

**Michael R. Griffiths, *Biopolitics and Memory in Postcolonial Literature and Culture* (Ashgate Publishing, 2016)**

Michael Griffiths' aim of dealing with the aftermath of colonial governmentality and the effect of imperial rule on native populations goes far beyond the scope of the title. His selection of essays discusses the use of memory and biopolitics as technical elements in ideological administration of the masses. Along with this, the essays discuss distortion of time, history and stereotyping paradigms to filter a population of continents and countries. The continuing impact of colonisation and the sustained effect of colonial rule is frequently overlooked in discussion of this topic. Other than the use of the coloniser's language, the effect of imperialism on history, memory and governmental techniques demands detailed study. Griffiths' collection of essays compiles works from scholars that offer a variety of perspectives on the long-lasting impact of imperialism on literature, administration and culture.

The essay 'Sedimented Colonization in the Maghribine Writings of Kateb Yacine, Assia Djebar, and Paul Bowles' by Michael K. Walonen discusses writings of the three authors and their depiction of the problems of their countries due to their colonial histories. The repeated events of imperialist rule for northwest Africa (the Maghrib) becomes the point of concern for the writers and Walonen studies the artistic manners in which the three writers discuss their respective histories. The long-lasting effect of a series of imperialist invasions on the histories and individual memories of the masses is discussed by the authors in different manners. While all three writers discuss disruption of history, and therefore of the cultural identities of their respective countries, they relate them to different aspects of culture. Yacine addresses this through the representation of his female protagonist and her relation to different men, Djebar through her close attention to the modalities of language, and Bowles incorporates the idea into the structure of his text. Walonen's essays is outstanding for his in-depth analyses of the texts, and his firm command on the topic. His writing is concrete and free of the generalisations which can find their way into even the most careful of analyses.

"The World is Spoilt in White Man's Time": Imagining Postcolonial Temporalities' by Asha Varadharajan and Timothy Wyman-McCarthy takes up Wole Soyinka's play *Death and the King's Horseman*, Michelle Cliff's novel *No Telephone to Heaven*, Mark Behr's novel *The Smell of Apples*, and Marguerite Abouet and Clement Oubrerie's graphic novel *Aya* in a discussion of temporality and its connection to memory. They discuss the rejection of the concept of time and history as enforced by the colonisers in favour of traditional practice in Soyinka and Cliff's texts. Behr and Abouet and Oubrerie's texts are analysed for their presentation of memory as a contributor to history. Soyinka and Cliff's texts play on the linearity of time and the resultant form of history, suggesting against this that time is necessarily cyclical, with the past, present, and future depending on each other. The latter texts question the validity of history through their unique use of allegory. Varadharajan and Wyman-McCarthy identify the subtle manners in which the four texts have identified the historical representation of time as well as the temporal representation of history.

'Regarding Self-Governmentality: Transactional Accidents and Indigeneity in Cape York Peninsula, Australia' by Timothy Neale discusses the exclusion and disempowerment

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of Indigenous Australians by monitored representation in Cape York. The essay analyses the subtle manner in which the politics of the area are regulated, and power is maintained by exploiting the ideals of self-governmentality and self-sustainability. Neale discusses the implementation of sudden strict policies, unsuited to the lifestyles of Indigenous people, to maintain an iron grip on the area. The essay is a nuanced study of the policies of the area in relation to the public that resided there, as well as the inflow of settlers.

Griffith's selection of essays undertakes discussion of his chosen topic from interesting perspectives. Indigeneity in Australia, presence/absence of the Chinese in Australia, analyses of texts like *Anil's Ghost*, and *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*, and the use of literature in political movements of Palestine are a few of the various angles adopted to explore the subject of biopolitics and exploitation of memory and history in countries that have experienced imperialism. These essays demonstrate thorough research and active engagement with the subject, and one notices only a few minor shortcomings: the writers' analyses are overshadowed by their statements of facts from primary texts in "'Backdoor Entry" to Australia: A Genealogy of (Post)colonial Resentment' by Maria Elena Indelicato and 'Memory is an Archipelago: Glissant, Chamoiseau, and the Literary Expression of Cultural Memory' by Bonnie Thomas. That is to say, the authors of these essays seem more often to be engaged in reporting information than in offering their own interpretations of that information. And Anita Lacey's 'Postcolonial Security, Development, and Biopolitics: Targeting Women's Lives in Solomon Islands' would have benefited from a tighter structure. Nevertheless, this collection offers detailed and rigorous discussion and, despite the few drawbacks mentioned, delivers a wide range of perspectives on postcolonial literature.

## Saba Idris

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