Book Reviews

Ranajit Guha. *History at the Limit of World-History* New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. Pp. x, 116.

Lamartine—that mediocre poet but cunning politician in France during the revolutions of 1848—once remarked that history is a trick we, the living, play upon the dead. Part of Ranajit Guha's argument in these extraordinary lectures is to partially invert this by showing that at least some of the eminent dead—Hegel for example—can play some fairly nasty historiographical tricks upon the living. As we know now, the philosophy of history achieved with Hegel a level of rigor and grandeur that has influenced generations of philosophers and historians. Yet, the whole exercise, Guha makes plain, was an erudite and passionate attempt by the no-longer-revolutionary Hegel to foist upon history a certain logic of unfolding, a certain rhetorical strategy, and a certain world-historical project that would justify the ascent of Europe quite "rationally"—and therefore by the Hegelian dialectics all must be real and morally acceptable in an objective sense. Guha brings an equal and opposite rigor to the dissection of the Hegelian corpse, following the Wittgensteinian idea of approaching the limit from both sides. The limit in this instance is, naturally, world-history. Concretely, it also turns out to be a deep theoretical critique of "statist history," "the prose of history," and history as "experienced truth" centered on the narrator. Ultimately, as I will show, history also turns out to be his-story in several senses.

At the very outset Guha reminds the reader-listener of the integral purpose of his life-long project, "the plea for historiography's self-determination." (2) It is a project of self-emancipation. "A call to expropriate the expropriators, it is radical precisely in the sense of going to the root of the matter and asking what may be involved in a historiography that is clearly an act of expropriation"(2). He reminds us that "colonialist knowledge" is collusive through and through in every field from philology to political economy. Certainly, in my own field—economics and political economy—the mainstream echoes of songs of praise for the capitalist economy and social formations all but obliterate any attempts at an objective inquiry into the real causes of wealth and poverty in our world. Joan Robinson's caustic comments about young Indian economists being completely bamboozled by the so-called sophistication and rigors of modern economics, are, alas, even more apt today than when they were first made. As Guha has so tenaciously and honestly demonstrated, history and historiography suffer from similar pernicious practices.

It is to Guha's credit that he picks as his foil an intellectual giant of Hegel's stature. It could be said that this exasperatingly complex thinker waxes and wanes as he shines over the changing intellectual landscape, but he (or rather his shadow—both in an ordinary and the Jungian sense) never disappears, never goes "gentle into that good night." Thus, Guha's rigorous critique of Hegel is all the more impressive as he leads us through a fascinating deconstruction (and ultimately destruction—"destruktion," in the Heideggerian sense) of "the representation of the colonial past held in thrall by a narrowly defined politics of statism"(5). A further fascinating aspect of Guha's treatment is his contrast between Hegel's approach and the approaches developed in India both in the Indian past and present. He draws upon several important sources from Indian antiquity—*Ramayana*, *Mahaabhaarata* and the *Brihadaaranyaka Upanishad* in particular. He also draws from Tagore and, by extension, from a critical understanding of the imposed colonial modernity in India under the British rule.

As Debesh Roy, one of the most original thinkers in Bangla about novel and novelization, reminds us, there were at least two modernities in nineteenth century Bangla literature. The modernity of Bankim and Madhushudan, based largely on European models (more specifically, Romantic models) in fiction and poetry won out over a more carnivalesque, self-parodying version started by Ishwar Gupta and Hutom.[1] This was not accidental. As Roy explains:

> In his [Gupta's] construction of a poetic foot by mixing English words, we might have been able to read the secret autobiography of the Bangalee middleclass of Calcutta. This self-reportage is what made him so acceptable, and ultimately this same self-reportage is what became a liability. Without the literary flourishes of Romanticism, this poetry in reality was simply the alter ego of prose, a reportage where the Bangalee reader could not hide his own true face from himself. . . . However, "the boy who has read A-B[2] in college" has become mature by then—he no longer wants to be a figure of fun in Ishwar Gupta. Therefore, the modernity that started with Gupta Kavi, the account of that same modernity with honest and forceful language became unacceptable to the Bangalee society.[3]

Although most of Tagore's own fictions and poetry also suffered from these problems, his essays and his songs

stand out as important exceptions. Long before his death, in various essays on history and biography (on Rammohan Roy, Bhaaratbarsher Itihaash, and others) Tagore had already expressed his profound dissatisfaction with standard histories and historiography. In his poem "Bhaasha o Chondo" (Language and prosody) he has the sage Narada advise the awestruck poet Valmiki who is instructed to compose the epic *Ramayana*:

Shei shotto ja rochibe tumi
ghote ja ta shob shotto nohe.
What you compose will be true
not everything that happens is true

Guha focuses on a different text, but the position he ascribes to Tagore was an aspect (among others that were at times contradictory) that seems to have been present consistently throughout his mature creative life. Tagore's critique of the state-centric historiography and thus by implication the Hegelian "prose of history" could not have been more original, sincere or apt. Guha's presentation of this facet of Tagore to English language readers is, in itself, a great service to critical understanding of the "East" and to the self-reflection and self-understanding of the colonial and postcolonial subject. Another figure whom Guha does not discuss, but who through his life, political acts and poetry projects the same revolt—only at times even more forcefully than Tagore, is Nazrul Islam.[4] Thus there are at least two poet-representatives of Guha's position in modern Bangla literature. Their very subjectivity and directness overrides the ignorant profundities of Hegelian world-history. But let us return to the very interesting and thorough dissection of the "prose of history" by Guha himself.

His third lecture has the dual title, "The Prose of History, or The Invention of World-History." The word invention and the distinction presented later between *historia rerum gestae* and *res gestae* (53) as Hegel drew this particular distinction, and the claim by Hegel that the two meanings unite in the German word *Geschichte*, show the reader the cunning steps by which world-history finally emerges at the hand of the old master. The higher order thus signified—one might say conjured up—by the master-philosopher is, like the Lacanian phallus, the master-signifier. It refers, as Guha reminds us, ". . . to providential design, and the 'common source' to the state." In his fourth lecture from which I cited the previous words, Guha also points to European novelization as the narrative of experience and contrasts its claims to "realism and vraisemblance" with the listener-initiated "tales within tales, relays of many voices" in the *Mahaabhaarata*. The setting of the telling of this tale, the interaction between the narrator and the audience leads one gradually to a conversational exercise where the *kathaayoga* proceeds as the main connoisseurs (*mukhyaah/aarambhaka*) act as inter-locutors, and an explicit dialogical principle seems to be at work.

It is thus that provenance makes for a clear distinction between the two paradigms: in the West the narrative issues from the narrator's initiative, in South Asia from the listener's. This corresponds to yet another set of distinctions that bear critically upon the question of experience. Its primacy in the long European tradition of storytelling from the Hellenic *historia* to the modern novel . . . is conspicuous for its absence in the Indian case. Here it is a certain distance between the narrator and the event rather than the immediacy of any personal experience that makes up the story for *Itihaasa* (59-60).

Closely related to Indian narratology (or rather an anti-narratology) is the idea of wonder. Guha harnesses the idea of *adbhuta rasa* of Sanskrit aesthetics to signify this characteristic. However, since he cites perhaps the most eminent scholar in the field who argues convincingly that the idea of *rasa* is almost impossible to convey, there is some difficulty here in reaching even an Indian audience that has drifted far away from the age where the upper class culture cultivated such aesthetic modes. However, as a description of how the Indian aesthetic modes may have indeed differed from their Western counterparts, this may be the only available way that at least tries to do justice to both modes. As Terry Eagleton has observed, aesthetics as a systematic field of inquiry really emerged in Europe with the rise of the bourgeoisie. Thus we are probably comparing several different modes of historical self-consciousness. Be that as it may, by identifying Itihaasa with a heightened sense of wonder, Guha brings to light the capacity of the ". . . language to illuminate what is unusual about the usual in everyday life." Thus he finally manages to establish the historicality of everyday life. The playfulness and contentment of the tale of wonder is contrasted with the seriousness and heroic strivings of world-history.

Not appreciating this crucial difference, many colonial subjects themselves may have been misled into a futile deconstructive gesture of privileging the other side of a vis-a-vis, as Derrida claimed could and should be done. Tragically (or perhaps in a tragi-comic repetition of neurotic gestures), ". . . historicality . . . has shrewdly assimilated itself to . . . [world-history's] mode of self-representation as historiography—the dominant mode of writing the past." Such gestures have ". . . inspired the intellectuals of the 'peoples without history' who had only recently been admitted to World-history, to emulate the statism of their European mentors."

These European mentors—Hegel and the rest—were all men whose mentality was one of imperial aloofness and superiority towards the colonized. As W. E. B. Dubois so insightfully remarked once in the African context, that relationship is also one of a male-centered, white world looking at the subjugated, "feminine," col-

ored people. Tagore's own attitude has been described as feminine by quite a few perceptive critics. His valorization of everyday experience certainly reveals a domestic quality that paradoxically can give a freer play to the imagination than the male-dominated statist historical fantasies of Hegelian inspiration. Therefore, the prose of history and historiography turn out to be really his-story—a "rational" reconstruction of male fantasies, myths, delusions of grandeur and illusions of heroism. W. B. Yeats, whose complex psyche had a place for resistance against colonial oppression among other tendencies, grasped this remarkably well in his interpretation of Shakespeare:

> Shakespeare cared little for the State, the source of all our judgments, apart from its shows and splendors, its turmoils and battles, its flamings-out of the uncivilized heart.

And Shakespeare himself through that immortal creation of his, the fat knight Sir Falstaff, saw through the hypocrisy of honor and valor of statist history: "Honor is a mere scutcheon—and so ends my catechism." And, "Give me life, which if I can save so: if not, honor comes unlooked for, and there's an end."

The heroic mode, on the other hand, is the kind of his-story that leads many a young man to an untimely doom. Furthermore, and more to the point, among the colonial elite it leads to an "alazon complex." The results of this "alazon complex—so called after "someone who pretends or tries to be something more than he is"—include, among other things, the dangerous and self-defeating tendency ". . . to produce historical accounts in which the nationalism of the colonized competes with metropolitan imperialism in its bid to uphold the primacy of the state." Guha's expression, "the pathos of exclusion" is exactly right, as is his spirit of autocritique. At the end, the book stands out as the honest expression of an attempt to come to terms with the logic and pathos of such exclusion. Like a nightmare from which we, the colonial subjects, like Joycean characters are trying to awaken, history stands as both a trap and a bridge. Tagore's own solution was to individualize everyday events through an exercise of one's own (feminine) creative spirit. That road is still open to us. But what are the political-social-economic conditions under which this becomes a possibility for all? This is the Marxian question in the spirit of the revolutionary side of Hegel that Hegel himself had abandoned. It is perhaps not just naïve romanticism to think that only through authentic acts of intellectual and political revolts—individually and collectively—we come to realize our common humanity, that is to say, we make ourselves historically human by asserting our creative spirit against the dead hand of oppression. Guha has been one of those rare creative spirits whose works continue to light our path towards this common humanity by honestly exploring our historical differences.

Haider A. Khan

Notes

[1]Debesh Roy, *Uponnyash Niye (On the Novel)* (Calcutta: De's Publishing, 1991), 3.

[2]Refers to the degree Ars Baccalaureate.

[3]Roy, *Uponnyash Niye*, 8 (my translation).

[4]See Haider A. Khan, "Nazrul Islam: Poet with Many Voices," *The Dawn* (30 June 2002) and "Nazrul's Poetics: A Polyphonic Discourse of the Multitude," *The Journal of Shilpakala Academy* (forthcoming). The songs of Bauls such as Lalan Fakir can also be viewed as a rather direct, soulful and spontaneous expression of a native historicality in everyday life. For an ethic that can emphasize cultural and aesthetic differences in the postmodern context, see H. A. Khan, *Technology, Development and Democracy*, (Edward Elgar, 1998), chaps. 6-7.

Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi. *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography.* St. Antony's Series. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. 216.

Refashioning Iran is a remarkable work of historiography and an original analysis of Iranian cultural history. At the heart of this study lies a critical engagement with the concept of modernity and its presumed European genealogy. Enabling and motivating Tavakoli-Targhi's work is a paradigm shift in "historical epistemology" that has opened up new modes of scholarship: "Departing from objectivist and Eurocentric historiographies, postmodern and postcolonial scholars have begun to *reactivate* the *sedimented* practices that naturalized 'the nation' and instituted Europe as the original home of modernity" (1). Tavakoli-Targhi's book is a superb example of what might be productively recovered through such reactivations.

Divided into seven chapters and a postscript, the book begins with a theoretical first chapter entitled "Modernity, Heterotopia, and Homeless Texts," in which Tavakoli-Targhi lays out the assumptions underpinning a conventional understanding of modernity as a product of European Enlightenment. Integral to this definition of modernity is the conviction that the spirit of inquiry, rationalism, and scientific discovery were unique to Europe and exclusive to European history. Left out of this construction are the dialogue and contact between Europe and its others, which were instrumental in the formation of modern Europe. Drawing on Michel Foucault's notion of heterotopias, "as alternative real spaces" (2), Tavakoli-Targhi argues for a recovery of the interchanges that provided Europe with the means of "self-recognition and self-refashioning" (3). A return to what he calls "residues of a genesis am-

nesia in European historiography" (3), Tavakoli-Targhi demonstrates, challenges the conception of modernity grounded in European historical time and the belief that in the rest of the world modernity is a belated phenomenon.

Tavakoli-Targhi's focus is also trained on how this Orientalist legacy has been internalized in Iranian historiography and cultural history: "By claiming that the Persian publication of Descartes in the 1860s is the beginning of a new age of rationality and modernity, these historians provide a narrative account that accommodates and reinforces the foundational myth of modern Orientalism, a myth that constitutes 'the West' as ontologically and epistemologically different from 'the Orient.' This Orientalist problematic has been validated by a nationalist historiography that constitutes the period prior to its own arrival as a time of decay, backwardness, and despotism . . . in this sense Iranian nationalist historiography has participated 'in its own Orientalizing'" (8). Tavakoli-Targhi offers instead a new conceptual model: "By envisaging modernity as an ethos rather than as a decisive epoch of the nation, historians of Iran and India may imagine a joint fact-finding mission that would allow for reactivating what the poet Mahdi Akhavan Salis has aptly recognized as 'stories vanished from memory.' . . . These vanished stories may be retrieved from a large corpus of texts made homeless with the emergence of history with borders, a convention that confined historical writing to the borders of modern nation-states" (9).

Chapter two, "Orientalism's Genesis Amnesia," puts this theory into practice and reveals an extensive archive of material and many forgotten chapters of Iranian, Indian, *and* world history. We find out, for instance, that "the breakthroughs in comparative religion and linguistics, which were the highmarks of 'the Oriental Renaissance' in Europe, were in reality built upon the intellectual achievement of Mughal India" (21). To foster harmony in the religiously diverse community of India, Emperor Akbar encouraged debate and intellectual inquiry among scholars and paved the way for translations of Sanskrit, Turkish, and Arabic texts into Persian, which remained the official language of India until the 1830s.

Emperor Akbar also commissioned the first Persian dictionary, which in turn led to the discovery of affinities between Sanskrit and Persian, a few decades before Sir William Jones laid claim to it. Tavakoli-Targhi's original research uncovers Jones's dependence on the work of scholars of Persian, a fact that has been erased from collective scholarly memory. Jones's co-called pioneering work in historical linguistics was anything but original. Equally importantly, in the remaining chapters of his book, Tavakoli-Targhi reveals that amnesia is not limited to European historiography.

The significance of India for the development of Persian arts and letters during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is an instance of such all-but-lost traces in Iranian national history. The hospitable intellectual environment in India attracted Zoroastrian thinkers and philosophers who chose exile in the wake of the establishment of Shi'ism as the state religion of Iran. One such figure, Azar Kayvan settled in India in the 1570s and along with his disciples "set out to recover the memories of the pre-Islamic past and to alter the allegorical meaning of Iran's ancient history and culture" (86). Chapter five, "Contested Memories" provides us with a fascinating analysis of the process of transformation that reinterpreted Pre-Islamic Iranian history as the golden age of enlightenment. This move was the precursor to nineteenth and twentieth-century reinterpretations of Perso-Islamic history that in Tavakoli-Targhi's words "prompted the emergence of a schizophrenic view of history and the formation of schizophrenic subjects who were conscious of belonging to two diverse and often antagonistic times and cultural heritages" (93). Within these same patterns, he places the revolution that took Iran from a monarchy bent on identifying with Iran's Pre-Islamic past to an Islamic government.

Chapter three, "Persianate Europology," argues against the Orientalist assumption that travelers from Iran and India lacked curiosity and knowledge about their European neighbors. Without constituting a specialized branch of knowledge and inquiry, mirroring Orientalism, Persian scholars and travelers knew and learned about European history, culture, politics, science and economics. The examples Tavakoli-Targhi provides lay bare the dialogue that led to a creative and dialogic process of self-reinvisioning in Iran.

Tavakoli-Targhi takes up specific strains of the dialogic interactions between Iran and Europe in chapter four, "Imagining European Women," chapter six, "Crafting National Identity," and chapter seven, "Patriotic and Matriotic Nationalism." As the titles of these chapters point out, gender was and remains one of the central questions of Iranian national self-refashioning. Interestingly, the gender question intersects with language reforms in the revaluations of Iranian history. For example, Tavakoli-Targhi traces the changes that saw the figuration of *vatan* (homeland) as a dying 6,000 year-old-mother, symbolically displacing the shah as the father figure and recruiting the children of the nation, both male and female, to save the dying mother. This "fusion of the women's question and the welfare of the motherland" meant that "[a]s the actual and potential pedagogues of the children of the homeland, women assumed a strategically significant role in the developmentalist national discourse in Iran" (133).

Tavakoli-Targhi's tightly-knit and theoretically-

informed and engaging argument breaks new ground and opens up a new space for productive critical analyses of even the most cherished Iranian cultural myths. *Refashioning Iran* is not only a must for historians, it is also crucial reading for the entire Persianist scholarly community.

Nasrin Rahimieh

Keya Ganguly. *States of Exception: Everyday Life and Postcolonial Identity.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001. Pp. 214.

Perhaps one of the few disciplinary "tribes" that currently has more angst about its academic work than anthropologists wrestling with the textual and postmodernist turn in ethnography consists of literary theorists wrestling with the specter of the "empirical" in literary studies. This is a productive angst, in many cases, because the quasi-ethnographic turn among literary theorists brings a new inflection to debates about the meanings of cultural studies and the politics of disciplinarity in the U.S. academy. Keya Ganguly's *States of Exception: Everyday Life and Postcolonial Identity* is a provocative book that will help push this debate further in its critical interrogations linking "the subject of ethnography" with a postcolonialist and Marxist approach to "quotidian" experience. In doing so, Ganguly is responding to what she sees as postcolonial studies' failed project of theorizing "ideas of lived experience and social reality"(15), and "the explosion of propositions about border crossings, liminal zones, the aporia of postcoloniality, performative or strategic essentialisms, and so on" in cultural studies at the expense of historical and materialist analysis (4). Sharing this fatigue of culturalist criticism myself, I am deeply sympathetic to her project and with her interest in using ethnography to explore the "mutual-constitution . . . of subject and object, theory and practice" (178).

The book also makes an important intervention in linking analyses of postcoloniality to those of immigrant experiences, an area where more work needs to be done in South Asian American studies. Ganguly chooses, for this purpose, to study a network of twenty Indian immigrant families in Southern New Jersey, focusing intensively on a dozen families or, rather, twelve immigrant couples, the majority of whom are Bengali immigrants. She herself is a daughter of one of the couples and this potentially makes for an interesting analysis of ethnographic reflexivity or autobiography's relation to theory. However, apart from learning that her parents were "latecomers" to this community, we never learn how and when they came, what their relationships were to this social network, and what her own memories are of this community. Ganguly clearly tries to stay away from using navel-gazing to stand in for critically reflexive analysis, but the problem is that her own relationship to the community or to the locale surfaces in sometimes problematic or puzzling ways.

For example, in the first chapter, she describes the setting for her research as typifying the "ecological damage, topographical blandness, and parochialism of U.S. suburbia" (18). There is no reason to doubt that Southern New Jersey is, in fact, topographically bland and parochial or that it represents the "banal and even deadening daily life" of the suburbs (85). Yet the reader cannot help wondering, given that she spent some time liv ing in this area and was considered an "insider" (18), that perhaps a critical reflection on her own attachments to, or need to distance herself from, this place might be in order. More importantly, perhaps, how would this description resonate with the subjects of her study, those who actually live in this area and about whom she is writing? Would they share this view or would they find it dismissive of other kinds of meanings produced in relation to place or home, beyond the fact of the landscape of highways and shopping malls, so easily skewered in images of the Garden State? The author is astute enough to note that "methodological reflexivity or ethical piety" is not enough to produce a critical ethnography and at the outset she notes that her use of "my ethnographic community" (10) is intended as an "ironic notation" to draw attention to the reflexive relationship between observer and observed. Yet this irony seems not to be sufficient to address the question of her own assumptions about her "informants" and their lives and beliefs that appear early on in the book and are never completely resolved.

There are some interesting insights that emerge from her relationship to the ethnographic community, such as a moment in the first chapter, where she comments on disciplinary and methodological issues for her "field of vision." Ganguly notes that it was because she did not embody the "proper lifestyle" of a married woman or scientific or business professional that the women she spoke to were able to voice ambivalence about their own positions. This gendered resonance seems to allow her, in turn, to offer an insightful analysis in the second chapter of the sexual-spatial politics of social gatherings of Indian immigrants and, particularly, of the gendered contradictions in men's and women's constructions of the "past" and "present." She points out that men tended to "romanticize the present" whereas women affirmed their past lives in India," arguing that "the presence of the past offers a way for these women to say what otherwise cannot be said: that emigration has brought with it a betrayal of the promise of equality" (112). This chapter deftly links questions of nostalgia and memory to the workings of model minority myths in Indian immigrant communities and to gendered

forms of labor. Yet while Ganguly argues that women confuse "the privilege of being secure in one's self with material security," we do not really learn enough about the women to know what their "sense of self" might be or what they believe it to be. The danger with such statements is that, once again, they are implicitly critical of her informants without really trying to grapple with their perspectives or emotions in their social and material contradictions.

This lack of nuanced engagement with her informants' views is also apparent in her statements about the racialization and race politics of Indian immigrants, here and also in the second chapter where she argues that "the experience of racial or cultural difference demarcates not the truth or reality of one's life but rather its mystifications" (81). Ganguly illustrates this point with a generalized statement that presumably sums up mystified attitudes in "the middle class community at issue": "Being Indian has prevented me from getting ahead in my company" (81). It is indeed true that often, and especially in the U.S., race is the modality in which class is lived, but the problem is that Stuart Hall was not arguing for a reduction of class politics to race in his widely cited statement, and especially not in his later work on "new ethnicities." However, it is used here in the context of an economically deterministic analysis of the meanings of racial and ethnic identification. For middle-class Indian immigrants' racialized narratives about workplace discrimination is not always "ushered in" only by his or her confusion about class barriers, but also by a racially stratified system where brown or black employees do indeed encounter a glass ceiling. But because there are so few actual examples of "everyday experience" in the book, a reader is at a loss to understand the context of this generalized statement. Who do these immigrants interact with in their workplaces? Who lives in their neighborhoods? Given that she is interested in the "localisms of identity, ethnicity, or cultural practice," (177) what does it mean to be a middle-class Indian American in New Jersey as opposed to suburbs in California or outside Chicago? Ganguly notably does not draw on the existing literature on South Asian Americans at all in her text, except for a few passing citations in the endnotes, an omission that seems deliberate, and so rather puzzling in its absence. It seems important to take on the local contexts of race politics in addition to postcolonial analyses of race via Fanon, yet the "cultural specificity" and differences "even within cultures" (110) that Ganguly calls for are largely missing here.

In this regard, Ganguly's use of the Frankfurt School's critique of commodification and experience, while important for the book's analysis of consumption and embourgeoisement, serves in places to reinforce a problematic stance toward her informants. She writes of "the difficulty in making comparisons between a critical consciousness such as [Benjamin's] and the self-understanding of ordinary folks," which is a valid statement if a little unnecessary, but then goes on to observe that "his is a privileged perspective on ideology not accessible to the man on the street caught in its machine" (85). Apart from the fact that this raises questions about whether the author is somehow not a member of the "ordinary folks," but closer to Benjamin's critical perspective, it also seems to impute a certain false consciousness to her informants. Writing critically about real people is no easy task to be sure, yet for comparison, Nina Glick Schiller and Georges Fouron's *Georges Woke Up Laughing: Long-Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home* (2001), a multi-sited ethnography of Haitian transmigrants, offers an astute and very nuanced analysis of similar issues from a reflexive and autobiographical perspective.

Perhaps Ganguly's most textured, and also most detailed, analysis of her encounter with the quotidian is in Chapter Five, where she uses the televised screening of Peter Brooks's Mahabharata to reflect on ethnic spectatorship. Her analysis of "the issue of what is to pass for authorized knowledge, informed history, and adequate representation" for immigrant Indians" (144) demonstrates that this "production works to estrange rather than illuminate my informants' sense of their world and themselves" (147). Interestingly, this encounter is also the one in which Ganguly treats her informants most sympathetically; not coincidentally, it seems, it is an instance in which she shares her informants' critique of the film, allowing her for once to empathize with their response; also the presence of the film allows her a partially textualist analysis. In other places, there are statements such as: "Like all Generation X-ers, the new generation of "Indian Americans" embodies a certain politics of forgetting, a cavalier disregard for history—the history of its own location no less than the provenance of older generations" (24). This is an odd, let alone dismissive, generalization for research, and "everyday" observations suggest that second-generation youth are, on the contrary, obsessed with history and with tracing their ancestral origins—setting aside for a moment the cliché about "Generation X," which is for many a marketing myth.

Ganguly's project of drawing on the Frankfurt School and on dialectical analysis to argue against "willed reflexivity" in critical ethnography and the eva sion of lived experience in deconstruction is an important and timely one. While to some extent she seems to be returning to older debates about "writing culture" of the mid-1980s in response to which there have been many interesting and experimental responses, the book's application of postcolonial theory and Marxist analyses of value to immigrant experiences in the U.S. is a valu-

able critical move. Ganguly acknowledges in the Afterword that the "reader who comes to the book expecting "thick descriptions" of the lifeways and customs of postcolonial subjects is bound to be disappointed" (177). Yet I think it is not simply the lack of "data" that the author needs to defend against, for a return to crass empiricism would clearly not address the epistemological questions that Ganguly is rightly raising. The question that remains for me is why Ganguly uses the trope of "fieldwork" at all, and whether "everyday experience" ultimately functions in her book as a kind of alibi for the limitations of representational and philosophical analysis. The rhetoric of "lived reality" seems to serve as a shorthand for interdisciplinary transgressiveness, a zone of anxiety about authenticity, actualized or not. All escape hatches marked "exit" from this zone must lead not out, but through.

Sunaina Maira

As'ad Ghanem. *The Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel, 1948-2000*. New York: The State University of New York Press, 2001. Pp. 238.

In July 2002, just a few months after the publication of this book as part of SUNY's series in Israeli studies, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's cabinet endorsed legislation that would allow Jewish communities to bar Israeli Arabs from buying and moving into land reserved exclusively for Jews. The legislation triggered an acrimonious debate about the principles of democracy, equality, and the racist nature of the "Zionist ideal," which perceives Israel as the "state for the Jewish people, not the state for all its citizens."

Although the legislation was later called off under the pressure of international criticism for its potential legalization of an apartheid regime, it can be taken as an emblematic summary for As'ad Ghanem's book. Its content, targets, and far-reaching implications constitute, to a large extent, the subject matter of the book as the timing of its endorsement underlines the distress under which Israeli Arabs live and dramatizes their need for a just solution.

The book is divided into three parts in which As'ad Ghanem, a professor of political science at the University of Haifa, deals with the dilemmas of Israeli Arabs, the development of their political consciousness, and their methods of struggle to realize their aspirations in egalitarian coexistence in the state that excludes *a priori* by its *raison d'être* their equal rights.

The first part comprises the introduction and historical background for the development of the Palestinian minority in Israel. The author maintains that there are many factors that have influenced that development and prevented it from taking a "normal" course. Of the most important ones are the Israeli authorities' policies toward the Palestinian minority, which were guided by the three major considerations of "security" (viewing Israeli Arabs as a security threat), of "ethnicity" (viewing Israel as the state for the Jewish people), and of "liberal democracy" (viewing Israel as a democratic state which must see to the welfare of all its citizens including the Arabs). In practice, the first two considerations take priority over the third one with the ultimate result of leaving the Palestinian minority to develop in "distress."

The second part, which constitutes more than half of the book, essentially represents the gist of Ghanem's political study. It begins with chapter two, which serves as a framework for the study, and includes six out of the nine chapters of the book. Ghanem gives particular attention to the classification of the ideological and political streams among the Arabs in Israel. He rejects the prevalent patterns of the political classification (dichotomy, three-part, and four-part classifications), and introduces his own five-part classification for characterizing the ideological groups. The criterion consists of the "broad ideology," "the organizational basis," "the degree of radicalism in the change advocated," "the tone of the political discourse," and "the motifs of the internal logic." On the basis of these five elements, the Arabs in Israel fall into four streams: the Israeli-Arab stream, the Communists, the Nationals, and the Islamists.

Ghanem analyzes the politics and ideology of these streams, each in a separate chapter, on the basis of their positions on the key questions of equality, identity, the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the appropriate methods for realizing the aspirations of the Palestinian minority in Israel.

Regarding the Israeli-Arab stream, there has been an intensification of struggle for equality and the desire for full integration in the state. It advocates the two-part compound identity—Arab-Palestinian national and Israeli civic. It only adopts the "legal means of struggle," parliamentary and extraparliamentary, to advance the interests of the minority.

The communist stream is the oldest, the most organized, the most experienced, and historically, the most influential in the political development of the Arabs in Israel. Perceiving of Zionism as a "colonialist and racist movement," it rejects the Zionist character of the state, focusing on achieving equality between Arabs and Jews and peace between Israel and the Palestinians. As to identity, the communists believe in the complementary nature of the double identity.

The national stream includes at various stages of its development the "The Arab/Popular Front," the "Al-Ard Movement," "The Sons of the Village," "The Progressive Movement," and "The National Democratic Alliance." Its emergence was drastically hindered by the

conditions resulting from the establishment of Israel in 1948; the dispersion of the Palestinian people, the isolation of the remaining Palestinians from the Arab world, and the stringent Israeli policy to control Arab nationalism. Throughout its political evolution, the national stream rejected the existence of Israel and did not rule out the use of violence as a legitimate form of struggle. As to identity, the national stream considers the Arabs in Israel as part and parcel of the Arab Palestinian people in every respect—political, social, and cultural. Nonetheless, some of these national attitudes have been modified after the first Palestinian *intifada* in 1987 and the signing of the Oslo Agreement between Israel and the PLO in September of 1993.

The Islamic stream emerged relatively late and rapidly acquired prominence in the political life of the Israeli Arabs. Since 1983, the Islamic movement has served as its organizational expression. Although the movement was split in 1996 over the participation in the Knesset elections, it still officially boycotts the Israeli parliamentary elections. It understandably, and with admirable success, concentrates on the municipal elections. The Islamic movement in Israel is basically a pragmatic political organization with an Islamic orientation. Thus it is fundamentally different from the Islamic movements in the Arab world. It accepts the existence of Israel and the status of the Moslems in Israel as a minority in the Jewish state. While it emphasizes the Islamic component in the identity of the Arabs in Israel, it does not dismiss the Palestinian national components as being "citizens of Israel."

The third part of the book, which is the most illuminating, analyzes the "political distress" of the Palestinian-Arab minority in Israel and suggests a way out of it by establishing "a binational state in the entire territory of Mandatory Palestine based on collective accords that bind the two peoples in a single political system" (184). Those accords should be based on the four principles of "consociationalism": a broad coalition between the political representatives of the Jews and the Palestinians; mutual veto power regarding fundamental and substantive issues; proportional distribution of social goods; and a significant degree of autonomous rule for each people to manage its internal affairs.

The strength of Ghanem's book lies in its systematic, well-integrated, analytical account of the comprehensive political development of the Palestinian-Arabs in Israel since the 1948 war, which resulted in the establishment of Israel as a "Jewish state" and the dispersion of the Palestinians. The paradoxical outcome of the war eventually forced the Palestinians in Israel to develop in an extremely "paradoxical environment" where they have to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable, heterogeneous ingredients of their political and cultural identity, their struggle for justice and equality, and their national belonging in the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. This is what Ghanem describes as "political distress." Ghanem's book is rich in political and human perception of this "distress" under which the Palestinian-Arab minority in Israel has to conduct its life.

Ghanem displays an impressive command of his topic, and his manner of writing is both lucid and compelling. I think he captures the direct style of the political scientist while maintaining an unswerving focus on his main topic: the political development of the Israeli-Arab minority in "distress." However, this style has its weakness, which is also apparent in Ghanem's book. The excessive authorial explanation of methodology and declaration of "purposes," combined with frequent detailed categorization, render the book somewhat repetitious and make certain chapters read like an itemized data bank.

By the nature of his academic study, Ghanem's book is confined to the historical time framework of 1948-2000. Time, as the saying goes, is the enemy and the touchstone of the given assumptions and the elucidated deductions. The last two years that Ghanem's book does not cover are so eventful and quintessential that they have reversed the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to its primordial causes, the fact which certainly will have tremendous impact on the ideology and politics of the various active streams among the Arab minority in Israel, as well as on Ghanem's proposed "binational-state" solution. I would like to see an "afterward" with the second edition of the book addressing this point in particular and explicating how the events of the last two years validate or invalidate those given assumptions.

Still, Ghanem's book *The Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel, 1948-2000* is both solid research and a handy reference that political specialist and casual reader alike need on their shelves to explore the life, politics, and operating ideologies of the Palestinian-Arab community in Israel.

Ahmad Harb

Sukeshi Kamra. *Bearing Witness: Partition, Independence, End of Raj*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002. Pp. xvi, 336.

Partition, Independence, and the Raj are words that resound in the minds of 1.5 billion people from the Indian sub-continent to the island of Britain and the vast archipelago of the South Asian diaspora. There are events in the history of a land that tear apart its sense of self more drastically than any other intrusion. Partition was such an event. For some, that moment is merely history and now firmly in the past; for others, every August is a reminder of the "cost of independence." Sukeshi Kamra's book *Bearing Witness: Partition, Independ-*

ence, End of Raj is a powerful reading of this difficult past. Her book demonstrates how a new generation is coming to terms with this past, a generation that is attempting to look at this wound with an objective gaze, if at all possible. The nature of this enterprise, according to the author, "is an attempt to broaden Indian historiography by bringing in 'ignored' if not exactly 'suppressed' voices" (20). It is a multi-generic and multidisciplinary study attempting to understand this traumatic event.

Kamra does an in-depth study of the available material—eyewitness testimonials, fictional accounts, newspaper reporting, editorial cartoons, autobiographies and diaries—using theories of culture and psychology, nation formation and postcolonialism, among others. A substantial introduction inaugurates the five chapters and provides methodological explanations. It ends with a summary of the debate on the formation of Pakistan that situates the reader with a good historical grounding, ready to explore whether India housed two nations, or as Mushirul Hasan asks, "Why did a 'Pakistan' come about which served the interests of most Muslims so poorly" (30)?

"The Word on the Streets: Editorials and Political-Cartoons in English-Language Dailies (1947)," examines three different groups of newspapers from North India: the nationalist, the communal based, and the ones partial to colonial government. In this probing chapter she uncovers, with ample use of actual cartoons, a complicated process of othering that alienated the nationalist positions from those of the Muslim League. Using Homi Bhaba's theorizing of the indigenous other, Kamra shows the complex interplay of derogatory cartoons that portrayed both Nehru and Jinnah as simultaneously the same and different. Through a reading of the *Harijan*, Gandhi's newspaper, Kamra appreciates Gandhi's singular attempt to deconstruct this 'othering' (109).

Chapter 2, "'Dare to Know': August 15, 1947, the Partition," reads the testimonials of survivors primarily from the urban, lower middle and working classes. It reads Partition in terms of a civilizational break. The most important contribution of this chapter is its challenge "to rethink the given of communalism" as the prime cause of violence (132). Unmasking the cultural logic of inequity, Kamra trenchantly asks:

> So how, and where, is it that what was at least partially an economic and social expression of rage at a loss of home and community got read as a purely communal anger . . . ? The question is an important one to ask because 'communalism' bears the burden of Partition. Where did the bargaining class derive its "knowledge" of a presumed, increasingly communal divide? (155)

Her book questions this assumption and shows the roles the press, politicians, police, and military services played in such a construction. On the other hand, she also makes the reader confront the uneasy question of ordinary people perpetrating unspeakable violence. The chapter is a painful reminder of how class and gender determined the nature and extent of violence one experienced.

In "Narratives of Pain: Fiction and Autobiography as 'Psychotestimonies' to the Partition," Kamra examines the most devastating impact of Partition—psychological trauma—and proceeds to examine whether its manifestations are culturally specific. Social rejection of many female victims by their own families testifies to the violence inherent in the cultural logic of female purity and honor. This was a time when the bordering of a nation blurred the boundaries between friend and foe, life and death, love and hate.

A study of writings by Indians, mostly united by class and gender privilege is the basis for "The Children of India Remember: Reflections, Chronicles, Diaries, Autobiographies." The reasons for writing these differ from the earlier narratives. Pradip Bose writes against "the myth of non-violence and of a voluntary abrogation of power by the colonial government" (202). Kamra reads these texts in terms of how they construct a subject, or what the writers consider as the self. She reads two distinctly different political groups, first the Congress Socialist Party with their Marxist leanings and then the Muslim League with its discourse of minoritism. The chapter reveals the ideological struggles where elites of two emerging nations debated the intricacies of secularism and communalism, ignoring the lived reality of the people they represented. The second section theorizes autobiography; it posits how these accounts do not disclose the self at all and are rather located in their privileged position.

The final chapter, titled "The Rhetoric of Anxiety: The End of the Raj in the Writings of the British in India and the British Press," examines the narratives of the group for whom the historical moment meant the end of "the Raj." The group included English people who were by birth Indians. They too experienced a sense of loss because they claimed India as "home." There is a marked difference in the accounts by various colonial administrators: most of them believed in "the white man's burden" but were ready to give up their benevolent trusteeship; a few like Sorensen saw colonialism as "conscienceless exploitation" and "as a process of economic blood-transfusion for British benefit" (247). A few British officials kept diaries, and Kamra provides a reading of these "very 'masculine' public diaries" that disguise the imbalance of power relations.

The book comes full circle with political cartoons and editorials, but this time from the other end. The British press in 1947 is primarily anxious to proclaim colonial-

ism as a "sacrifice misread by the world as exploitation" (287). Employing the rhetoric of the civilizing mission and the familial, the self-representations of the British people in these editorials are that of moral superiority in the face of increasing global criticism. Ironically, the partition of India provided relief because blame could be shifted to the new nations, completely ignoring British culpability. While the conservative press uses Partition as vindication of the British trusteeship position, at least the *Manchester Guardian* breaks the silence by asking whether the horrors of partition were not preventable.

The short conclusion grapples with the difficult problem of representation and ends with the reiteration of the need to historicize Partition. Three appendices are informative as they give the lay reader a short history of the Punjab and the Indian press, as well as biographies of prominent authors.

Sukeshi Kamra's extremely readable book creates a powerful narrative of voices even though it tells only half the story. She focuses only on the Punjab, her personal mooring, revealing the perspectival nature of historiography. Exclusion of many important newspapers from Bengal appears discordant to this reviewer perhaps because her family had to flee East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. Despite this self-imposed limitation, Kamra does a monumental job of challenging the "official" versions of this terrifying moment.

Neela Bhattacharya Saxena

David R. Loy. *A Buddhist History of the West: Studies in Lack*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2002. Pp. 244.

David Loy has done a masterful job of condensing and assessing more than two thousand years of Western religious, philosophical, and cultural history "from a Buddhist perspective." Basing his discussion on the premise that the predicament of Western civilization can be traced to a search for metaphysical origins and the subsequent attempt to "reify the sense of lack" in both the Christian doctrine of "original sin" and the secular preoccupation with "freedom," he systematically deconstructs the foundations of our monotheist/humanist society. Arguing that fame, romantic love, and money are the major Western devices for reifying the self, Loy makes a strong case against the possibility of ever resolving our sense of lack if we are to continue pursuing those devices. In their place, he offers the Buddhist solution of "forgetting" ourselves through meditation, which he defines as the technique of "[losing] our sense of separation and [realizing] that we are not other than the world." Following the dualistic course of searching "out there" to satisfy what Sakyamuni Buddha called *drshna*, the unquenchable thirst for experiences that delude us into believing in a permanent self, Western theologians and philosophers, from Plato to Augustine to Locke, have engaged in a desperate game of "consciousness attempting to catch its own tail." It is this never-ending game that the Buddha saw as the cause of all human suffering, which can only end with the realization that there is "no-thing at my core," in other words, that there is no permanent self, and therefore nothing to liberate.

Loy claims that "the lack of an overtly spiritual grounding to our lives" is intrinsic to "the basic nihilism of modernity," and he ingeniously reveals a link between totalitarianism and dualistically envisioned individual freedom. He goes on to posit the Buddhist notion that victimhood is yet another way of "[reinforcing] one's delusive sense of self as that which has been abused." It is here that Loy comes dangerously close to arguing in favor of the otherworldly kind of quietism that Westerners too often associate with Buddhism and meditation in general. While touching on the inner tension between the inner-worldly Buddhism of Southeast Asia and the more socially engaged Mahayana form adopted by China, Korea, Japan, and Tibet, the author nonetheless skirts the most crucial issue faced by the majority of Western Buddhists: how much involvement with the suffering of the world beyond the meditation cushion is too much? And are my efforts to "save the many beings" not merely another way of aggrandizing the self? Ascribing the Western obsession with progress and subsequent destruction of the environment to the largely Protestant construction of a worldly solution to the spiritual sense of lack does not account for the fact that ancient societies under Buddhist rule such as China were no less aggressive in their search for wealth and power, and, in several cases, equally brutal in their persecutions of non-Buddhists. Loy makes a valid distinction, however, between Buddhist and Western core values: "Most of us [in the West] have lost faith in collective solutions . . . we are more in the grip of individualistic ones, such as the craving for fame, the love of romantic love, and of course an obsession with money."

Loy's discussion of our three favorite "devices" for solving our sense of lack is truly admirable. Devoting an entire chapter to "The Renaissance of Lack," he meticulously traces the current obsessive craving for fame, romantic love, and money to the late Middle Ages and the decline of Christianity. Though not a new phenomenon by any means, the "fever of renown" has assumed a peculiarly warped form in the democratic West, where individuals are less worshiped than celebrity—or, lacking that, notoriety—itself. Loy's Buddhist insight into this endemic postmodern disease is poignant yet hopeful.

When fame symbolizes my need to end my lack and

become real, . . . disappointment is inevitable: No amount of fame can satisfy me if there is really something else I seek from it. From here there are two ways to go. One is concluding that I am not yet famous *enough*. Then each achievement has to top the last one, for if you're not going up you're headed down. The other danger with becoming famous is that one might accomplish one's project for overcoming lack without overcoming lack, with the effect of increasing one's anxiety about being unreal. From a Buddhist standpoint, however, this second problem is also a great opportunity since it opens up the possibility of confronting one's sense of lack more directly. The issue becomes how one deals with that heightened sense of pure lack. (71-72)

Loy's discussion of the institutionalization of greed under the current neo-liberal "new world order" is also highly provocative. Yet his deconstruction of the quest for romantic love is weak largely because of its heavy reliance on two antiquated sources: Denis de Rougement's *Love in the Western World* and Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death*. Most disappointing, however, is the glaring "lack" of feminist scholarship. One wonders how, in any discussion of contemporary sexuality from a Buddhist perspective, the author could have overlooked the work of Rita Gross or Miranda Shaw, for example. Other than that, Loy's thoughtful and compassionate analysis of our twenty-first-century spiritual malaise is well worth pondering.

Perle Besserman

Jeannie Suk. *Postcolonial Paradoxes in French Caribbean Writing: Césaire, Glissant, Condé*. Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001. Pp. 214.

In *Postcolonial Paradoxes in French Caribbean Writing: Césaire, Glissant, Condé,* Jeannie Suk examines the debate over the concept of postcoloniality, placing what has largely remained a phenomenon of anglophone postcolonial studies within the context of the francophone literature of Guadeloupe and Martinique. Following an introductory chapter that examines the content of this debate and its relevance to the French Antilles, the author examines in successive chapters Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal,* Edouard Glissant's *Discours antillais,* and, in the course of three chapters, the fiction of Maryse Condé.

In the author's introduction, Suk rapidly surveys the reception of De Manian literary theories of allegory in postcolonial thought (Homi Bhaba, Christopher Miller, Fredric Jameson). Suk emerges from this critical survey to formulate the work's underlying query: whether it is "possible to read postcolonial literature as preoccupied with allegory, without neatly projecting its alterity on to a nostalgic annulment of postcolonial discontinuity" (17). Thus the "paradox" at the heart of Suk's study lies in the author's willful appropriation of "postcolonial" critique from anglophone literary studies: the continuing neocolonialism of the French Overseas Departments, the uninterrupted (though certainly variable) four centuries of political domination of French Antillean colonialism up to the present day, in its very blatancy, demands a "practice of reading that accentuates the commonality of the problems that arise from colonialism, its aftermath, and continuation" (19).

An examination of Césaire's *Cahier* follows this introduction, examining this protean text's reinscriptions and transformations of the literary trope of the voyage ("Crossings, Returns") "that both constitutes a nostalgic quest for something lost and figures poetic activity" (24). Suk provides an overview of the poem's critical reception, then moves to a reading that describes how "Césaire's self-conscious effort to recover an original authenticity to be found in his Antillean and even more alienated African roots confronts the legacy of European exoticism that projected a distant elsewhere as a realm of return to primal rejuvenation and wholeness" (31). Suk examines various intertexts that serve to illuminate Césaire's poetic voyage (Baudelaire's "Parfum exotique," Mallarmé's "Brise marine," Breton's narrative "Martinique charmeuse de serpents"), to conclude that the *Cahier*'s radical novelty necessarily operates in critical relation to such precursors and contemporary voices as it engages the trope of the voyage (36). In its paradoxical status as a poetic document that seeks to construct an elusive Antillean identity, the *Cahier* serves, in Suk's reading, to render the inherent tension between aesthetic object and history (55).

Glissant's *Discours antillais* refocuses Antillean postcolonial experience, in Suk's reading, via a self-reflexive critique of the quest for authenticity initiated in Césaire's *Cahier* (57). Figured as a "space of discontinu ity" that actually generates historical consciousness, Suk probes the recuperation of history in its political and literary dimensions. Suk examines Glissant's critique of the Césairien "teleology of return" (58) via the concept of *relation.* Glissant finds the loss of history to operate through the mechanisms of communal trauma (61), and in this light, the Antillean literary focus on the "return" becomes a veritable return of the repressed. Glissantian *détour* in turn offers the means to resist colonial hegemony via a strategic outflanking, at once linguistic, historical, and political (64-67). As a "renunciation of logocentrism," Suk takes the *détour* to put into play serial supplementarity, deferral, and displacement (67). In tracing the operational similarity between Freud's model of trauma (*Moses and Monotheism)* and that of Glissant, Suk shows with remarkable clarity and originality that

Glissantian rememoration functions via delayed insight: traumatic events such as Louis Delgrès' 1802 rebellion are only truly understood in the moment of their (postponed) representational reconstruction, rather than amid the immediate shock of their original occurrence (77). Suk closes her analysis with a penetrating interrogation of Glissant's celebration of this Antillean mnemonic deferral: does Glissant's traumatic model, she asks, instrumentalize the suffering of past generations, of the slavery itself, in deference to the teleogy of a contemporary mnemonic plenitude (82)?

The three final chapters of *Postcolonial Paradoxes in French Caribbean Writing* examine the work of the Guadeloupean author Maryse Condé. Suk finds Africa in Condé's *Hérémakhonon* to function as "the setting and occasion for the writing of self-fictionalized return" (88). For all its irony, Suk finds the novel to invoke an experience of hybridity as constructive of Antillean subjectivity itself (103). *Une saison à Rihata,* like Suk's *Cahier,* evokes in her reading a series of intertextual, archetypal referents, including biblical and mythical antecedents (107). These intertextual repetitions play out the return of trauma in the literary register, as did Suk's Glissantean Antillean historiography (107). The novel's description of traumatic guilt resituates the Derridean critique of origins, as Condé becomes, in Suk's reading, witness to the trauma of failed African decolonization and its ever-deferred promise (115).

In her fifth chapter, Suk reads Condé's *Moi, Tituba, sorcière noire de Salem* as a further recoding of the psychoanalytic model of trauma through the historical relation of sorcery and postcolonial experience. Suk critiques previous critical affirmation of Condé's attribution of vocal agency to her protagonist, arguing that this act "constitutes an assertion of authorial presence and power rather than an act of absenting and self-disempowerment" (120). Suk further expands her investigation into trauma, history, and Antillean literature as she considers the role of sorcery as a communal, performative cure (141). Not only the narrative of *Tituba a sorceress*, but Condé herself, in this view, enacts a literary "possession" by the historical Tituba (142) that leads to a working through and recuperation of the past thematized in the novel's epilogue (145).

Suk's final chapter examines Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove* in light of the Guadeloupean author's critique of the theory of *créolité* elaborated by Chamoiseau, Confiant, and Bernabé. In contrast to its previous critical reception, Suk finds *Traversée* to enact a critique of "Caribbean multiplicity and diversity to which *créolité* lays claim" in consonance with Condé's more explicit critique of the movement in other circumstances (155). The chapter skillfully orchestrates a complex interrogation of *Traversée* and the complex polemic over *créolité* to draw an extremely rich picture of the interaction between Antillean fiction and its meta-discursive vicissitudes.

Jeannie Suk's *Postcolonial Paradoxes in French Caribbean Writing* offers an important and original contribution to the study of French Antillean literature. In considering this literature in light of recent theories of allegory and trauma, Suk demarcates—most notably in the book's four final chapters—an original and underappreciated dimension of the Antillean engagement of postcolonial historical experience. Thoroughly researched, clearly written, and compellingly argued, it places this literature within the context of deconstructive, poststructuralist thought with ease and sophistication, while offering substantive close-readings of canonical texts that markedly extend our awareness of the subtle workings of these materials.

Nick Nesbitt

Gaurav Desai. *Subject to Colonialism: African Self-fashioning and the Colonial Library.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2001. Pp. xii, 197.

In his book *Subject to Colonialism: African Self-Fashioning and the Colonial Library*, Gaurav Desai examines a range of texts from roughly the first half of the 20th century. Chapter 1 is devoted to discourses of racial difference, so-called "African identity" and "educability" -- discourses that belonged to *the* order of knowledge about black peoples not long ago. The chapter considers discourses of scientific racism and the counter-arguments mounted by liberals and relativists, showing how various participants elaborated their positions as part of concrete political agendas. Chapter 2 concentrates on anthropology as an academic discipline whose origins link it with European imperialism. The author suggests that it is time to re-read the classic anthropologists – those "dead white males" who made their careers by inventing the cultural/racial other in order to constitute the European self. For Desai, we can enrich our critique of ideologies of otherness, not simply by recognizing the compromised historical and intellectual origins of anthropological writing, but also by reading the texts against the grain of the writers' intentions. In this sense, anthropological writing turns out to have opened up a discursive eventuality that colonial anthropologists themselves did not necessarily intend. The analysis of Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938), alongside Edwin Smith and Bronislaw Malinowski, enables Desai to examine a case of a "native" taking up ethnography—erstwhile tool of colonialism—and using it for an anti-colonial statement.

Chapter 3 turns to Akiga Sai, a male Christian convert of the Tiv ethnic group in Nigeria, whose book *Akiga's Story: The Tiv Tribe as Seen by One of Its Members* appeared

in 1939, translated and annotated by Rupert East. From this text, Desai teases out multiple levels of social and discursive contradiction and negotiation, and one of these is the place of women. Desai shows the double discourse that Sai's text enacts, caught between a defense of Christian, colonial modernity and a proto-nationalist representation of women as custodians of cultural health. Thus, the text wants to embrace European modernity, but is also moved to lament the "bad" consequences of modernization on traditional Tiv society. On Desai's reading, Sai is an ambivalent subject, neither more nor less so than, say, Charles T. Loram and Simon Biesheuval (analyzed in Chapter 1); or Smith, Malinowski, and Kenyatta (examined in Chapter 2). Further, Sai and Kenyatta offer a specific inflection to the colonial archive because, being Africans, they testify to a moment when "natives" begin to enter the colonial archive to tell their own stories, thereby acquiring, at some level, the power of discourse that previously excluded or ventriloquized their desire.

Desai identifies his book's impulse as "post-foundational," as distinct from "anti-foundational." "Distinguished from *anti*-foundationalism," he writes, "*post*-foundationalism is interested not so much in debunking foundations as in historicizing their emergence" (11). This is a useful distinction, and we can sharpen it further by stressing that the two need not be conceived as rival choices. Depending on the discursive field at issue, it may well be productive to debunk *and* historicize in equal measure. The foundationalism that sponsors scientific racism and its discursive vectors can most thoroughly be debunked if one also plots the historicity of these discourses' emergence. Likewise, our appreciation of the discourses of African self-fashioning (of which Kenyatta and Sai are examples) is enriched if we stress their historicity and effects, not despite, but precisely because of, their epistemic and institutional imbrication with the colonial archive.

One significant aspect of Desai's "post-foundationalist" procedure is its critique of the canonical construction of Anglophone African literature, wherein Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) figures as the founding text, to the exclusion of previous writers like Herbert Dhlomo, Sol Plaatje, or Samuel Ntara. Desai does not reject this construction (it would be conceptually problematic to do so). Rather, he urges us to extend our research interests to previously sidelined texts by female authors and writers from the first half the 20th century. He sees these earlier writers as the "dangerous supplements" to the colonial library as well as the corpus of "African Literature" that blossomed in the decolonization era. In Jacques Derrida's sense, the "dangerous supplement" is an excluded element that is always necessary to any construction of totality and interiority. It is the "outside" that the "inside" requires to constitute itself. But precisely for this reason, it also functions as a potential intrusion that exposes the limits of that inside -- its immanent vulnerability to contamination or disarticulation. In this way, Desai's reading of Kenyatta and Akiga Sai serves a dual function. First, to figures like Loram, Evans-Pritchard, or Malinowski, Kenyatta and Sai are the dangerous supplements, "natives" speaking on their own behalf—even if the voices are neither "representative" nor monolithic. Second, read alongside Achebe or Ngugi, Kenyatta and Sai are also potentially dangerous supplements: they show the limits and exclusions of the "postcolonial" moment we often cast, too readily, as free of traces of the colonial archive.

Subject to Colonialism gets most interesting from Chapter 2 onwards, most exciting when Desai turns to Kenyatta and Sai. This is perhaps because I generally find eggheads of scientific racism, as well as their liberal or missionary adversaries, conceptually uninteresting: they tend to be thin and boorish in some instantiations, condescending in others. This is not to underplay the need for scrutinizing such discourses closely, for as Desai reminds us, racism and its discursive masks are still with us. Rather, given the project of "African self-fashioning" contained in the book's title, I was rather eager to learn more about dangerous supplements like Kenyatta and Sai, less about, say, Lévy-Bruhl in the logic and province of the Same. It is for a related reason that, despite Desai's impressive effort in Chapter 2 and the Coda, Joseph Conrad remains for me more theoretically suggestive than Malinowski or any ethnographer from the colonial era. Because he worked in a discourse that specifically announces itself as fiction, that is to say, an imaginative use of language that reaches for truth by renouncing glibly referential "truth," Conrad's epistemological lesson can be distinguished from Malinowski's in rewarding, "post-foundationalist" ways.

And yet, the achievement of *Subject to Colonialism* stands. The most persuasive case that Desai makes is to be found in his well-grounded insistence that we read texts of Africa patiently, with solemn ethical commitments, not easy self-congratulations. Accounts of trends in Anglo-American academia sometimes claim that an intellectual development called "postcolonial studies" reigned in the 1980s and early-90s, but has by now faded away. In such accounts, "postcolonial studies" gets lumped with "poststructuralism" and "postmodernism," the idea being that all three have come and gone. *Subject to Colonialism* gives us reason to recognize that the conceptual gains of the best of these intellectual developments will not, and should not, fade away. The book offers a welcome example of what can be done with poststructuralist thinking in the service of postcolonial criticism and African studies. This study may not elicit total agreement in all its detailed arguments, but it

makes a significant contribution to the ongoing critique of the colonial archive, and to the theorization of African self-fashioning, in and through language.

Olakunle George

Alfred J. López. *Posts and Pasts: A Theory of Postcolonialism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001. Pp. xi, 274.

At the core of Alfred J. López's impressive new study of postcolonialism lies the definition of postcoloniality as simultaneously a contrapuntal recollection of histories of colonial suppression and a displacement of these largely unilinear narratives toward the adumbration of a future characterized by heterogeneity and diversity. In this sense, López's theoretical articulation of the postcolonial resonates not only with Homi Bhabha's well-traveled concepts of hybridity and cultural difference, but also with Paul Gilroy's notion of a diasporic or "non-traditional" (Black Atlantic) tradition (that is, one defined by *routedness* as opposed to rootedness), as well as Edouard Glissant's conception of Diversity (*le Divers*). In this acceptation, Diversity, as Glissant emphasizes, means neither chaos nor sterility. It refers rather to "the human spirit's striving for a cross-cultural relationship [*relation*], without universalist transcendence." A similar idea of cultural "transversality" undergirds López's informed treatment of a remarkable array of texts (ranging from José Martí and Joseph Conrad to Frantz Fanon, Alejo Carpentier, Kamau Brathwaite, Wilson Harris, Gabriel García Márquez, Salman Rushdie, J. M. Coetzee, and Michelle Cliff). Notwithstanding the generalizing connotation of the subtitle's *theory*, López's approach endeavors not to transcend these heterogenous figures and cultural and linguistic contexts into a hierarchical whole, but to preserve their irreducible differences and discontinuities. Concomitantly, the author seeks to foreground both his own critical discourse and a select body of "exemplary postcolonial" texts as sites of multiple cultural identities and historical itineraries, as the nexus of converging paths, which, in the last instance, can aspire only to a provisional totality. As anyone reasonably acquainted with postcolonial studies has perhaps already noticed, this does not constitute a significant departure from current theories of postcoloniality. In my view, the book's most valuable contributions to a decidedly amorphous field are, on the one hand, López's thoughtful and detailed engagement with recent debates over the meaning and value of the postcolonial as a theoretical construct and, on the other hand, his assertion that until Latin American experiences of decolonization and revolutionary struggle receive due consideration our conception of postcoloniality will remain both "partial" and "false" (40).

In his introduction, López provides a useful overview of the *condition* of postcoloniality, followed by an account of what he deems the principal tasks of postcolonial writing. The bulk of this long chapter is devoted to a summary and critical examination of several critiques of postcolonial studies over the last decade. Sifting carefully through this wide-ranging material, López divides the most "significant areas of contention regarding postcolonial studies" into three major factions, depending on (1) whether they object to the term (postcolonial) as a valid epistemological category, (2) whether they call into question the efficacy of postcolonial models of subjectivity in accounting for the colonized "subaltern," or (3) whether they interrogate the ability of notions of postcolonial hybridity and difference to resist (neo)colonial hegemonic discourses and practices. In elaborating his response to these critiques, López formulates a provisional set of parameters for postcolonial studies. He distinguishes *post* from *neo*colonialism, for example, stressing the complexity of the former. As more than an economic and historical phenomenon, the postcolonial "encompasses class, gender, race, ethnicity, language, and geography," in short, all "the discourses and identifications" that contribute to "the shaping of nations and nationalisms" (17). The postcolonial, the author avers, is neither an ideal nor an essentialist construct. Rather, it registers a degree of historical specificity, which resides in a "rethinking and revision" of the colonizer's historiographic project.

Not surprisingly perhaps, the work of Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha takes pride of place in López's defense and reclamation of postcoloniality (against the putative impugnations of such critics as Benita Parry, Arif Dirlik, and Kwame Anthony Appiah) as something more than an "academic exercise," as the expression of "a desire for agency, a willingness to stand *for* something, even if that agency and its object or focus are more ambivalent and qualified than their critics let on" (18). Here, again, the author demonstrates his thorough familiarity with the field by elucidating some of the key concepts of postcoloniality mobilized by these two prominent theorists. He begins by smartly and concisely outlining Spivak's privileging of the subaltern. He then proceeds carefully to contextualize her related and consistent critical self-reflexivity, as well as lucidly to explain Bhabha's imbricated notions of mimicry, hybridity and cultural difference. The object of this survey, as I have already indicated, is to establish the foundation for the "theoretical framework" that the remainder of the book purportedly establishes (35). Its aim, in sum, is to broach the "interactions of subalternity and agency, hy bridity and complicity and resistance to colonial hegemony at work in the literature of the postcolonial" (30). Nevertheless, it is also at this crucial point, where the project of *Posts and Pasts* is arguably afforded its most

careful theoretical formulation, that one of the book's theoretical weaknesses first emerges. This difficulty arises from López's hesitancy or reluctance to recognize and explore an important discontinuity between Spivak's and Bhabha's articulations of postcoloniality, in other words, to confront the likelihood that there may be no "interaction," no meeting point between the former's "subalternity" and the latter's "hybridity." As Spivak herself has recently suggested, the two notions run on parallel courses, as it were: "The postcolonial informant has rather little to say about the oppressed minorities *in* the decolonized nation as such. . . . [T]he more stellar level [of postcolonial scholarship] confin[es] the destabilization of the metropole merely to the changes in the ethnic composition of the population. . . . Both the racial underclass and the subaltern South step back into the penumbra." It is to the shadows as well that the subaltern, and indeed the question of class as a whole, tends all too often to be relegated in López's otherwise valuable theoretical intervention into the field of postcolonial studies. Since the problem to which I am alluding here crops up more than once in the book's later chapters, it behooves me to elucidate it further.

If, say, the powerful and vexed exchange between Latin America and Europe ought to be included in any full-fledged articulation of postcoloniality, this reconsideration, Spivak would argue, will be *postcolonial* only insofar as it takes up the question of the subaltern. In her formulation, however, the latter are always "insufficiently represented or representable" in that mode of production narrative that Fredric Jameson, for instance, famously posits as History's horizon of totality (Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 244). Postcolonial critical discourse thus entails, by ethical necessity, an acknowledgment of both the theoretical impossibility of know ing the "true" subaltern and the imperative *not* simply to turn away from representing this other subject whose identity is its difference. Hence, in contrast to Bhabha's "mimic men," Spivak's subaltern marks the site of a "displacement of the colonization-decolonization reversal"[1] To circumscribe one's account of the subaltern to this logic of inversion is inevitably to stay caught within what she designates the "ethnocentric and reverse-ethnocentric benevolent double bind (that is, considering the 'native' as object for enthusiastic information-retrieval and thus denying its own 'worlding')" (*Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 118). It is this crucial distinction that remains largely unaddressed in *Posts and Pasts.* As we shall see, López's elision of Spivak's and Bhabha's incommensurable notions of postcoloniality lies at the heart of some of the book's subsequent lapses and inconsistencies.

Already in the introduction these later problems are foreshadowed in López's contention that Fredric Jameson's much-maligned notion of third-world narrative fiction as "national allegories" ascribes to the literary production of the "third world" a cultural "back wardness" that supposedly echoes "outmoded stages of our own first-world cultural development" (*Posts* 17). Granted, to point out the reductive Eurocentrism of Jameson's postulate has become almost *de rigueur* since Aijaz Ahmad's scathing retort to Jameson's 1986 essay. Granted, too, what Ahmad calls Jameson's encapsulation of the "experience" of the "third world" within Hegel's master-slave allegory is certainly susceptible to criticism.[1] The fact remains, nevertheless, that Jameson's adherence to the logic of Hegel's familiar dialectic leads him in effect to a conclusion that is diametrically opposed to the one López attributes to him. Just as for Hegel the slave's situation constitutes "the beginning of wisdom," so does Jameson's third-world novelist supercede the "epistemologically crippling" view of the "masters of the world" (that is, their inability to grasp "the social totality").[1] By virtue of her subordinate place in the world system, the third-world writer, is thus able to narrate a collective story that appears both to adumbrate and antecede the "aesthetic of cognitive mapping," which Jameson will later propose as "a pedagogic political culture" aimed at endowing the postmodern "individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system."[1] In this restricted sense, then, Jameson's hypothesis—whatever its flaws—is not significantly different from what Paul Gilroy, for instance, defines as his own counter-hegemonic critical project: "the inversion of the relationship between margin and centre as it has appeared within the master discourses of the master race."[1]

As López's own nuanced reading of the complex and complicated relationship between Frantz Fanon's work and Hegel's master-slave allegory in chapter four (in my view, the book's best chapter) indicates, this is fundamentally the central orientation of Fanon's work as well: "to wrest that abused, overdetermined signifier 'humanism' away from Europe once and for all, to gear it toward a philosophy for *all* humans" (*Posts*, 142). To read Jameson exclusively in terms of a Eurocentrism putatively induced by his strict adherence to a Marxian-Hegelian teleology is, therefore, to read him both a little too hastily and ultimately inchoately as well. For what an alternate postcolonial critique of Jameson's "idea" of the "third world" would need closely to examine instead is exactly the place (or displacement) of the subaltern *vis-à-vis* the collective "non-centered subject" Jameson posits as the third or sublatory term, which, at one and the same time, cancels and preserves the old centered and inner-directed (Hegelian) subject and the "new non-subject of the fragmented or schizophrenic self" (*Postmodernism*, 345). The question such a critique[1] would need to pose, in sum, would concern the kind of "visibility" allowed the subaltern by Jameson's claim that "we

can thus see down through class categories to the rocky bottom of the stream" (*Postmodernism*, 346). That López fails to take all this into account, given his solid grasp of the Hegelian, Sartrean and Lacanian iterations of the master-slave dialectic (amply demonstrated in his fine discussion of Fanon in chapter four), is both surprising and disappointing.

By the same token, in characterizing Kwame Anthony Appiah's definition of postcoloniality as "the condition [López writes *contrivance*] of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia"[1] as "a cheap shot" (9), López appears to lose sight of the important distinction Appiah wishes to draw between high and mass culture in Africa. This division, Appiah asserts, "corresponds by and large to the distinction between those with and those without Western-style formal education as cultural consumers" (*In My Father's House*, 148). Unlike that of the former, the (popular) cultural production of the latter is "not concerned with transcending, with going beyond, coloniality. . . its borrowings from international cultural forms are remarkably insensitive to—not so much dismissive of as blind to—the issue of neocolonialism or 'cultural imperialism'" (*In My Father's House* 149). In *Culturas híbridas* [*Hybrid Cultures*], García Canclini has advanced remarkably similar claims about popular cultural forms in Latin America. It is a distinction López would be well-served to keep in mind not only in his less than rigorous formulation of a "colonial unconscious" in chapter three, but also in his examination of the worries over reliability, which Salman Rushdie's Saleem experiences as "a credible witness to, and translator of, India for a Western audience" (*Posts*, 174). If I have spent some time reviewing López's brief engagement with Jameson in *Post and Pasts*' introductory chapter, then, it is because, as I observe above, this tendency to (fore)close his readings of fundamental "anti-colonial" texts with a hurried imputation of a Eurocentric perspective constitutes a kind of interpretive "reflex," which manifests itself at crucial moments in the book.

Another case in point is chapter five's reading of Alejo Carpentier's celebrated description of 'the entire history of Latin America [as] a chronicle of the marvelous real (*lo real maravilloso*).' In stark contrast to Conrad's Marlow, whose narration of Africa ultimately discloses its own "epistemological limits," its own inability to tell the experience of the Africans (146-7), López argues, Carpentier fails to apprehend Haiti's "marvelous reality" (presumably in *A Kingdom of this World* [1949]) within anything other than a Western cultural taxonomy (146). Like Said's Orientalist, the Cuban novelist's representation of America remains, according to López, ineluctably consigned either to "an entire [Western] history of mastery and cultural domination" (148), or "an entire history of colonial and neocolonial desire, of nativist interpretation" (150), "caught up in the conventions of appropriation, desire and mastery" (149). It represents "the allegory of an ever more subtle and elaborate mastery" (150). Yet it seems rather difficult to accept that a textual production as complex, ambivalent and self-conscious as Carpentier's should turn out to be as seamlessly and irrevocably allegorical as one of Jameson's own "political allegories."

Indeed, what I find both valuable and provocative about López's reading of *Heart of Darkness* in his first chapter is precisely its insistence on shifting the analysis beyond the question of whether Conrad's infamous text "functioned in the service of morally or ideologically questionable interests" (46). Juxtaposing Conrad's novella to Wilson Harris's *Palace of the Peacock*, López argues persuasively that the former tears an opening in imperialist axiomatics, which points "toward a space or index through which the process of questioning may continue" (47). It is this interrogation—"literally a *turning away* from the homogenous totalizations of the past"(64)—which Harris allegedly pursues in his own narrative. In this way, *Heart of Darkness* "comes to constitute the clearing (*lichtung* or [*clairière*]), which. . . . makes possible the emergence of the postcolonial. . . . What is for Marlow/Conrad a limit becomes, for Harris and others, a *threshold*" (55). As intriguing as this hy pothesis is, it nonetheless raises a number of troubling questions, when regarded in the light of López's reading of Carpentier. For example, why does the kind of continuity López traces between Conrad and Harris *not* obtain between Carpentier and García Márquez, whose best-known novel López discusses in chapter five? If, as López claims, *Cien años de soledad* turns "the interrogating gaze of subjects never recognized as such [on] the artifacts and discourses. . . of a modern Western civilization" (159), if it opens up "a space or index that remains beyond the grasp of the oppressors' reign of violence" (160), then what specific features in Carpentier's texts render them incapable of "challeng[ing] the dominant [Western] historiographic paradigm. . . and replac[ing] it with one that does not correspond to what is traditionally regarded as truth," as Amaryll Chanady asserts?[1] If, according to López, Wilson Harris's depiction of the Guyanese forest indicates "the possibilities for a new and heterogenous community" (60), then why precisely does Carpentier's theory of the marvelous real *not* reveal a different "function of landscape," as Edouard Glissant proposes, one in which "the individual, the community, the land are inextricable in the process of creating history [*sont indissociables dans l'épisode constitutif de leur histoire*]" (*Caribbean Discourse*, 105-6)?

In *Posts*' final chapter, López argues that, "as a matter of strategy and of survival, of . . . exceeding and escaping the impositions of Western desire or will-to-mastery" (172), Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Chidren* of-

ten "works to reveal an *absence* of clarity, the revelation of its own self-concealment and the clearing [*clairière*] for the space or index for that which cannot be revealed in its presence. . . what Heidegger called *Lichtung*" (166). If Heidegger—whose own perplexing insistence on discerning the "other" of Western metaphysics exclusively in the thought of the pre-Socratic Greeks, rather than in that of Judaism, say—is well-known; if Heidegger can thus propitiate an "opening" onto the postcolonial, why is Carpentier, arguably a postcolonial himself, precluded from doing so? If the "classic" notion of the detached cultural 'outsider looking in' "already deconstructs itself in the writings of nineteenth-century Orientalists" (187), as López suggests in chapter five, then how does it manage to reemerge integral and whole in a discourse (Carpentier's) whose point of departure is precisely the interrogation of that very construct? In what sense, then, is López *not* being "simplistic [in] criticiz[ing] the Cuban author for imitating metropolitan conventions and identifying with European preoccupations" (Chanady, 137)? How is his own dismissal of Carpentier distinct from what he defines as an "ideological aversion" in Achebe's similarly peremptory rejection of Conrad's representation of African culture as 'racist' (45)? (Incidentally, as well-disposed as I am toward López's subtle reading of *Heart of Darkness*, I feel strongly that Achebe's "aversion" is not merely "ideological," and that any postcolonial analysis of the novella ought to take Achebe's critique rather seriously.)

Still more fundamental than all this, however, is the methodological question that arises from López's account of his reading of Conrad as a matter "of *exhuming* difference, of producing or finding a fissure in the production of sameness through which its previously interred others may emerge" (61). By affirming that the fact that such fissures tend "more readily" to disclose themselves in texts such as *Heart of Darkness* "is illustrative of their latent heterogeneity" (61), López is at the same time tacitly indicating that this exhumation of difference is precisely a matter of critical *practice*. In other words, it is not that the postcolonial critic ought to privilege certain "colonial" texts for their "latent heterogeneity," but that her exhumation of difference represents a politics of reading privileged by a specific postcolonial theoretical project, one that "would acknowledge the determination as well as the imperialism [of the West's literary and philosophical tradition] and see if the magisterial texts can now be our servants, as the new magisterium constructs itself in the name of the Other" (Spivak *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* 7). Given that Carpentier's literary production "constructs itself" exactly as part and parcel of such an endeavor, it seems all the more disconcerting that it should so inexo rably annul all vestiges of cultural difference. Although it may seem paradoxical to affirm it, *Posts and Pasts* is, in my estimation, a valuable book precisely because it, too, moves a considerable way in the direction of such a reconstruction. Indeed, the close attention I have paid to its central propositions constitutes a measure of my respect for López's work, and my keen sense of its future promise. But perhaps the best endorsement I can offer of *Posts and Pasts* is to say that, had I come across it before I devised its reading list, I would not have hesitated to include it on the syllabus of the graduate seminar on postcolonial theory I am currently teaching.

Luís Madureira

Anne-Emmanuelle Berger. Ed. *Algeria in Others' Languages.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002. Pp. viii, 256.

The papers published in *Algeria in Others' Languages* are the proceedings of a conference on the linguistic situation in Algeria. The conference was conceived as a platform for a dialogue on the issue " among experts in the field and nonspecialists, Algerian citizens and non-Algerians" (viii). Most contributors went back to the colonial period to explain the intricacies of the situation and the complex nature of the linguistic issue in Algeria. The book is divided into three parts: "Algeria in Others' Languages," "Symbolic Violence," and "Writing in Other's languages."

Hafid Gafaïti's "The Monotheism of the Other" is a comprehensive, balanced, and objective assessment of the topic, describing the multiplicity of languages in Algeria during the colonial period and in post-independent Algeria. He provides a detailed account of the colonial government's efforts to suppress both Arabic and Berber languages, a policy which culminated in the 1938 declaration classifying Arabic as a foreign language. Access to French, however, was limited to a privileged section of the population and aimed at forming mere bureaucrats. Gafaïti does not spare the Algerian government as he points out the mistakes it made in the implementation of Arabization and the repression of Berber languages, a policy that divided the population and contributed to the events of the past decade.

Gafaiti, blasts the colonial administration's antagonistic attitude towards Arabic and the creation of the "Kabyle Myth," both policies aiming at dividing the population. He provides a list of the mistakes made in the post-independence period: France's recall of its engineers extracting oil and gas; the poor pedagogical training of some of the teachers of Arabic who were sent from the Mashriq to help in the Arabization process; and the lack of qualification and commitment of the French teachers sent to Algeria as a substitution for their military service. He sees the Kabyle's divisive atti-

tude in present day Algeria as a replication of the colonial anti-Arabization policy, and considers their discourse against the Arab-Muslim Algerian population as " exclusive, tribalist, and racist"(38). He sums up his evaluation of the linguistic situation in the following words: "Algerians are to a large extent the victims of their own perpetuation of what one might call the colonial subconscious."(43)

Djamila Saidi-Mokrane's essay, "The Algerian Linguicide," does not offer an objective assessment of the situation. She places the blame for Algeria's linguistic woes solely on Middle Eastern teachers commonly referred to as Mashariqa in opposition to Magharibah. There is a strong underlying anti-Arab feeling throughout her paper, and a failure to analyze the education policy of the post-independence period, stressing quantity over quality to fill the dire need for Algerian instructors and the lax admission requirements to institutions of higher education. Furthermore, sweeping generalizations weaken the validity of some arguments, such as the claim that the Egyptian professors sent to Algeria after independence were "Muslim Brothers" (55). Equally surprising is a reference to restrictions placed on oral culture; I taught a course on Algerian folklore, which is rooted in oral culture, in the Arabic department at the University of Constantine, in compliance with the curriculum established by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education.

In "Civil War, Private Violence and Cultural Socialization," Omar Carlier places the blame for the deteriorating situation in Algeria and the bloody events which characterized the last decade on Islam and the Mashriqi countries. Carlier sees Arab nationalism born during the *Nahda* as the major culprit, though it is well-known that Algeria was hardly touched by that movement due to the isolation imposed on it by the colonial administration. Little is said about the French colonial efforts to dismantle the support system provided by Sufi brotherhoods and the proletarianization of the Algerian farmers as a result of land confiscation. Little effort is made in Carlier's paper to address the true cause of Algeria's post-independence problems. If women did not flood the workplace after independence, as he states, it is because they were not qualified, the majority being illiterate. The moment the gates of the educational institutions were opened to them they filled benches of the universities in both the humanities and the sciences. Despite the disregard for the serious impact of issues such as illiteracy and 130 years of a traumatizing colonial rule, Carlier admits the complexity of the situation in the conclusion to his essay:" It [violence] is related to the implosion of every form of consecration, to the weakening of all bonds: of nationhood, language, locality, social status, family, sex."(105).

Lucette Valensi's "The Scheherazade Syndrome: Literature and Politics in Postcolonial Algeria," takes a look at a selection of Algerian novels written in French and chosen to fit Valensi's preconceived opinion of the violence of the Algerians, demonstrated through the violent death of some of their intellectuals. Of the three novelists named, only Taher Djaout was assassinated, whereas Abdelhamid Benhadouga was of a mature age when he passed away, and Rachid Mimouni succumbed to his excessive drinking.

Abdelkebir Khatibi's "Diglossia" provides a fascinating analysis of the psychological process that takes place in bilingualism when a Maghribi author chooses to write in one of the languages of his country. In his assessment of the linguistic situation in Algeria, Khatibi is of the opinion that the psychological repercussion of the choice of French has not received the in-depth analysis it deserves. Such a study would shed light on the Algerians' problem of identity.

Other essays include Anne-Emmanuelle Berger's "The Impossible Wedding," which explains the process of the establishment of a national language from a mother tongue and the way a national language becomes a mother tongue, using Benedict Anderson's theory in *Imagined Communities.* Ranjana Khanna's fascinating essay, "The Experience of Evidence: Language, the Law and the Mockery of Justice," is primarily concerned with Jamila Boupacha's court case and the language of pain. The author explains the ambiguous role of language in postcolonial Algeria, especially in the 90s. Reda Bensmaia presents a reading of Khatibi's *Amour Bilingue*, more as a writer than a critic. "The Names of Oran" by Helen Cixous is a recollection of the author's childhood memories in the city of Oran and its multicultural population. She evokes the phonetic impact that names of objects have on people.

The essays reveal that the debate over the linguistic situation in Algeria is neither over nor solved, and is still capable of provoking the same passion and controversies half a century after the country's independence, almost as much as it did in the early years of independence. Readers interested in issues of identity and multilingual situations would find *Algeria in Others' Languages* a very valuable reference.

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