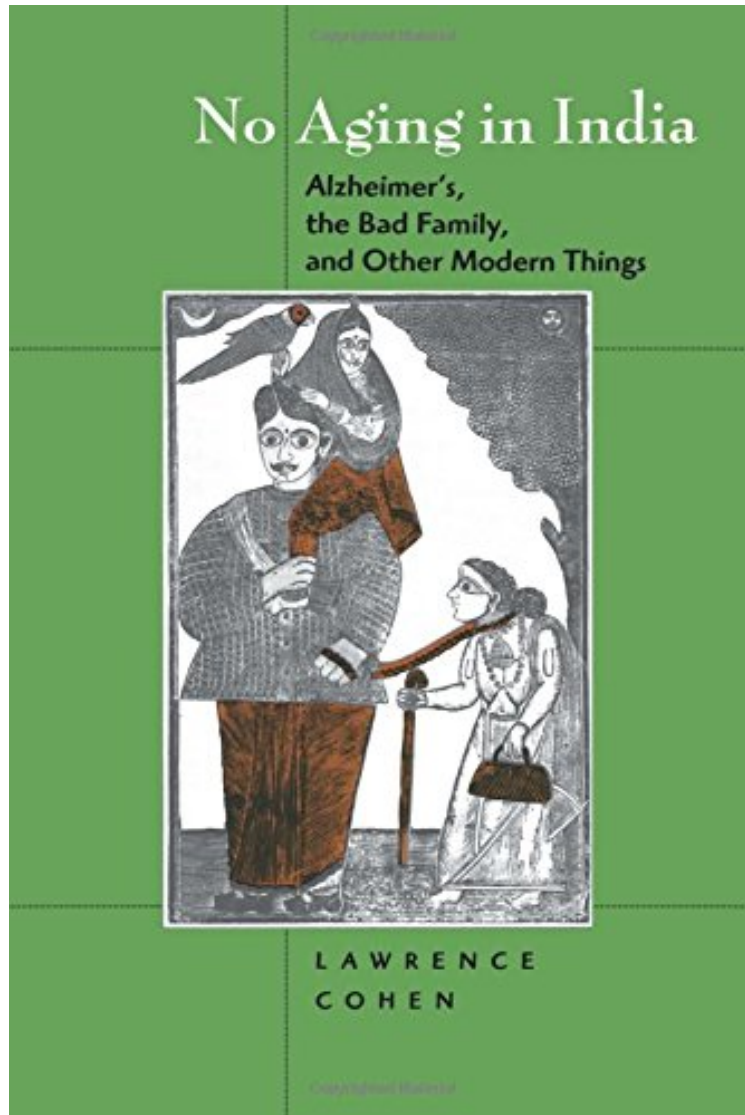


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# No Aging in India: Alzheimer's, The Bad Family, and Other Modern Things

Lawrence Cohen

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**Lawrence Cohen : No Aging in India: Alzheimer's, The Bad Family, and Other Modern Things** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised No Aging in India: Alzheimer's, The Bad Family, and Other Modern Things:

1 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Tediously muddled ISO coherent editingBy JaiI looked forward to reading this acclaimed text in Medical Anthropology. But, once it arrived, I found it tedious. (That is: boring, dull,

monotonous, repetitive, unrelieved, unvaried, uneventful; characterless, colorless, lifeless, insipid, uninteresting, unexciting, uninspiring, uninvolved, flat, bland, dry, stale, tired, lackluster, stodgy, dreary, mundane, monochrome; mind-numbing, soul-destroying, wearisome, tiring, tiresome, irksome, trying, frustrating; informal, deadly, not up to much, humdrum, ho-hum, blah, dullsville--man, that's a lot. So much that I had to borrow that list of synonyms from the Web :) But it's totally true. This appears to be one of those media-is-the-message works, where presentation trumps content, and form is not intended to advance the understanding so much as present a cultural bric-a-brac to startle the senses. It started off with uninspired kowtows to anthropology of the body and Foucault, postures which always strikes me as oh-so-PC. So I bowed to these various Meccas and from there forward I struggled with every page, until, reaching page 147, I finally found myself unable to finish the book. And I put the text back on my shelf. At 300 pages of densely-spaced text in 6-point font, it is absolutely maddening to try to read. I'd find myself reading page after page and having absolutely no idea of the point he was making, or trying to make. Or maybe my assumption that he was actually trying to make a point was false, a bit of imposture on the text by the reader. Maybe the act of putting-into-words his semi-random stream of consciousness itself was the point. It would have benefited greatly by a slash-and-burn editing before seeing the light of publication, IMHO boil it down to 200 pages max with a coherent structure and argument. It was, in any event, a bit like reading Joyce bleary-eyed on a bad hair day. But that stream-of-consciousness POV seems to have been recognized and rewarded by the right tribes. I understand this book won the Victor Turner prize in ethnographic writing. Now I understand that that is some prestigious award. But to me, this speaks volumes as to what Medical Anthropology is, and is not; and it leaves to we other anthropologists of medicine what MA might actually be. 2 1/2 stars. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Approachable, yet profound By D. Liu As a medical student beginning research on Alzheimer's disease, this book provided me a deeper understanding of the full ramifications of such a disease on the lives of the patient and family members. The interactions described in this book are really quite complicated, yet the clear writing and organization makes this subject matter approachable. 10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. absolutely first rate By A Customer professor Cohen may be the most brilliant anthropologist of our time as it pertains to south asia. this book is a sparkling example of a prodigious mind at work. it is both scholarly and playful; rigorous and light-hearted. may be read for both pleasure and for what it can teach us about all manner of things. may be the best scholarly work i have ever read. first-rate.

From the opening sequence, in which mid-nineteenth-century Indian fishermen hear the possibility of redemption in an old woman's madness, *No Aging in India* captures the reader with its interplay of story and analysis. Drawing on more than a decade of ethnographic work, Lawrence Cohen links a detailed investigation of mind and body in old age in four neighborhoods of the Indian city of Varanasi (Banaras) with events and processes around India and around the world. This compelling exploration of senility encompasses not only the aging body but also larger cultural anxieties combines insights from medical anthropology, psychoanalysis, and postcolonial studies. Bridging literary genres as well as geographic spaces, Cohen responds to what he sees as the impoverishment of both North American and Indian gerontology: the one mired in ambivalence toward demented old bodies, the other insistent on a dubious morality tale of modern families breaking up and abandoning their elderly. He shifts our attention irresistibly toward how old age comes to matter in the constitution of societies and their narratives of identity and history.

"No Aging in India deserves to be a classic in the anthropological literature on aging." --John Van Willigen, "Medical Anthropology Quarterly" From the Inside Flap "Beautifully written, erudite, a perfect balance between theory and ethnography. The narratives are wonderful." E. Valentine Daniel, author of *Charred Lullabies* "No book in medical anthropology matches *No Aging in India* in its extraordinary richness of ethnographic detail. A feast of stories, lives, and theory--it contains such a thickness of social experience that the reader feels he or she has become a part of India's local worlds. Lawrence Cohen has written one of the finest ethnographic monographs I have read. A triumph of field research and writing, this book will, I feel sure, set the standard for the next wave of ethnographies in medical anthropology." Arthur Kleinman, author of *Writing at the Margin*