



The Spectre of Derrida

In 2014 Other Books came up with the translation of *Islam and West: Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, which, we claim, is the first ever original work in Malayalam of the luminous Algerian philosopher. The last newsletter brought to you a report of the launch of the book on the sidelines of Sahodaran Ayyappan memorial lecture. The ceremony was held in Hotel Asma Tower Calicut on 26th January 2015.

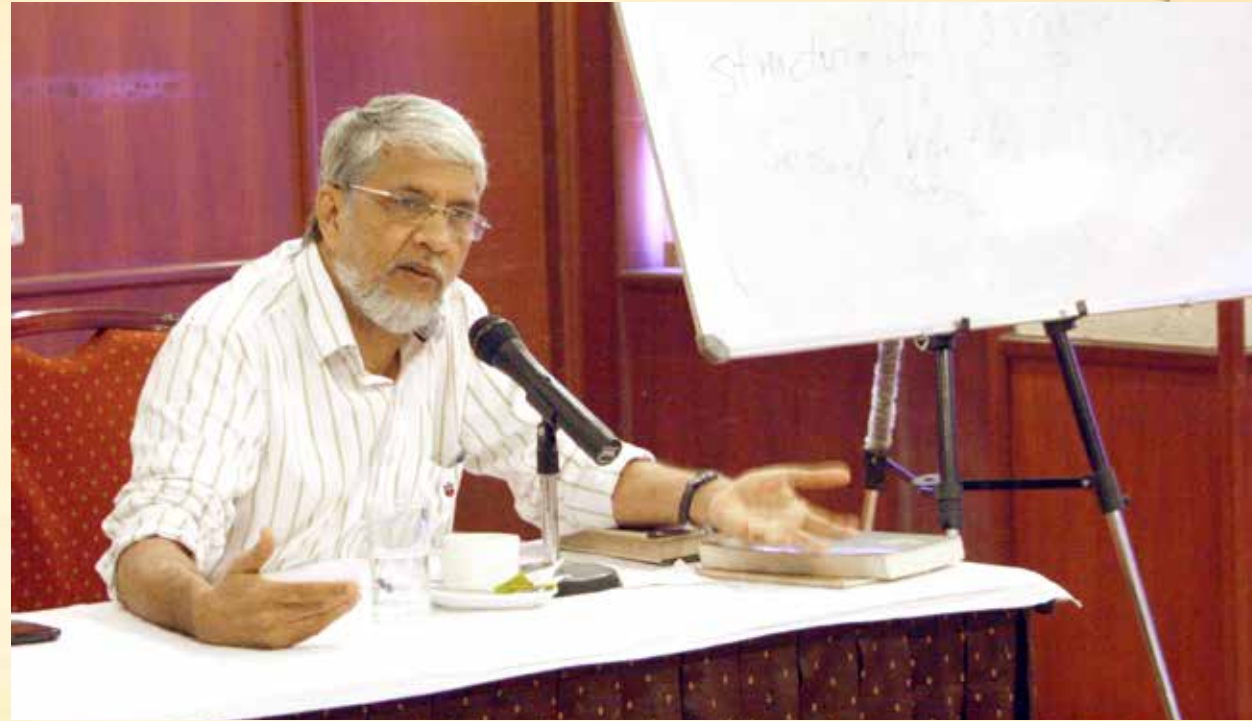
Three months after the launch, the book became a pivot on which an august interaction about the author and his epoch making theory of deconstruction was held in the same venue. As Derrida himself said in his *Spectre of Marx*, all that leaves space and is supposed to be dead will haunt us as a spectre to fill in the gaps of our authoritarian discourses as a corrective and reminder of rereading, revolution and deconstruction. We remember the ghost of Hamlet's father coming back from the mysterious mist of the past to set the stage and tune for the live drama in the present. Other Books, in association with Interactive, was setting a stage (if not Gothic, indeed) for the spectre of Derrida to haunt a pack of interlocutors and to destabilize their myriad notions of politics, culture, literature and, above all, the way we all exist.



OB-Interactive Lecture series is the title for academic lectures being proposed in the coming months on a variety topics in sociology, religion, political science, gender and exclusion studies, political economy, race etc, topics which engross Other Books and its partner Interactive, an online web portal running issues on cultural and social themes. The first lecture in the series was about Derrida and deconstruction. A modest audience of 40 members, mostly academics, students and independent researches, participated in the two one-day lectures delivered by famous academics in Kerala, Dr PK Pokker, former head of the Department of Philosophy, Calicut University and Dr VC Harris, dean and professor, School of Letters, MG University. Both the guests of honor are well-known public intellectuals in Kerala who write on contemporary issues in politics and culture from anti-authoritarian perspectives.

Why Does Derrida Still Matter?

The first session was centred on the influence of Derrida and his seminal concept of deconstruction on politics, philosophy and culture. Dr PK Pokker, who has addressed this issue in his articles in various Malayalam journals as well as books, spoke on the relevance of Derrida and deconstructivists at a time when philosophers who work for empire like Samuel Huntington came to consider deconstruction as hampering the onward march of the US-led "civilizing mission of the empire. He underlined the relevance of Derrida in the western academia as a breaking point or rupture in its racist, authoritarian and westoxicated onward march.

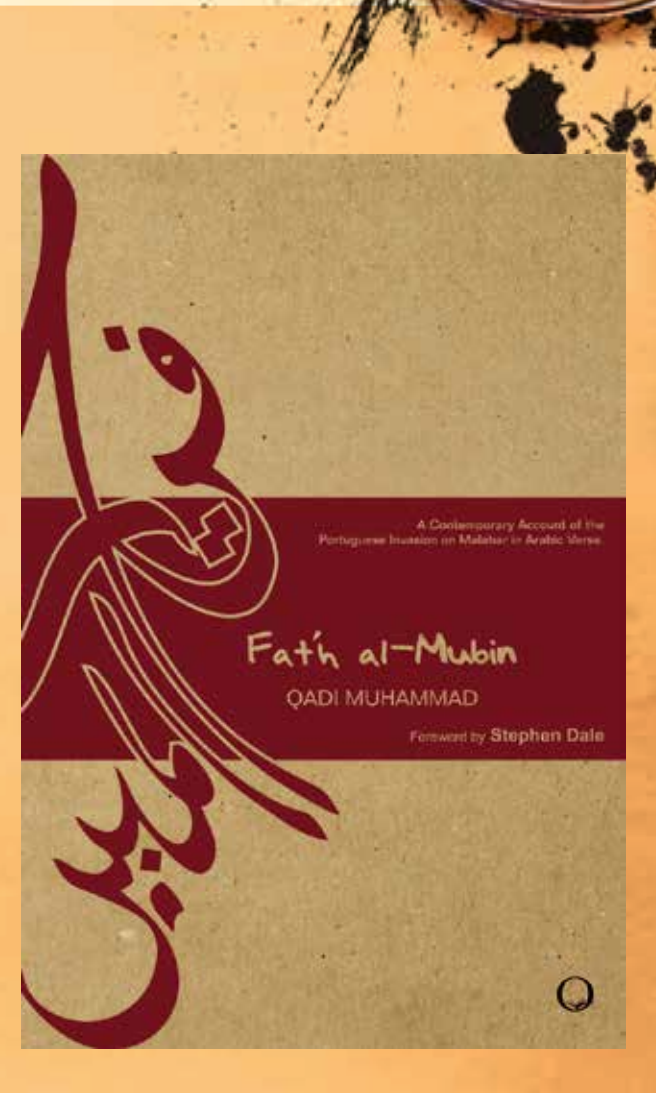


The second session was about how deconstruction altered the way we read, appreciate and criticize literature. Dr VC Harris, who has edited a series of books on new critical theories, said that Derrida's emergence in the theatre of critical theories was that of Hamlet's ghost, destabilizing the calm, comfortable, ivory tower of academia. Along with the fact that deconstruction helped deepen the feminist and Dalit readings of literature in Kerala, it helped innovative readings of religion by opening up its heterogeneous hermeneutical traditions.



The third edition of *Quran Oru Penwayana* is in our stalls. One of the most noticed and discussed titles Other Books ever published, the Malayalam translation of Dr. Amina Wadud's *Quran and Woman: Re-reading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* carries two essays by Dr. PK Abdurahiman and Dr. J Devika, apart from a foreword by AK Ramakrishnan. This compelling and ground-breaking re-reading of the Quran offers original possibilities to question patriarchy deeply rooted in Muslim societies, by using theology and hermeneutics as an emancipating tool for women. Translated by Hashim and edited by Kanesh Poonor, the book has its cover designed by Harshad.

Fat'h al-Mubin is a contemporary account of the Portuguese invasion on Malabar in Arabic verse. An eye-witness account of the colonial rampage, the book is more a report than historical account; though it ends on a positive, optimistic note. With the destruction by the Mappila forces of the Chaliyam fort, the narrative ends, saying that resolution of a people always breaks open the doors of victory. This historic document is now available at Other Books – English version by an anonymous translator and original Arabic written by renowned poet-scholar Qadi Muhammad. Stephen Dale has written a brief but striking foreword; the cover calligraphy is done by Abdul Kareem Kakkove and cover design by Harshad.



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