, bebāk hāmsne-muskarāne vālī thī – pahcān liyā thā.*

51 *Madhu ke khilte cehre meṁ zimmedāriyōṁ, pareśāniyōṁ kī āṛī-tirchī anekoṁ dhūmil rekhāeṁ khimcī thīm.*

52 This invites reflection on different kinds of etiquette and behavioural rules, contrasting the mainstream urban (largely north Indian, Hindu-Muslim or Christian) sense of etiquette and social norms with that of the Adivasi (perhaps Oraon). One might further want to consider the possibility that the impact of the former on the village, here exemplified by the convent school, may have weakened or replaced local forms of education (e.g. the Ghotul/Dhumkuria), leaving Madhu, who dropped out of school, in a kind of limbo, without any sort of education at all. This dynamic can better be appreciated in the short story *Anchui parchāiyām* (Ekka 1986: 102–110).

than from her young age. Her 'thriving in nature' still conveys an idealised view of the rural space, making Madhu another noble savage.

### **ādivāsī and vanvāsī**

It could be argued that the cases considered so far have concerned rather individualised characters, and that their descriptions therefore do not arise from a stereotypical view of the Adivasis in general (with the exception of the first story, in which innocence, happiness and an absence of worries were attributed to all people; see above). Furthermore, if the identification of the characters with Adivasis was explicit in the first short story and implicit in the last, it was somewhat looser in the second and third ones, where it could be inferred from hints (such as dark skin colour)<sup>53</sup> that were not openly stated. Therefore, instead of considering other cases exhibiting patterns and vocabulary similar to those observed in the four stories above, attention will now be given to instances where the author refers to Adivasis as a group rather than as individuals. In doing so, another peculiarity of Ekka's writing will emerge, namely the terminology that is adopted.

Ekka makes use of two terms when speaking of Adivasis: *ādivāsī* and *vanvāsī*. The term *ādivāsī* appears in three of the twenty-two stories making up the collection: first in *Rāj Kumārōm ke deś meṁ* (see the first long quotation), and subsequently in *Anchui parchāiyām* (see below) and *Jaṅgal ke phūl* 'Jungle flowers' (see Ekka 1986: 111), while *vanvāsī* appears in four of them (see below). The former term does not need much comment, as it is the term preferred by Adivasis, at least in Jharkhand and central India.<sup>54</sup> However, considering the vantage point of Adivasi politics in Jharkhand, it is peculiar that the author did not refrain from using the more controversial term *vanvāsī* 'forest dweller', which is deeply associated with, and usually used by, the Hindu right wing, and the RSS in particular, as part of their efforts to incorporate Adivasis into Hinduism (Bara 2009: 94 and Dasgupta 2016: 1).

It appears that when these terms (and especially the latter one) are used, the vocabulary of innocence and simplicity is often juxtaposed with them. In *Anchui parchāiyām* (Untouched shadows), the term *vanvāsī* is alternated with *ādivāsī*, in both cases linked with the adjectives listed above or similar ones. At first, the narration speaks 'of those pure-hearted, innocent, simple Adivasis' (Ekka 1986: 103)<sup>55</sup> complemented by a slightly eroticised description of female bodies:

[...] perfectly shaped strong bodies, of dark complexion, or the colour of copper melted in a furnace, and women with equally dark skin, softer than black flowers, but wrapped in the unique redness of their *cunrī*. (Ekka 1986: 103)<sup>56</sup>

Later, the term *ādivāsī* is replaced by *vanvāsī* in the phrase 'simple, innocent *vanvāsī*...' (Ekka 1986: 109).<sup>57</sup> The terminology is quite repetitive, although two terms have been added, *saral*<sup>58</sup> and *sīdhe-sāde*. *Saral* means 'straight, direct', as does *sīdhā*, from which *sīdhā-sādā* derives. Furthermore, both

53 The fact that the characters are Adivasis is arguably also implicit in the idea underlying the entire collection. In the preface to *Partī zamīn*, which contains almost all the short stories later republished in *Rāj Kumārōm ke deś meṁ*, including all those considered here except *San flāvar*, the author clearly indicates that he is writing about Adivasis (see Ekka 1983: 1).

54 The term 'Adivasi' emerged in Chotanagpur in the 1930s as a calque of the word 'aborigine'. Its usage was more or less formalised when the *Choṭānagpur Unnati Samāj* (Chotanagpur Improvement Society) was renamed the *Adivāsī Mahāsabhā* (Adivasi General Assembly).

55 *bhole-bhāle, māsūm, saral ādivāsiom ke*.

56 *Sāmivare yā bhaṭṭhī meṁ tapāye tāmbē kī tarah sāmce meṁ ḍale faulādī jism, nāriyām sāmvalī, śyāmvarṇ phūl se komāl, par anokhī lālimā meṁ śakti kī cunrī lapete*. The *cunrī* is a long, shawl-like piece of cloth worn by women, especially at weddings. The fact that the Adivasi women are described as wearing this type of cloth instead of 'thick saris' speaks for a context where the culture of the plains has reached more deeply into the Adivasi village. However, I am unable to determine the exact meaning of the phrase 'śakti kī cunrī'.

57 *side-sāde [sic], bhole-bhāle vanvāsī...*

58 'Saral' appeared in the previous section as *sahaj-saral*, but it was not commented on.

terms also share a variety of metaphorical senses ranging from 'correct' to 'simple, easy', among others (cf. McGregor 1993: 991, 1020). With respect to a person, *saral* can be translated as 'simple' or 'honest', as can *sīdhā-sādā*, which may also have the meanings 'righteous', 'good-natured' and 'ingenuous' (cf. McGregor 1993: 1020; Verma 2007b: 298, 380).

The description is similar in the short story *Ḍāk baṅglā* (Post office), where the strength and beauty of the '*vanvāsī*' are once again placed alongside their pure heartedness, innocence and other qualities, while the surroundings, an unspecified mountain area, are described as unworried and free:

[...] strong as rocks, hard bodies made of steel, pure-hearted, cheerful, generous *vanvāsī*, [like] deer tossing about on soft flowers, leaping around, caught up in tinkling laughter, unrestrained, innocent, young mountain girls of dark complexion. An open, unworried, free, natural courtyard. A great resting place for the mind. (Ekka 1986: 141)<sup>59</sup>

In the story *Tumhīm kaho kahām jāem* (You say where we shall go), which deals with the relentless deforestation and other injustices perpetrated by the contractors, the following is said:

How fearful the whole settlement grew then. Clouds of apprehension descended in dense clusters over the houses and courtyards. In the hearts and minds of the innocent *vanvāsī*, darkness fell. (Ekka 1986: 126)<sup>60</sup>

In the final story of the collection, *Pāro* (Paro), the term *vanvāsī* is also used, although without any particular qualifying words. A line reads, 'We were suffering from thirst, and those silent *vanvāsī* began to look at us with eyes full of empathy'.<sup>61</sup>

## The moulding of the Adivasi 'other': A discussion

The examples considered here show that romanticism and stereotyping are an integral part of Peter Paul Ekka's portrayal of the Adivasis. It has been seen that the author is particularly prone to adopting a vocabulary that stresses qualities such as childlike innocence<sup>62</sup> and simplicity, and sometimes also carefreeness, happiness, freedom, foolishness, rusticity, and some physical characteristics. The recurrent attribution of such qualities to the Adivasis thus seems to substantiate an earlier observation: namely that Ekka's characterisation is very similar to that of the mid-nineteenth-century administrators-turned-ethnographers, who saw in tribals the manifestation of an Arcadian simplicity and a hedonistic lifestyle (cf. Chiocchetti 2025: 199), tropes that have reemerged in more recent times.<sup>63</sup> In this sense, Ekka can be grouped with those non-Adivasi authors who have been criticised for stereotyping the Adivasis, with Mahasweta Devi being perhaps the most famous example.<sup>64</sup> It has also been noted that such qualities are more often repeatedly attributed to female characters, revealing a stereotypical vision of the female Adivasi in particular, as if the female Adivasi encapsulates these characteristics to a higher degree. Moreover, the romantic features of the natural environment observed elsewhere (Chiocchetti 2025: 190–204) are encountered here (arguably in an even clearer

59 [...] *pahārī caṭṭānoṃ kī tarah mazbūt, sakht, faulādī jism, dil se bhole-bhāle, hāmsmukh, dildār vanvāsī, phūloṃ-sā komal par hiraṇoṃ-sī culbulātī, uchaltī-kūdatī, khankatī haṃsī meṃ liptī, unṃukt, māsūm śyāmvarṇ pahārī bālāem. Khulā-khulā, beparvāh-sā āzād prakṛti-prāṅgaṇ. Man dil ko barā sukūn milā thā.*

60 *Pūrī bastī tab kis kadar śaṅkit ho uṭhī thī. Andeśe ke bādāl ghar-āṅgaṇ meṃ jhuṇḍ-ke-jhuṇḍ utar āye the. Bhole-bhāle vanvāsiyōṃ ke man-dil meṃ andherā ghīr āyā thā.*

61 *Hamne pyās bujhāyī aur un mūk vanvāsiyōṃ ko hamdardī bhārī nazroṃ se dekhne lage the.*

62 Note that even the adjective *māsūm*, despite the possibility of a direct link with innocence with regard to exploitation, is often used in a romantic way in phrases like 'innocent faces', 'innocent eyes', etc.

63 Cf. Skaria 1997: 742.

64 More on this follows below.

manner), as if the author wanted to indicate the close relationship between the Adivasis and their environment by showing how they share the same qualities.<sup>65</sup>

It is important to note that the emphasis on the above-mentioned qualities in the short stories occurs in so far as the narrator/observer perceives them as peculiarities – features worth stressing – thereby generating a contrast between those who possess such qualities, namely the Adivasis, and those who lack them, the non-Adivasis. By retaining those qualities, the Adivasis emerge as 'others' in relation to the non-Adivasis. Such a contraposition also positions the narrator (who is usually a character in the story) at the opposite pole to the Adivasis. This seems to be the case regardless of whether or not the narrator is an Adivasi, as there is no appreciable difference between the two scenarios.<sup>66</sup>

At this point, it is impossible not to recognise in the narrator the alter ego of the author. Indeed, most of the characteristics attributed to the narrator/observer (being a student, a writer, or someone who returns to his village after several years away) perfectly match the biography of Peter Paul Ekka, himself a fiction author who spent most of his life studying and teaching at universities, and who sporadically visited his village.<sup>67</sup> Taken together, all these hints suggest that the perspective of the narrator coincides quite accurately with that of the author. This is important, as is the fact that, despite being an Adivasi himself, the author creates a representation of the Adivasi as an 'other' filled with all the romantic and stereotypical characteristics described above. It follows that what was initially presented as an opposition between Adivasis and non-Adivasis needs to be further problematised. It could be argued that the opposition does not rest on a purely Adivasi/non-Adivasi basis, but is of a different kind, and that the 'otherness' is therefore based on different grounds altogether.

To pursue this possibility, it is important to reconsider the concrete differences (as opposed to the differences attributed by the narrator) between the narrator/author and the characters that are subjected to stereotyping description. A clear picture immediately emerges. The characters in the short stories display a combination of the following characteristics: having little or no education, speaking a dialect rather than standard Hindi, performing manual work, belonging to the lowest strata of society and, above all, being more or less embedded in a village culture, seemingly little affected by modernity or caught up in the process of modernisation.<sup>68</sup> In contrast, the narrator, as observed above, is either a college student or a writer, a son of a well-off family, someone who has left the village for the city, and someone who belongs to a higher social class. Education seems to play a particularly important role. The contraposition between the narrator and 'the other' is strengthened by the presence or absence of education and its associated skills of literacy and the ability to speak English and standard Hindi.

It is thus evident that primitivist fantasies about pre-modern/pre-industrial societies (or pre-modern/pre-industrial features of rural societies), in which the relative simplicity of modes of production (and perhaps a less complex bureaucracy) are turned into generalised qualities of the people belonging to those societies, do indeed lie at the root of this alterity.<sup>69</sup> Such is the viewpoint of the author, who, having grown apart from that rural culture, lacks these qualities just as the rest of mainstream

<sup>65</sup> Recall the carefreeness attributed first to Mother Earth and then to the people, in *Rāj Kumārōṃ ke deś meṃ*.

<sup>66</sup> It is not always clear whether or not the narrator is an Adivasi. If in some cases he clearly is not (as in *Rāj Kumārōṃ ke deś meṃ*), in others, especially in *Ek saṛak kaccī-sī*, he probably is.

<sup>67</sup> This is the case in *Rāj Kumārōṃ ke deś meṃ* and *Ek saṛak kaccī-sī*, but also in several of his other short stories.

<sup>68</sup> Most vividly in *Rāj Kumārōṃ ke deś meṃ*, but also in *Rozī* and *Ek saṛak kaccī-sī*, and, in less detail, in the stories mentioned in the last section. In Raghu's case, there are no concrete elements, but his occupation as a gardener may be related to an acquaintance with 'gardening' acquired in a rural setting, though this idea is somewhat speculative and cannot be verified.

<sup>69</sup> For comparison, one can consider the representation of an Adivasi girl in Alice Ekka's *Koyal kī lāṛlī Sumrī*, where the simplicity of the character was contraposed to the artificiality of the outside world: 'a healthy, simple and spontaneous girl [...] Far, far from the artificiality of the world' [*ek svasth, saral aur svacchand bālikā [...] saṃsār kī kṛtrimatā se dūr atī dūr.*] (Tete 2015: 57).

society does. Thus, the alterity of the characters with regard to the narrator appears to be more a matter of the stereotypes about the rural world and elements linked to it – social class, education and perhaps gender – than any kind of 'Adivasiness' *tout court*, if the latter simply means 'being an Adivasi' or belonging to the category 'Adivasi'. Alternatively, it could be said that if the contraposition between Adivasis and non-Adivasis rests on other binary oppositions, for instance rural/urban, educated/uneducated, and sometimes even civilised/uncivilised (Raghu and Madhu), then the alterity emerging from such oppositions is a matter of Adivasiness, if 'being Adivasi' encompasses all the other qualities that the word elicits. In other words, 'being Adivasi' creates an alterity only insofar as being Adivasi entails all the rest, namely being a rural peasant, being uneducated, and so on.

This interpretation is more consistent with the observation that the narrator/author creates such a representation despite being an Adivasi himself. If the literary debate stresses the importance of experience as the basis for writing, then it cannot neglect the fact that Ekka's life journey, conducted outside of, and indeed far away from, the cultural horizon of his village, is itself an important part of his experience. This experience has of course also shaped his perspective. As in *Ek sarak kaccī-sī* (and other similar stories not mentioned here), this is the perspective of someone who looks at the village of his childhood after spending many years in various cities and abroad, mostly in academic milieus.<sup>70</sup> His long acquaintance with the complexity of modern, heavily industrialised and bureaucratised urban society, as opposed to the traditional village of his childhood, has led him to develop a perspective that aligns more with urban culture than with the culture into which he was born. It is through this perspective that the author identifies rural Adivasis as innocent, simple, pure of heart and to some extent worrisome (at least until contractors arrive and begin wreaking havoc), despite the hardships of rural life.

Of course, it could be argued that the kind of romantic and stereotypical representations described above might reflect the author's intention to portray such attitudes as a way of 'playing' with such a perspective. However, this does not seem to be supported. There are no elements in the texts to suggest that the reader should interpret the perspective as being subverted. Indeed, this is the case even when the author is clearly 'playing' with perspectives, such as in *Rājīkumāroraṁ ke deś meṁ*, where the narrator's 'outsider' perspective allows the author to depict the internal life of an Adivasi village.

As stated previously, this analysis reflects cases considered elsewhere, providing more vivid and explicit examples that corroborate the thesis already proposed there.<sup>71</sup> The only objection that might refute this analysis is the idea that Adivasi authors had to conform to the norms of mainstream literature and readers' expectations.<sup>72</sup> If correct, this would contradict the authors' and critics' claims of authenticity. In any case, there is currently no substantial evidence to support this idea. While one could and perhaps should give this possibility the benefit of the doubt in the case of Alice Ekka, about whom very little is still known,<sup>73</sup> it seems less plausible for Peter Paul Ekka, who does not appear to have expressed any dissatisfaction about this issue. On the other hand, in the preface to *Partī zamīn* he expressed an intention to expose the tremendous repercussions of 'this blind race of development' (Ekka 1983: 1),<sup>74</sup> from which one can infer that his fictional writing was intended to be realistic, and the patina of romanticism applied to it and later stories accidental.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, in his introduction

<sup>70</sup> This also explains the sense of estrangement felt by some of his alter egos.

<sup>71</sup> This also includes the last point, posited in the case of Alice Ekka and eventually discarded, as it seemed doubtful (see Chiocchetti 2021).

<sup>72</sup> This argument was presented to me in discussions during my visit with activists and authors in Ranchi.

<sup>73</sup> In any case, this seems unlikely, as she published her short stories in the journal *Adivāsī*, a mixed-content magazine (including various genres, even folk songs) meant to provide a space for Adivasi voices.

<sup>74</sup> *Vikās kī yah andhī daur*.

<sup>75</sup> In the preface, the author speaks of the 'generosity of the Adivasi society' [*ādivāsī samāj kī dariyādilī*] and the fact that 'in innocence nobody cheated or deceived anybody; they were incapable of doing so. They were untouched by all this' [*māsūmiyat meṁ kisī ko ṭhagnā, dhokā denā, unheṁ ātā nahīm thā*] (Ekka: 1983: 1).

to a collection of short stories by the Adivasi author Rose Kerketta, he demonstrated his awareness of, and adherence to, the idea of authentic writing, and praised the author for providing 'a true picture of Adivasi society' (Kerketta 2017: 19).<sup>76</sup>

However, whereas in previous cases, textual evidence was used to critique the concept of literary authenticity based on the *anubhūti* and *sahānubhūti* dichotomy found in the literary debate, the case of Peter Paul Ekka can be used to briefly address the concepts of 'othering' and epistemic violence. I shall pursue this line of investigation by relating it to some key texts of postcolonial theory, namely Said's critique in *Orientalism* and Spivak's equally famous theorisation of the silencing of subalterns in *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, alongside her other essays in the collection *In Other Worlds*.

Notoriously, Said produced, if not the first, then certainly the most influential and direct critique of the emergence of the Oriental as 'other', which he identified as a 'Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient' ([1978] 2003: 3). It should be recalled that Said based his critique on Foucault's notion of discourse ([1978] 2003: 3), thus assuming that the creation of the 'other' was the product of power relationships and, in this particular case, of the dominance of the West over the East.<sup>77</sup> It is equally important to recall Said's strong criticism of the ontological dichotomy that had been constructed between West and East.<sup>78</sup> It seems then, that the case of Peter Paul Ekka (and Alice Ekka) can help to refute the first assumption (i.e. Foucault's idea that power is always imbricated with various discourses).<sup>79</sup> Of course, one might argue that Ekka, despite being an Adivasi and a supporter of the Adivasi cause, was unconsciously adopting the style produced by a power discourse. I do not believe this to be the case, however. First, one must remember that Ekka's stereotyping takes a positive form. Secondly, his othering appears to be 'genuine', in the sense that it seems to derive from the perception of 'them' as different from 'me'. Thirdly, and more importantly for my argument, Ekka's othering matches modern forms of the othering of 'traditional' (mostly meaning pre-industrial) societies – continuing the romantic idea of Adivasis being 'sons of the soil'<sup>80</sup> – that have emerged with respect to 'indigenous people' as (better) alternatives to modern industrial society.<sup>81</sup> Even his use of the term *vanvāsī* seems intended to convey this positive understanding of the Adivasis as 'forest people' rather than being a derogatory term related to a right-wing ideology.<sup>82</sup>

The second point (i.e. the otherness of the subaltern subject) rescues Said, but contests later attitudes towards postcolonial subjects. As is well known, Said became a pillar of postcolonial theory and subaltern studies (although he was much criticised within postcolonialism itself),<sup>83</sup> which is something he considered to have been forced upon him.<sup>84</sup> Ironically, the humanities took the opposite

<sup>76</sup> *ādivāsī samāj kī saccī tasvīr*.

<sup>77</sup> A similar argument has been proposed by Spivak, 1985.

<sup>78</sup> Said reiterates this point several times in the book, as well as in his 2003 preface. Cf. Said [1978] 2003: x, xv, 2, 233, 237, 259.

<sup>79</sup> One might equally well try to challenge Said's and Foucault's assumptions on their own terms. For such an attempt, see Ahmad 1992: Ch. 5. Here I follow another line of questioning.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Weiner 1978. This idea is widespread with regard to Adivasis, and is promulgated by several Adivasi intellectuals (cf. Chiocchetti 2025: 77).

<sup>81</sup> Elsewhere I have attempted to highlight this more clearly. See Chiocchetti 2026.

<sup>82</sup> Note that until the rise of ecological arguments, the link to the jungle was meant to be derogatory, although today it is precisely the opposite. However, the term still carries a hint of the old scorn. Therefore, despite the fact that the Adivasis themselves now want to assert their connection with nature, and thus with forests, the term is not perceived as positive.

<sup>83</sup> Consider how postcolonial scholar Robert Young, after stating that Said's critique 'effectively founded postcolonial studies as an academic discipline' (2001: 383), said that 'postcolonial studies has actually defined itself as an academic discipline through the range of objections, reworkings and counter-arguments that have been marshalled in such great variety against Said's work' (2001: 384).

<sup>84</sup> Compare the following lines from the afterword to *Orientalism*: 'Nevertheless, *Orientalism* has more often been thought of as a kind of testimonial to subaltern status – the wretched of the earth talking back – than as a multi-cultural critique of power using knowledge to advance itself. Thus as its author I have been seen as playing an as-

course to that suggested by Said (i.e. of moving beyond ontologising dichotomies), so that cultures and identities, and subaltern categories such as Dalit and Adivasi in particular, are made into ontological subjects as anticipated in the introduction. In the case of Adivasis, this was also due to the rise of indigeneity as an international subjectivity.<sup>85</sup> The problem with this process is precisely that pointed out by Said regarding the representation of the Orient by Orientalists: 'The Orient is Oriental no matter the specific case' ([1978] 2003: 255). The membership rule that springs from current identity politics and that is also reflected in literary debates has precisely this defect, namely that it essentialises categories and fails to consider their internal differentiation. In more practical terms, this means that an Adivasi author will always be credited with writing authentically and a non-Adivasi author will never be fully accepted.

In *Can the Subaltern Speak* (1988) Spivak proposed the argument that the subaltern is silenced by the epistemic violence of those who seek to represent them. This is, of course, largely a critique of the Western European humanist tradition. Spivak's famous article was preceded by the above-mentioned collection of essays *In Other Worlds*. It is interesting and indicative that the third part of the book, titled *Entering the Third World*, is almost entirely dedicated to the Bengali author Mahasweta Devi (1926–2016).<sup>86</sup> As the title of the collection and of the third part of the book clearly suggests, the third world is the 'other' world meant by the author. Furthermore, it is equally clear that Spivak must have considered Mahasweta Devi to be a plausible representative of the Third World 'otherness' – if not of a tribal woman's 'otherness', as can be inferred from the foreword to the translation of 'Draupadi'.<sup>87</sup> However, when discussing these issues with several Adivasi intellectuals and writers, I have discovered that they strongly criticise Mahasweta Devi and ultimately reject her for being one of the many non-Adivasi authors whose work misrepresents the Adivasis.<sup>88</sup> The matter is clear: Mahasweta Devi cannot represent them. To them, her work does not constitute any kind of counter-narrative. On the contrary, to put it in 'subalternist' terms, it is seen as one of the many attempts at subject constitution that, by being performed by outsiders, necessarily reflect the same epistemic violence that silences or at best misrepresents the Adivasis. Her fate is thus not too dissimilar to that of Premchand and later Arundhati Roy with respect to Dalits.<sup>89</sup>

Such cases help to highlight the impasse to which the subalternist approach and the fight against Western ethnocentrism ultimately led, namely an uncompromising insiderism, or 'group based truth', or even 'group solipsism',<sup>90</sup> which took root in the very ground prepared by Said and Spivak, who, interestingly enough, did not really promote such a stance.<sup>91</sup> Ironically, the challenge to 'positivism',

---

signed role: that of self-representing consciousness of what had formerly been suppressed and distorted in the learned texts of a discourse historically conditioned to be read not by Orientals but by other Westerners. This is an important point, and it adds to the sense of fixed identities battling across a permanent divide that my book quite specifically abjures, but which it paradoxically presupposes and depends on' ([1978] 2003: 336).

85 See Niezen 2003.

86 Two of the four chapters are translations of her short stories ('Draupadi', the tale of a tribal woman, and 'Breast-Giver'), and one is an essay that discusses the short story 'Breast-Giver'.

87 Consider the following lines: 'We will not be able to speak to the women out there if we depend completely on conferences and anthologies by Western-trained informants. [...] In inextricably mingling historical-political specificity with the sexual differential in a literary discourse, Mahasweta Devi invites us to begin effacing that image' Spivak 1987: 179.

88 The factual inaccuracies and romanticism in her work are why Adivasi authors and intellectuals dismiss her literary representations.

89 Premchand's rejection by some Dalit critics and writers was much stronger (one of his novels, *Rangbhūmi*, was publicly burned in 2004). The basis of his rejection was a putatively overly dark, helpless and offensive representation of Dalit characters (see Gajarawala 2013: chapter 1). For Arundhati Roy, consider Anand 2003: 17.

90 Cf. Merton 1972.

91 Cf. Said, 'It is not the thesis of this book to suggest that there is such a thing as a real or true Orient (Islam, Arab, or whatever); nor is it to make an assertion about the necessary privilege of an "insider" perspective over an "outsider" one' ([1978] 2003: 32) and Spivak, ' [...] what I find useful is the sustained and developing work on the me-



and the project of 'letting the subaltern speak', ended up triggering yet another form of positivism – one that easily lends itself to intellectual imperialism.<sup>92</sup> But why do Spivak's essays work against each other so much? Of course, what has happened since then is that the space of otherness has simply moved from the 'Third World' to, in the case of India, Dalits and Adivasis. The myth of a Third World Literature contesting the centre's authenticity (cf. Ashcroft et al. 1989) has given way to still other/*others*' myths of authenticity.

## Conclusion

Two main conclusions can be drawn from the above discussion. First, because othering, as it has been shown, can occur within a cultural formation – in the case presented here within the 'Adivasi' group – such a process can depend on various different terms, through several of the variables that constitute the fragments of a cultural formation. Thus, group membership cannot be taken as the sole basis for establishing otherness. In other words, one is 'the other' of someone belonging to another ethnic group, just as one can be the 'other' of someone of one's own ethnicity but with a different particularisation within the ethnic group, or of one's brother or father. Arguing for the radical alterity of one of the many terms upon which alterity can rest ultimately requires making an arbitrary decision – undoubtedly motivated by objective realities such as the historical emergence of different kinds of subjectivities (including the East/West divide) – yet nonetheless an arbitrary one.<sup>93</sup> The case of Peter Paul Ekka has proven to be quite illuminating in this regard. The 'other' that he produces when representing the Adivasis is an 'other' not only to the non-Adivasis, but also to himself, due to the different terms on the basis of which othering can occur.<sup>94</sup> This poses serious problems for narrow readings of culture and for the ideas of literary authenticity that such readings generate.

Secondly, the case of Peter Paul Ekka destabilises the idea that othering and misrepresentation are fundamentally imbricated with power relations, as suggested in the foundational texts of postcolonial theory. On the contrary, it has been shown that the mentioned processes can depend on other dynamics than epistemic violence. Most importantly for the present and future, however, the major weakness of the postcolonial/subalternist approach is that it moves dangerously close to arguments that can easily become the vehicles for other forms of intellectual imperialism, which is quite the opposite of their intended purpose.

## References

- Ahmad, Aijaz (1992) *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Theories*. London: Verso.  
 Anand, S. (ed.) (2003) *Touchable Tales: Publishing and Reading Dalit Literature*. Chennai: Navayana.  
 Anderson, Benedict (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.  
 Ashcroft, Bill et al. (eds) (1989) *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge.

---

*chanics* of the constitution of the Other; we can use it to much greater analytic and interventionist advantage than invocations of the *authenticity* of the Other' (Spivak 1988: 90).

- 92 What I have in mind here is, for instance, the protest against a Muslim teacher of Sanskrit at BHU (see Dikshit 2019).  
 93 While it is important for a thorough understanding of the Adivasi case specifically, it is beyond the scope of this article to perform a synthesis of the emergence and reification of national, subnational, ethnic, caste-based and other subjectivities largely due to the circumstances of modernity and globalisation. However, some such analyses have become classics in the humanities. See Anderson 1983 and Gellner 1983 on nationalism, and Eriksen 1993 on ethnicity. For the Dalit and Adivasi cases, see Bayly 1999 for the former and Niezen 2003 for the transnational phenomenon of 'indigeneity'.  
 94 It would be interesting to see whether other works by the same author would confirm or challenge what emerged from the reading of the short stories considered here.

- Baraik, Savitri [Barāik, Sāvitrī] (2018) 'Kathākār pīṭar pāl ekkā: jhārkhaṇḍī samāj ke prāmāṇik pravaktā', *Ādivāsī* 149, 16: 3–5.
- Bara, Joseph (2009) 'Alien Construct and Tribal Contestation in Colonial Chhotanagpur: The Medium of Christianity', *Economic & Political Weekly* 44, 52: 90–96.
- Bayly, Susan (1999) *Caste, Society and Politics in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chiocchetti, Armin (2021) 'Alice Ekka and the Question of Authenticity in Hindi Adivasi Literature', *Orientalia Suecana* 70: 114–128.
- (2025) *Digging into anubhūti: Explorations in Hindi Adivasi Short Story Writing*. [Doctoral dissertation, Uppsala University].
- (2026 forthcoming) 'Eco-local and eco-global: Some literary interventions in Adivasi Hindi short stories', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*.
- Dasgupta, Sangeeta (2016) 'Introduction: Reading the Archive, Reframing 'Adivasi' Histories', in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 53, 1: 1–8.
- Dikshit, R. (Nov 18, 2019) BHU professor: I am a Muslim, why can't I teach Sanskrit. *The Times of India*. (Accessed 31 December 2024) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/varanasi/bhu-professor-i-am-a-muslim-why-cant-i-teach-sanskrit/articleshow/72092216.cms>
- Ekka, Peter Paul [Ekkā, Pīṭar Paul] (1983) *Partī zamīn*. Rāmci: Satya Bhārtī Prakāśan.
- (1986) *Rāj Kumārōṃ ke deś meṃ*. Rāmci: Satya Bhārtī Prakāśan.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland (1993) *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.
- Gadgil, Madhav and Guha, Ramachandra (1992) *This Fissured Land. An Ecological History of India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Gajawala, Toral Jatin (2013) *Untouchable Fictions: Literary Realism and the Crisis of Caste*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Gellner, Ernest (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Guru, Gopal and Sarukkai, Sundar (2012) *The Cracked Mirror: An Indian Debate on Experience and Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hansen, Kathryn (1981) 'Renu's Regionalism: Language and Form', *Journal of Asian Studies* 40, 2: 273–294.
- Heywood, Paolo. [2017] 2023 'Ontological turn, the'. In F. Stein (ed.) *The Open Encyclopedia of Anthropology*.
- Jesuit Alumni Association of India (March 12, 2018) *RIP Dr. Fr. Peter Paul Ekka SJ (RAN)* (Accessed 24 Sep 2024) <https://www.jaaindia.com/news/rip-dr-fr-peter-paul-ekka-sj-ran>
- Kerketta, Rose [Kerkeṭṭā, Roz] (2017) *Biruvār gamchā tathā anyā kahāṇiyām*. Nāī Dillī: Prabhāt Prakāśan.
- Kuper, Adam (1994) 'Culture, Identity and the Project of a Cosmopolitan Anthropology', *Man* 29, 3: 537–54.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1963) *Structural Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.
- McGregor, R. S. (1993) *The Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Merton, Robert K., (1972) 'Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge', *American Journal of Sociology* 78, 1: 9–47.
- Niezen, Ronald (2003) *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity*. London: University of California Press.
- Patel, Anand Kumar [Pāṭel, Ānand Kumār] (n.d.) *Ādivāsī saṃvednā aur pīṭar pāl ekkā ke upanyās*. Rāmci: Kāthālik Pres.
- Rangarajan, Mahesh (1996) *Fencing the Forest. Conservation and Ecological Change in India's Central Provinces 1860–1914*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Said, Edward W. [1978] 2003 *Orientalism*. [s.l.]: Penguin Books.
- Simmel, Georg (1905) *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie: eine erkenntnistheoretische Studie*. 2nd ed. Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot.
- Skaria, Ajay (1997) 'Shades of Wildness Tribe, Caste, and Gender in Western India', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 56, 3: 726–745.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1985) 'The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives Author(s)' *History and Theory* 24, 3: 247–272.
- (1987) *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. Methuen: New York.
- (1988) 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana: Illinois University Press.
- Tete, Vandana (ed.) [Ṭeṭe, Vandana] (2015) *Elis ekkā kī kahāṇiyām*. Nāī Dillī: Rādhākṛṣṇā Prakāśan.
- Verma, Ramachandra [Varmma, Rāmacandra] (chief ed.) (2007a) *Mānak hindī śabdkoś. cauthā khaṇḍ*. Ilāhābād: Hindi Sāhityā Sammelan.
- (2007b) *Mānak hindī śabdkoś. pāṃcvām khaṇḍ*. Ilāhābād: Hindi Sāhityā Sammelan.
- Weber, Max (1913) 'Ueber einige Kategorien der verstehenden Soziologie' *Logos* 4: 254.
- Weiner, Myron (1978) *Sons of the Soil*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wessler, Heinz Werner (2020) 'From Marginalisation to Rediscovery of Identity: Dalit and Adivasi Voices in Hindi Literature', *Studia Neophilologica* 92, no. 2: 159–174.
- Young, Robert J. C. (2001) *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.