



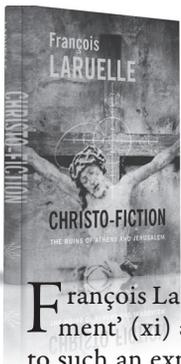
**From Decision to Heresy:
Experiments in
Non-Standard Thought**

François Laruelle
Ed. Robin Mackay

Sequence Press, 36 Orchard Street,
New York, NY 10002, USA. www.sequencepress.com. 2012. \$27.95. xvi +
496 pp. PB. ISBN 9780983216902.

This book is a collection of the English translations of François Laruelle's writings, mainly from the first two stages of the five-stage development of his thought of non-philosophy. The tone of the book is set by the wonderful introduction by the editor, Robin Mackay, who brings out the dissatisfaction of Laruelle that propelled him to rethink philosophy and propound a new thought, that of non-philosophy. The introduction is interspersed with quotations from a conversation with Laruelle, which bring out his insights. Here, we see Laruelle describing the gradual growth of his thought and how his 'critique is a critique of all possible philosophy' (9). This volume showcases Laruelle's literary talents as well, as we have different forms of writing, including some poems. This book is a reference for anyone interested in the history of the development of non-philosophy.

PB



**Christo-Fiction: The Ruins of
Athens and Jerusalem**

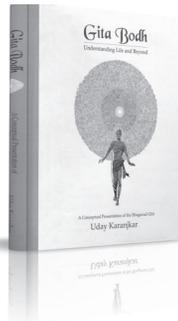
François Laruelle
Trans. Robin Mackay

Columbia University Press, 61 West
62 Street, New York, NY 10023, USA.
www.cup.columbia.edu. 2015. \$35. xviii
+ 276 pp. PB. ISBN 9780231167246.

François Laruelle calls this book a 'faith experiment' (xi) and presents the problem that led to such an experiment: 'The war of religion continues, and there will be no Christian return of Christ. If Christianity is the religion of the exit from religions, Christ is the exit from Christianity itself' (ix). He proceeds to apply the 'Algebra of the Messianic Wave' (103) to bring about a 'transformation of theology and the production of a christo-fiction that replaces the "return of Christ"

as object of belief"' (112). Through this work, Laruelle tries to find 'new relations between religion, science, politics, and art' (blurb). He seeks a more humane Christ as opposed to the authoritarian figure propagated by academic theology. His Christ is human and he establishes that the science of Christ is the same as non-philosophy, free from any preconditioning. Listing the new 'tasks ... prescribed by this placing of Christ's message into the gnostic matrix' (xiv), Laruelle mentions the following, among others: 'To reinterpret the distinction between belief and faith ... To rename this whole set of axioms as being those of a gnostic but nonreligious usage of Christ, of his kerygma and of his faithful' (xv). Representing a major rethinking of theology and the philosophy of religion, this book is a good resource for anyone interested in religion.

PB



**Gita Bodh: Understanding
Life and Beyond—
A Conceptual Presentation of
the Bhagavad Gita**

Uday Karanjkar

Uday Karanjkar, Flat C-9, 'Pinnac
Memories', Phase 1, Kothrud, Pune
411038. Email: uday.gitabodh@gmail.com. 2015. ₹ 1,599. 546 pp. HB. ISBN
979352359394.

This book is, in every sense of the word, a remarkable achievement which embodies in its content every aspect of Bhagavadgita's teachings. If Gita teaches bhakti, jnana, karma, and other yogas, the spirit of those yogas is evident in every section, every paragraph of this stunningly beautiful book. Devotion, intense knowledge, and impeccable activism in executing the task and above all a comprehensive, flawless execution in producing the outcome—what are these except values of the text itself! In short, it is a radiant replica brought out of the crystallisation the author absorbed from above all, his guru Swami Satswarupananda, a disciple of the late Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of Arsha Vidya Pitham.

This does not exhaust the uniqueness of this volume. With his experience as a corporate leader

for thirty-seven years, Karanjkar brought a transformative ambience to the content and production of the volume. If Gita is the product of a crisis of faith—in the very presence of the Lord—his message is much more needed now. In the ambience of the cosmos and the inescapable chaos surrounding it we require not only a message like the Gita, but also an adaptation of the text to the tastes and tempers of the ethos in which we live. The very format and the content reflect the existing ethos.

The author's uncanny precision in language is in tune with the brevity of our contemporary trends of writing and publishing. And, above all, it is reader-friendly. Before I go further, this volume's contents hinge on the dual textual logic prevalent today. Particularly, and perhaps instinctively, Karanjkar introduced into the production of the book the captivatingly visual texts to illustrate the simple, expressively rich words. In short, the eye is enchanted which keep our 'I' alert to the profound insights into the art of integral living in a world which has irrevocably turned global and complex.

The Gita, in the format in which it has appeared, therefore is not one of those tracts which instantly create not only aesthetic headaches but also the verbal paradoxes, pompously hiding or bypassing the crucial content. For instance, to cite a few examples: we have the troublesome and temperamental 'I' accredited with three 'wants': 'I want an infinitely and permanently happy me! ... I want an immortal me! ... I want an all-knowing me!' (98). All imbued with exclamation marks. In short, the Gita threadbare shows the trouble with 'desire' for perennial happiness: permanent, infinite, immortal. And the colourful spaces—the beautifully rounded, balanced colourful spaces in which the 'I' owner is shown so exultantly that one need not study what is maya! We are products of maya.

About *jivanmukti*, liberation-in-life, Karanjkar says in his enchantingly simple language: 'Just as a seed is completely burnt in fire and cannot sprout again, all the karmas of a *jivanmuktaḥ* are completely burnt by the fire of *Atmajñāna*. Having burnt, they cannot produce any *Karmaphala*' (285). So many linguistic items condensed into a visual which shows the burning as also the energetic running away of the liberated one. The verbal exemplifies alongside the visionary depth, call we call it?

Uday Karanjkar seems to follow the *Gita* of our times: Sri Ramakrishna, who condensed the essence of Gita, as *tyagi*, renunciation, emphasised the indispensable quality of mind for knowing God as: 'Unless you are simple you cannot know God, the simple One.' And, the God here is also Sri Krishna, whose essence is integral to the Gita text. Perhaps, the author's comprehensive aim, for instance, is found in the very beginning.

This is a 'concept by concept presentation of the knowledge revealed in the *Gītā* in a smooth, logical sequence, unfolding the whole vision and leading to a clear understanding and conclusion' (11). And captivating 'beautiful illustrations, simple stories and examples' (ibid.) highlight the content effortlessly. And Karanjkar draws, as a man of contemporary science and technology, chooses everyday items for, in one case, to yoga-*shastra*.

To explain Yoga-*shastras* 'Correcting My [Our] Direction While Driving' (310), he gives the following features of amazing inter-thematic transformation: Driving a two-wheeler is the source. And the identical skills of yoga are comparable: 'Validating—for checking the direction and finding the correction (e.g. Viveka ... Controlling—like applying a brake to replace momentum and speed in the wrong direction (e.g., Basic values) ... Correcting—like steering to correct the direction (e.g. Āstikya... Śravaṇa ... Manana ...) ... Elevating—like an accelerator to accelerate in the right direction (e.g. Dhyānayoga ... Nididhyāsana ...)' (310). The equivalent Sanskrit terms in Devanagari have also been added.

This review does not need and even cannot comprehensively cover the nuggets of practical Gita lessons. It is comprehensive explaining in familiar techniques of exposition, and, above all, using contemporary scientific and technological apparatus to achieve one of the most difficult jobs: alert *mindfulness*. In short, Uday Karanjkar has blazed a new trail of technology/spirituality as also the mental/scientific in harmony of mutual help. Dip into it when, God forbid, you feel depressed: it is instant intoxicating experience. The threatening blues are blasted—the book is seeker friendly.

Prof. M Sivaramkrishna

Former Chair, Department of English
Osmania University, Hyderabad