

eration: *Kindheit und Adoleszenz in der zeitgenössischen japanischen Literatur*” (Psychograms of a lost generation: Childhood and adolescence in contemporary Japanese literature) considers five novels by authors ranging from Murakami Ryū to Kirino Natsuo as exemplary texts that both depict and critique the violence and precarity that underlie the contemporary experience of many Japanese children and adolescents. The concluding chapter, “A Daughter’s Flight from M/Other in Yamagishi Ryōko’s ‘Yasha gozen’ (Lady Demon),” by Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase, examines mother-daughter relationships through a close reading of a manga that treats domesticity in Japan as a battleground for both mothers and daughters.

In sum, *Kindheit in der japanischen Geschichte: Vorstellungen und Erfahrungen / Childhood in Japanese History: Concepts and Experiences* is a fascinating and extremely informative collection of essays that introduces a relatively little-known topic to European and American readers. With its finely detailed perspectives on the child and childhood experience across the broad sweep of Japanese pre-modern and modern history, this volume provides a comprehensive, distinctive, and much-needed contribution to childhood studies that is certain to inspire further research engagement in the area. An eminently rewarding addition to recent scholarship, the volume will appeal to a wide range of academics, researchers, students, and informed general readers with an interest in Japanese history and Japanese studies as well as in the humanities and social sciences more broadly construed.

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Tamil: A Biography. By DAVID SHULMAN. Cambridge, Mass.: BELKNAP PRESS OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2016. Pp. xii + 402.

“A language is never a thing,” writes David Shulman in the preface to his provocative biography of the Tamil language. Identifying himself as Tamil’s “ghostwriter” and “biographer,” this book, as Shulman tells us, is a “cultural history of Tamil . . . with particular focus on the understandings and perceptions about the language that came to the surface over the two thousand years of its documented existence” (p. ix). Shulman identifies two main narratives, “one about the ways Tamil evolved in itself . . . and one about major expressive—especially poetic and literary—drives and themes, seen in a broad historical perspective that makes space for continuities” (p. ix). (But what, I would ask, about the discontinuities? I will address these questions towards the end of my review.)

In his first chapter, Shulman takes us from pre- to proto-history via a “linguistic survey,” but it is much more than that. He opens with a meditation on Tamil’s left-branching, agglutinative nature. Writing with deep empathy and understanding, he invites readers to acquire “at least some sense of what it feels like to “live inside” a Tamil sensibility (pp. 8–9), thereby getting a feel for the effects of Tamil’s linguistic structures on its speakers and listeners alike, the demands of the wholly formed Tamil sentence, and Tamil’s “wealth of modal and aspectual means” (p. 12).

As Shulman rightly insists, there is no such thing as “pure Tamil.” He then leads us through an examination of “external testimonies to the existence of ancient Tamil” (p. 25) by providing a discussion of Prākṛit and Tamil Brāhmī inscriptions. Through this evidence, we know that by the mid-third century BCE “the far south of India was home to several dynastic states whose names we know well from the later, so-called Sangam poems” (p. 22). But Shulman is quick to say that “the Tamil tradition has its own persistent theory about its origins” (p. 25), found in the figure of the “maverick Vedic sage Agastya,” who, according to medieval commentator Nakkīraṇār, was there at Tamil’s very beginning, and the “putative author of the first Tamil grammar,” the *Agattiyam*, “now lost except for a few stray verses quoted in medieval commentaries” (p. 27).

Shulman advises us to hold both perspectives in our minds—origin narratives from the inside and out—as we consider the shift from pre-history to proto-history, which begins around the second century BCE with the Tamil Brāhmī inscriptions. This is certainly early, and while the Aśokan inscriptions of the

mid-third century BCE mention four Tamil kingdoms, Dravidian speech is actually attested long before this; found in “Vedic Sanskrit, and in the Hebrew Bible” (p. 41). Moving ahead, what we end up with is “a strikingly coherent and convincing image of a culture driven by poetry and an ancient grammar that serves both poets and their royal patrons.” As Shulman perceptively adds, “Grammar defines politics no less than literature and music” (p. 42).

In his second chapter, Shulman explores the “in-ness” of *caṅkam* poetry, beginning with the *kiḷavi*, the “statement” or “clear expression” in the form of a contextualizing headnote, with which each *caṅkam* poem begins (p. 44), followed by *uḷḷurai-y-uvamam*, the “inset” or “a comparison that inhabits the inside,” and *iraicci*, “suggestion,” the latter two techniques that, in tandem, constitute what A. K. Ramanujan so perceptively called the “interior landscape” (pp. 44–45). Shulman’s translations of the *caṅkam* poems used as examples in this chapter are not precise—he has simplified them, and has rendered them in too colloquial a register for my taste—but they are *emotionally* precise, and he does note that these poems were “written for us”; that “the centuries fall away as soon as we hear them” (p. 54).

Shulman provides us with a fine discussion of what we can say about dates for the early texts, and while sometimes we fear that we can only sigh over the difficulties, he gives us useful signposts to use to consider what the texts and their commentators can offer us to think through probable “real” dates and chronological order, while wryly noting that “chronology is sometimes a useful diversion from real work” (p. 68). What do the poems give us? Some poems—especially those of the *puṟam* super-genre—have stories that have accrued to them over the centuries, and those stories affect our readings of the poems—and then there are the headnotes—the aforementioned *kiḷavis*—which, as Shulman remarks, attempt to project backwards “possible contexts to suit the poems.” He suggests that they can be viewed as “a type of early commentary . . . that may well go back to very early stages in the literary process” (p. 74). In other words, it is all about editing and the sense-making process. And ultimately, Shulman rightly and usefully stresses that we have to think of the *caṅkam* poems as existing in “clusters of time” across the anthologies (p. 77). Even if the poems offer us “fictionalized, or semi-fictionalized, accounts” of real, worldly events, the texts “reek of concrete, sensuous, often tragic reality. By far the strongest argument . . . in favor of an early date for the *puṟam* poems is precisely this overwhelming atmosphere in the poems of an intimately known set of circumstances along with the typical heroic values that make those circumstances somehow bearable” (p. 82). In thinking through these poems by regarding them in clusters unbounded by the fetters of anthologization, Shulman sees “a possible cluster as early as the second and third centuries, and another, more ample and possibly more likely one in the fourth and fifth” (p. 82). Neither can one forget the profound importance of Madurai as a literary center, the probable site of the final “codification and canonization” of the *caṅkam* poems (p. 82) in the eighth and ninth centuries. But putting the question of “when” aside, the composition and redaction of the *caṅkam* poems most certainly had a “where”: Shulman emphasizes that “we can be sure it happened in a singular cultural setting in real sites, and in specific political conditions” (p. 82), “and in large part at a place we can name . . . historical Pandya Madurai” (p. 87). He then situates the somewhat later works—the *Tirukkuraḷ*, *Cilappatikāram*, and *Maṇimēkalai*—“within the continuum of Tamil poetry” (pp. 102–3), paying special attention to the *Kāmattuppāl* (the “section on desire”) of the *Tirukkuraḷ*, often ignored in other studies of this text, which tend to favor its more didactic and moralizing sections.

In his third chapter, Shulman begins to take us deeper, and in doing so, he slowly reveals the true and unique nature of this book, which is not just a biography of Tamil, but also one of Tamil feeling—of anger and of love—as he takes us through the poems of the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava saints and their difficult ties to their gods. He explores *uyir* and *āvi*—both ancient words for the breath of life, the soul, or “aliveness,” as Shulman puts it (p. 107). He looks at the ways in which the medieval saint-poets altered the older literary conventions of *akam* poetry and molded them “to another expressive purpose,” in which the absent lover becomes god, resulting in exquisite poems of “hopeless yearning” (p. 108). The Tamil language itself is also praised “as the medium for connecting to god” (p. 121).

In the canonization of *caṅkam* and *bhakti* literature, *abhinaya*, “the language of hand and eye gestures” (p. 126), becomes just as important as, if not more than written and spoken words. Shulman suggests that *abhinaya* is “perhaps the most prestigious, also the most effective, medium of recording a South Indian text” (p. 126). His comments about these processes are inspired and deeply insightful,

as he writes about how certain “performance genres . . . assume . . . the preexistence of expansion and explication relative to the text waiting . . . to be expanded and explicated” (pp. 130–31); in other words, how the embodiment of a text—through memorization and performance alike—is just as crucial in canonization as writing something down, indeed quite possibly more important; and it cannot be regarded as “complete before the *abhinaya*, with its narrative rituals, is in place” (p. 131). Shulman also emphasizes the powers of the human voice in textual enactment through singing, as is the case with the *Tēvāram* reciters, the *ōtuvārs*, who sing the text in the *viruttam* style, but Shulman does not allow us to forget the inherent magic of “the graphic text” (p. 141). Shulman concludes this chapter by claiming that “South Indian *bhakti*, as we find it [in] the rich repertoire of the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava poets in the second half of the first millennium, is probably the single greatest contribution of the Tamil country to pan-Indian civilization” (p. 148), but I would add that it is the affective universe of *caṅkam* poetry, which provided *bhakti* poetry with much of its emotive and aesthetic scaffolding, that made all of it possible.

In chapter four Shulman moves us from the Pandyas and Pallavas into the rich world of the Cōḷa Empire, with its amazing forays into Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, and China. The Cōḷas left us with official genealogies, as well as many literary works such as those of the *ulā* and *paraṇi* genres, and Kampan’s exquisite Tamil *Rāmāyaṇa*. With Cōḷa literature comes an emphasis on realism and the literary valuations of truth as exemplified in Kampan, evident in Shulman’s absolutely stunning translations of sections of the *Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa*, rendered in beautiful epic-register English. What follows is a meditation on the unique qualities of Tiruttakkaṭēvar’s Jain masterpiece, *Civaka-cintāmaṇi* (pp. 176–80). It is a real pleasure to read Shulman as he thinks and feels his way through Tamil literary history.

With Cōḷa expansion came the spread of the Tamil language. Although Shulman cautions us against tying Tamil’s fortunes too closely to those of the Tamil state, he does note that “the Cōḷa kings and administrators did greatly extend the use of Tamil prose, and sometimes of poetry, as well” (p. 185), primarily into Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Cōḷa-period authors ushered in “a series of shifts in taste as well as in poetic theory” (p. 191), and regardless of the forms that the Cōḷa state took, it is certain that under the Cōḷa kings “the Tamil language burst out of its original boundaries and became a cosmopolitan medium spoken in far-flung diaspora communities, from Sri Lanka to southern China” (p. 193). Tamil also became an “‘imperial’ language in other ways, such as in its social and sectarian reach, in its self-understanding as a universal tongue easily on a par with Sanskrit, and in its ever-richer self-awareness as a heterogeneous tradition with competing canons and far-reaching meta-grammatical features” (p. 193), resulting in a regrammaticalization of the Tamil arts “even as literary taste was radically revised” (p. 193).

In his fifth chapter, and in my opinion, the most gratifying one in the entire book, Shulman makes us happy citizens of the “Republic of Syllables,” in which we are ferried on to the polyglossic world of post-Cōḷa literature. Here, we encounter Kāḷamēkappulavar (“Black Cloud”), “the new, pragmatic Tamil poet-wizard,” and the brilliant commentator Pērācīriyar, “the conservative polymath committed to defining, defending, and explicating the classical Tamil past” (p. 203). We find ourselves shuttled forward and backward between the poles of innovation and conservatism. Shulman reads Pērācīriyar’s “classical backlash” as a sign that “something radically new [had] taken over the world of Tamil letters” (p. 204). Pērācīriyar’s concerns with “correct” practice were deeply rooted in the “gold standard” of *caṅkam* poetry, and the *Tolkāppiyam*, Tamil’s oldest extant grammar and treatise on poetic convention and usage, delimited and defined “his practical field of operation” (p. 205). We also encounter the dazzling playfulness of Pukaḷēnti, the *venpāppuli*, or “tiger” of the *venpā*, a popular and enduring verse form (p. 210). But the true contribution of this chapter is Shulman’s lengthy and much-needed discussion on *maṇi-pravāḷam* and the Malayalam *Lilā-tilakam* (pp. 215–33), whose anonymous author is “clearly haunted by the overwhelming presence of Tamil and its ancient sources both literary and erudite, in close proximity to but also within Kerala, [and] thinks of Tamil as a translocal, . . . transregional—one might say cosmopolitan—language” (p. 229). Shulman claims that it is Tamil’s grammar “in the widest sense of the word” and its sustained historical impact “through which it wields its authority” (pp. 229–30). And within the linguistic and literary phenomenon of *maṇi-pravāḷam* itself, “the very meaning of the word ‘Sanskrit’ was far from fixed—shifting from the notion of a distinct, full-fledged language to that of a prestigious speech register useful for specific expressive aims” (p. 234).

In chapter six Shulman revisits the city of Tenkāci in all of its sixteenth-century glory, so beautifully unfolded for us in his 2012 book, *More Than Real: A History of the Imagination in South India* (also published by Harvard University Press). Here, he asks what a word such as “modern” might mean in Tamil (p. 249). This is the point at which I must disagree with Shulman’s narrative. He states, “In Tamil, believe it or not”—and I choose *not* to believe it—“one could draw a line leading from late-sixteenth-century Tenkāci poetic narratives to twentieth-century prose artists such as Putumaippittan, with a big but necessary detour around late-nineteenth-century novelists such as Vedanayakam Pillai and Rajam Iyer” (p. 255). Why this detour? And one *could* draw such a line, but I do not think one should. It is perfectly fine to focus on literary realism and its textual lineages in Tamil, but it is far more useful to think about realism within the context of distinct literary genres. To speak of the kinds of realism that we encounter in the genres of *nonṭi-nāṭakam*, *paḷḷu*, and *tūtu* messenger poems and somehow tie them to the realism encountered in the Tamil short-story forms of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries takes us nowhere. There are vast difference in authorial sensibilities, and vast differences in genre and class, and I find that in constructing such a master narrative, modern authors are stripped of *their own sense* of the world, their own sense of difference and newness in sensibility and approach, and ultimately their own sense of history and innovation in the world of Tamil literature. Saying that it is the same—and all part of a single, continuous line—flattens everything, and robs the modern Tamil short story of what makes it distinctive. The way in which Shulman tells the story of the march toward “the modern” is one among many ways to tell it. It is not the way in which I would tell it; certainly not the way in which modern Tamil writers themselves tell it, or think about the influences on their own work or on their self-fashionings as creative intellectuals. Shulman conveniently leaves Christian polemics, the presence of the English novel, and Western short-story forms out of this chapter, choosing to treat them separately in his concluding chapter seven. Too, there is much in Tamil literature that is neither good nor beautiful, and while Shulman’s exuberance for Tamil is admirable—and I share and appreciate this enthusiasm—too much exuberance also blinds us in our own capacities as critics and literary historians.

Shulman concludes his book with a discussion of Tamil literature’s three “master narratives” over the past two centuries, remarking that they are all both true and false (p. 284). It is mostly his habit to look back, looking forward only in a “short glance toward the unknown future” (p. 285). And it is here where the English novel finally appears, but in his mode of writing in the template of continuity, he states that “one could argue that novelesque modes were already current in both Tamil and Telugu from as early as the sixteenth century” (p. 286), but let us not. He also emphasizes the centrality of Minatci-cundaram Pillai—who, like Shulman himself, is a prophet facing backwards—and Pillai’s allegorical play, the *Maṇṇmaṇṇiyam*, “a statement of the current literary canon and strong evidence of a mostly unbroken tradition at the very moment when this tradition was just beginning to expand with dizzying velocity backwards toward *caṅkam* times” (p. 298).

It is within this backward-looking movement that the drama in the world of Tamil life and letters occurred in the last third of the nineteenth century, and Shulman invokes Greek rediscovery narratives in his discussion of Tamil savant U. Vē. Cāminātaiyar and the “something” that happened on October 21st, 1880 (p. 299), Cāminātaiyar’s fated conversation with Celam Ramacuvami Mutaliyar, which resulted in the “rediscovery” in 1883 of six of the eight *caṅkam* anthologies in the Tiruvavatuturai Mutt. This “discovery” resulted in a flurry of movement from the palm-leaf manuscript to the printed book, in which “‘old’ became synonymous with ‘good’” (p. 303). But just how much of a “discovery” was this? Quotations from old works appeared in commentaries and so on, but as Shulman rightly points out, “at the very most, we can speculate on a hiatus of little more than a century between the time when large parts of the ancient corpus were still current and the moment when they had to be ‘rediscovered’” (p. 305). But it is this “rediscovery” that seems to have landed us (and Tamil) in our contemporary predicament. As Shulman writes, “the publication of the *caṅkam* classics and the historical visions this process inspired were very rapidly recruited to fashion a new identity for Tamils at the very moment that the first tentative shoots of Tamil nationalism, with language at the heart of its program, began to burst out” (p. 306).

During this formation of a “new old” canon, the forces of secularization were also at work, but as Shulman states—again, rightly—“It is not so much that Tamil literature was secularized at the turn of

the twentieth century as that it was radically nationalized and appropriated by a rising, non-Brahmin elite” (p. 307), resulting in Tamil’s full ethnicization (p. 308) and “the marriage of linguism with long-standing social and economic resentment” (p. 311).

This is a fine book, and in many ways a masterpiece, in spite of the concerns I have expressed above: the biography that David Shulman has chosen to write is only one of many ways in which such a one might be written, and his choice to privilege certain genres—and authors—over others has left us with the feeling that everything in Tamil is beautiful, or if ugly, is expressed in beautiful ways that makes human pain and degradation somehow palatable. We need to see and explore struggle and adversity to offset our reveling in the creamy, glowing comforts that Shulman has skimmed from the top. But Shulman writes invitingly, and with deep humanity and feeling, pointing out where we need to unlearn certain learned things. Ultimately, there is brilliance in the book itself and in its very envisioning.

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The Hittite Demonstratives: Studies in Deixis, Topics and Focus. By PETRA GOEDEGEBUURE. Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten, vol. 55. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2014. Pp. xxv + 610. €98.

The book under review represents a major step forward in our understanding of Hittite. By including in the interpretation of passages of the Hittite texts selected here to illustrate the many shades of meaning of Hittite demonstratives both the pragmatic functions of those demonstratives and the role they have in structuring discourse, the author brings to light hitherto overlooked elements of implicit information that can be traced regarding specific demonstratives. Her interpretations give attention not only to the position in time and space of an entity mentioned in a text but—equally or even more importantly—also considers what was meant but left unsaid, such as background beliefs, emotional attitudes, and tacit assumptions of the ancient authors. Even when unexpressed overtly, this information is often paramount in attempting to make sense of Hittite texts.

The book is structured into ten chapters: Following the requisite information about the scope of the study and the investigated text corpus (ch. 1), as well as theoretical preliminaries (ch. 2), there is a detailed investigation of the semantic and pragmatic properties of four Hittite demonstratives and some of the adverbial forms belonging to them: *ašī+* and *annali-* (ch. 3), *apā-* (apart from the genitive sg. and pl. and the adnominal *apā-*, ch. 4), and *kā-* (ch. 5).

This investigation is followed by an even more detailed inquiry into the functional motivation for the use of *apā-* as an accented third person pronoun. This part of the book starts with a pilot study of the use of this pronoun in the Hittite Laws (ch. 6) and continues with a discussion of its role in information structure, where it can mark contrastive focus (ch. 7), inclusive focus (ch. 8), or contrastive topic (ch. 9). Sections 1.1 and 1.6 of ch. 1 (pp. 1–3 and 32–36) as well as the whole of ch. 10 present the author’s observations regarding the use and development of the Hittite demonstratives from Old to Late New Hittite (including the set of all inflectional forms of each demonstrative attested in the corpus from individual periods). The corpus consists of all documents in Old Script and all datable Middle, New, and Late New Hittite compositions, which are conveniently listed in sec. 1.5 (pp. 11–36), while sec. 1.4 (pp. 7–11) brings forth a discussion of text dating criteria. The book concludes with a bibliography and an index of the cited texts.

The results of the author’s analyses of attestations of these forms in the corpus shake some long-held convictions about Hittite demonstratives. The author argues that *ašī+* is not an anaphoric pronoun as previously assumed, but instead is a distal demonstrative; that *apā-* is not distal, but addressee oriented; and that word order in Hittite is controlled by information structure. Although the evidence for Old Hittite is somewhat scarce, she maintains that for most of its attested history, Hittite had a three-term person-based demonstrative system with *ašī+* as a third person term referring to entities in the domain (i.e., in the vicinity or the sphere of influence) of a third party, that is, of neither the speaker nor the addressee