employed in the ‘village’ and a relief fund was set up to repatriate them to Bombay.

There is much of similar picaresque interest here including a mention of Major Reginald Teague-Jones, a member of the Central Asian Society (the RSAA’s predecessor), who wrote an unpublished manuscript on Indian mysticism and magic. Harry Price, the dodgy ghost-hunter and member of the Magic Circle got caught up in arranging a demonstration of fire-walking in a Carshalton garden. The fire-walker, Kuda Bux, crossed the trench twice, but baulked at a third attempt, although he went on to have a long show business career, appearing on television in the USA. Other magicians from India suffered a similar fate and the closing chapters of this book are more anecdote than analysis. But it makes an entertaining read.

ROSIE LLEWELLYN-JONES © 2019
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Amba Pande (ed). Women in the Indian Diaspora: Historical Narratives and Contemporary Challenges. Springer Nature, Singapore, 2018. pp. xiv + 200. Hb. $99.99. ISBN 9 7898 1105 9513

This collection of essays highlighting the role of women as migrants and settlers tries to break the stereotypical representation of women migrants as ‘victims’ and ‘passive agents’ in the process of migration. The volume contains 15 chapters divided into four parts. Underlining the place that women have in the diaspora discourse in general and Indian diaspora in particular brings into focus that while the process of migration has many difficulties and constraints it also provides new opportunities and helps to improve the status of women in their homes and communities.

Discussion of the “The Context of Theory and Identity” has three chapters. Mehta argues that women in the Indian diaspora in the Gulf countries have been a neglected group. With the use of Ashima and Gauri, the main characters of Lahiri’s Namesake and The lowland, the fictions of Jhumpa Lahiri, Chakraborty shows how the context matters for the women migrants. Sharma adds to the discussion the subjectivity of women in Indian diaspora communities, explaining the pressure of creating a new home. The second part of the book “Revisiting Historical Narratives”, starts with a discussion of the indentured labour system in which
women found themselves doubly disadvantaged due to a patriarchal system burdening them with the responsibility of being ‘Sita’ and one functioning under pre-determined boundaries. Tiwari points out, however, that women recovered their respectability after the indenture system. The next article by Mahase shows how women used their economic independence to challenge patriarchy. The last chapter of the part by Sami focuses on the migration of Tamil women. It explains that there have been three waves of migration of Tamil women. The first was during the indenture system when they escaped the hardships in their homeland. The second was when Tamil consciousness grew due to their integration in host countries and the third and final is about professional and student migration in the post-colonial phase.

The third part of the book, “The Contemporary Challenges”, has four articles. The first article, by Bhattacharya, is a personal narration about how she had to go to the Indian community in Pennsylvania, USA for support, in new surroundings. She further explains that at many times one has to make a choice in individual matters. The second article by Ravindran takes the case of three Tamil women who gained ‘agency’ through micro-processes. The third article by Thakur and Khadria focusses on the migration of highly skilled workers to the USA but the females have low earnings as compared to their female counterparts from other countries. The last article by Kherkoff and Kirk focuses on the wives of highly skilled workers. These women are themselves qualified but are not engaged in any paid employment. The chapter also explores what happens now that women are going out to work.

The fourth part, “Diasporas Across the World”, also has four articles. The first article by Reddy explains that some women in South Africa are empowered while others are disempowered. In the journey to empowerment, for some food has played an important role. The article by Thandi focuses on contemporary issues within the Sikh diaspora. The article tries to bring out the inter-generational and intra-generational tensions existing in the community. The article by Lobo focuses on Anglo-Indian women who have not migrated from India. The last article by Kaur focuses on the process of migration, settlement and integration of Sikhs in Canadian society, from the perspective of Sikh women.

The volume is well structured and tries to look at the Indian diaspora from the perspective of women which also fills a literary gap in both diaspora and gender studies. It helps the reader to obtain a glimpse of diaspora
through a gender narrative. The book is also a good read. It helps the reader to understand the experience of women in the Indian diaspora in a readable manner but with a robust theoretical backing.

ABHIJEET © 2019
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Susan Shumsky. *Maharishi & Me: Seeking Enlightenment with the Beatles’ Guru*. Skyhorse Publishing, New York, 2018. pp. xi + 307. Illust. Appendix. Bibliog. Notes. Hb. £19.99. ISBN 9 7815 1072 2682

Besides her genuinely ascetic Hindu holy men, India has produced many fake and fraudulent gurus and charlatan godmen. These have entranced or indeed enslaved their gullible followers into fawning obeisance through a mixture of hypnosis, intimidation and fear. Some have enriched themselves on an astonishing scale through donations offered by, or levied from, earnest Western disciples yearning for a drug-free nirvana of spiritual awareness.

Before Maharishi Mahesh Yogi left India for America in 1958 to promote his own brand of cosmic enlightenment to a wider world, meditation was virtually an unknown concept in the West. By the time he died half a century later at the age of 90, an inordinately wealthy man, in the words of Susan Shumsky, the author of this book, “his brand name Transcendental Meditation was as generic as Kleenex”.

Whatever his faults, then, this most famous guru of the 20th century was instrumental in establishing meditation as a reputable practice absorbed into Western culture. But he went a step too far to imagine that his transcendental meditators could literally levitate their way to will the world into permanent peace through world government in a new Age of Enlightenment - his ultimate aspiration.

Maharishi’s arrival meshed seamlessly into the Western cultural revolution of the 1960s that embraced the hippie movement and flower power from California and the social licence of Swinging London. Susan Shumsky broke free from her conventional background as the daughter of a Jewish surgeon to become a hippie flower child in the spirit of “let-live, live-free, and be-me” and the LSD-fuelled mantra of Timothy Leary’s “turn on, tune in, drop out.” It was only natural for her to be captivated by the exotic soft-voiced long-haired be-robed flower-decked