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Complete Book Reviews

Editor: Sean Haylock

Contents

- | | |
|---|--|
| Peter Beaglehole | <i>What Matters?: Talking Value in Australian Culture</i>
by Julian Meyrick, Robert Phiddian and Tully Barnett |
| Arpita Chakrabarti and
Anindya Sekhar Purakayastha | <i>Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and
Palestine</i> by Steven Salaita |
| Melinda Graefe | <i>Poetry of the Earth: Mapuche Trilingual Anthology</i> ,
edited by Jaime Luis Huenún Villa, Spanish into
Mapudungun translation by Víctor Cifuentes Palacios,
Spanish into English Translation by Juan Garrido
Salgado, Steve Brock and Sergio Holas |
| Saba Idris | <i>Biopolitics and Memory in Postcolonial Literature
and Culture</i> by Michael R. Griffiths |
| Sirsha Nandi | <i>Africa's Narrative Geographies: Charting the
Intersections of Geocriticism and Postcolonial Studies</i>
by Dustin Crowley |
| Jaydeep Sarangi | <i>Four Gardens and Other Poems</i> by Malsawmi Jacob |
| Mandy Treagus | <i>Georges Baudoux's Jean M'Barai: The Trepang
Fisherman</i> , translated and with a critical introduction
by Karin Speedy |
| Amelia Walker | <i>Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt</i> by Sharankumar
Limbale and Jaydeep Sarangi |
| Amelia Walker | <i>Faithfully, I Wait</i> by Jaydeep Sarangi |

Complete Book Reviews.

Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.

<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

Julian Meyrick, Robert Phiddian and Tully Barnett, *What Matters?: Talking Value in Australian Culture* (Monash University Publishing, 2018)

What Matters? is a product of the Laboratory Adelaide, a research project that began with the task of finding better ways to communicate the experience of culture (attending/curating/making an exhibition/concert/library/performance/museum/etc.) to policy makers in Australia (deciding how to, how much, and why?). The authors respond to the rise of ‘metric power’ (vi), where cultural experiences are measured quantitatively, or ‘datafied’ (viii). This approach is only a few decades old, and has come to limit thinking about culture because it views its value ‘functionally’ (130). While their research project was underway, former federal Arts Minister George Brandis announced the National Programme for Excellence in the Arts (NPEA) (see xvii-xxvi). The announcement of the NPEA in 2015 was widely criticised and the resulting Senate Inquiry saw an outpouring of ‘articulate statements that truthfully and movingly communicated what [cultural] practitioners did and why ... Australian culture was *of value* to Australia’ (xxv-xxvi). The Senate Inquiry revealed how the ‘experience of culture is distant from its means of support’ (xxvi). These events galvanised and set the ambition of *What Matters?*, whose authors aim to fundamentally change the conversation around culture and value. While the authors’ research emerged from a regional Australian city, and its intended audiences are those with ‘operational interests’ there, they suggest its scope is ‘glocal’ (xxix). They invite readers to reflect on wider contexts – Brexit, Trump, and public value’s ‘demented twin ... political populism’ (61).

The book is divided into two parts. The first provides definitions for the concepts of culture and value alongside three case studies. The second part offers conceptual and pragmatic solutions to ‘the problem’ of cultural value. It describes the *meaningful* use of language, discusses how narrative can be used as a tool for reporting in the cultural sector, and offers an adaptation of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and Integrated Reporting (<IR>) as alternate reporting strategies. *What Matters?* also features ‘boxes’ throughout that distill the key ideas or offer ‘how-to guides’.

What Matters? presents a toolkit. The first chapter’s relatively agnostic approach argues that ‘just as you cannot solve the problem of culture’s meaning by haggling over definitions, you cannot solve the problem of its value with more measurement techniques’ (18). Nevertheless, the footnotes provide a gateway for further research and will be useful as a teaching resource in universities. The working definitions provoke critical engagement and encourage readers to work through a series of thought experiments. These come in the form of ‘parables’. The second chapter’s parable shows that raw data around Patrick White’s theatre productions is meaningless without evaluation. By referencing a sketch from *That Mitchell and Webb Look*, where two contestants on a quiz show arbitrarily call out numbers until they are told by the host ‘that’s numberwang!’ and everyone reacts as if the right answer is given, the discussion shows how ‘numbers’ have been ascribed meaning(lessness).

Digital humanities scholars are likely to be drawn to the third chapter. Its parable of ‘digital disruption’ shows how audiences’ values are determined by the curatorial capacity of Netflix, Spotify, and, more unsettlingly, Cambridge Analytica (45-51). As capital moves from

the cultural sector towards the technology sector (59), and audiences are viewed as passive consumers, less effort is made to evaluate or participate in cultural production. This provocation offers a bridge to the fourth chapter which discusses the renegade Adelaide Festival of Ideas. This event undermines the notion of the 'marketplace of ideas'. It describes the creation and maintenance of a free biennial festival, where citizens rather than consumers participate in the co-creation of public discourse (66-67).

Practicing artists, arts managers, producers and policy makers are likely to find the second part appealing. Chapter five promotes the need to get better at talking about culture, not as experts, but as 'enthusiastic and well-informed amateurs' (85). It calls bullshit on buzzwords and offers a nine-part writing guide (92-93), suggesting 'It is better to win support honestly when it is won at all' (92). Chapter six proposes that narrative is key to describing the experience of culture more accurately. This is because narrative can organise experience over time and better represent the impact of arts and cultural organisations (99). Frustrated artists, including myself, may find this less persuasive – we want change now, but the authors offer no silver bullets. However, the final chapter is particularly pragmatic. It adapts GRI and IR, two accounting theories, to suggest that 'Reporting reform and culture are natural allies, and a closer relationship between them could be conceptually and practically fruitful in both fields' (121). The authors argue that the box-ticking exercise of reporting can be turned on its head. Honest, narrative-driven reporting that reflects the experience of culture could realign cultural values.

What Matters? is earnest, rigorous and also very funny. The authors' balance between head and heart will likely appeal to the wide audience that it seeks. (Buy a copy and pass it on, or post it to your MP). Writing at a time when cultural stakeholders are exhausted with and by quantitative methods that fail to articulate what matters, the authors point out how often tools of evaluation are mistaken for the actual act of evaluation. They articulate how information is confused for understanding, and argue that grappling with questions of value can have a transformational impact (133). They encourage their readers to work at evaluating cultural practice, to speak honestly and accurately. While they encountered cynicism, frustration and outrage among cultural practitioners, *What Matters?* 'aims to wake us to the problems of value, to stimulate the sense of value we need to have – do always, in fact, have, in our own hearts and minds – to grace and inform not only our choices in arts and culture, but in the world beyond' (136). In its quiet and gentle way, *What Matters?* is radical.

Peter Beaglehole

Peter Beaglehole is a South Australian playwright. His play *Strata* was a finalist in 2018 for the Jill Blewett Playwright's Award and he is the recipient of a Carclew Fellowship to develop a new play with the mentorship of Mary Anne Butler. He also researches Australian theatre history and teaches Drama at Flinders University.

Steven Salaita, *Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016)

The Map is Not the Territory

An outspoken critic of Israel and Zionism, Steven Salaita has always been a controversial figure in the American literary circle for his views on the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Like his other ground-breaking works, *Inter/Nationalism* is a refreshing contribution in the domain of Decolonial Studies, Critical Ethnic Studies, and Recolonisation Studies. His comparative approach to Palestine and Native American Studies provides fresh insights, methodological departures and the much-needed shift from Euro-colonialism to American and Zionist occupations and Palestinian *Intifada*. Such new positionings reinforce a critique of post-globalised forms of imperialism. The book also problematises the whole premise of the modern nation-state, itself a product of the colonial enterprise by distinguishing the sovereign nation-states from the idea of nations as communities.

Salaita's raging discontent and passion for decolonisation greet us as we go through the chapters which successively consolidate a new notion of transnationalism – of crossing borders but not in the way conventional transnational theories operate. This book is an experimental project to concretise emerging tendencies in American Indian Studies; a tendency that attempts to study decolonisation not just by comparing colonial discourses but by promoting decolonial dialogues centred around matters of Indigenous liberation. Salaita claims his project to be an activist as well as an intellectual document that pivots its paradigm around an interesting concept of Nation which is 'not an isolated organism but a radical entity' (xvi). It survives in relation to the destinies of other nations in this age of decolonisation. Therefore 'putting nationalisms into conversation and gradually into collective practice' (xvi) is what he intends to do in this project of theorising Inter/nationalism. Salaita explicitly analyses the term 'nationalism' to avoid any risk of misunderstanding. The different formulations of the term nationalism seem to leave him worried. His is not the kind of nationalism tied to the concept of the nation-state and born out of industrial revolution that go so often hand in hand with jingoism and imperialism (xvi). He envisages a dynamic structure of discrete, autonomous community, a collective that works in the interest of communities rather than corporations and institutionalised bureaucratic powers. Therefore, the Israel Palestine dyad refers to a difference between the nation-state and the nation, in which the former embodies concentrated coercive power and the latter, the assemblage of communities. This is how nationalism relates to Inter/nationalism in varied and important ways – a metaphor in which communities of Indigenous collectives such as American Indians and Palestinians and many such people-nations are interlinked in their common strivings for freedom and human rights. Such Inter/national affinities and dialogues are different from stereotyped diplomatic internationalism between different nation-states which are premised on statism and sovereign absolutism.

Without rejecting the progressive internationalism of the Left, Salaita conceptualises his

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Book reviews: *Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine* by Steven Salaita. Arpita Chakrabarti and Anindya Sekhar Purakayastha.

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Inter/nationalism in an experimental enterprise to challenge the conditions of decolonisation in Indigenous communities worldwide and envisions a solidarity in the struggle for better human relationships – a world that allows societies to be organised around justice rather than profit.

Salaita's study of Natives and the Palestinians as agents of decolonisation unfolds itself in the first chapter of the book, 'How Palestine Became Important to American Indian Studies'. Through the dissemination of common histories of colonisation and the participation of other dispossessed communities in the form of academic boycott, divestment and sanctions (commonly called the BDS movement), Palestinian nationalism has entered into transnational spaces. This along with other factors locate Palestine at a pivotal point of Inter/national possibilities where one can encounter the self-perpetuating incarnations of US history. This chapter argues for affinities between Palestine Studies and American Indian Studies as by engaging with 'performing inter/nationalism' (23), Indigenous scholars can converse with Palestine and can identify commonalities of colonial/occupational experiences. Salaita argues for deterritorialising traditional disciplinary boundaries and foregrounds the 'need to approach Palestine as a crucial site for global struggle and acknowledge the centrality of American decolonization in that struggle' (6).

The subsequent chapter on 'Boycotting Israel' discusses intensively the reactions and counter-reactions involved in the American Studies Association's resolution to honour the academic boycott of Israel. The most visible feature of Palestinian solidarity activity was the BDS – movements to promote academic and cultural boycott of Israeli institutions, divestiture and withdrawing sanctions by the state from those institutions. BDS in America has been taken up as a comprehensive grassroots movement. Beyond rejectionism, the movement includes 'the prevalence of college campuses as sites of action, emphasises the necessity of Palestinian voices, and disengagement from the orthodoxies of liberal Zionism' (31). Despite the vast difference between US/Canadian and Israeli colonisation, there exists a particular transatlantic bond, what Hilton Obenzinger calls a 'Holy Land mania' (65) which preceded the nation-state in America and Palestine. Therefore a 'boycott of statehood in the service of native nationhood' (59) is the purpose of BDS.

A more detailed and comparative study of the ideologies of ethnic cleansing runs throughout the third chapter of the book. The divine sanctioned right that justifies land theft underpins both Zionist ideology in Israel colonial occupation and 'Manifest Destiny' ideology in US colonial occupation. Andrew Jackson's advocacy of displacement of the wandering savage in his *Annual Messages* (1830) is reiterated in Ze'ev Jabotinsky's 'The Iron Wall' (1923) (83). The book reminds us how Jabotinsky advocates displacement but with 'polite' indifference to the Palestinians. By focusing on these unexplored areas, Inter/nationalism thus has immense possibilities to subvert these grand narratives that represent 'civility' and 'progress'.

Perhaps the most interesting read in the whole book is the chapter on 'Inter/national Aesthetics'. Salaita centres his reading here on Native writers narrating Palestine. Palestine, he concludes, is a theme outside its own physical geographical entity. The thematic relationship that emerge across nations substantiates the Inter/national discourse. Eric Violet Lee's poems trace connections between Native and Palestinian women while opening up critique of how injustice can

be appropriated by the colonised when it lacks self-reflection: ‘you and me/ we’re the nation/ – you and me/ we’re the resistance’. The reference is clear in the lines ‘And this is for the mothers and daughters/ leading movements from Gaza to the grasslands’ – it refers to Indigenous women all over the globe (108). On the other hand, John Trudell in ‘Rich Man’s War’ suggests that in this era of colonisation, the rich man’s war is global. Imperialism requires militarism to accumulate foreign resources and wipe out victims in the process. Palestine exists within multiple geographies; it is a global phenomenon, a painful reality shared in histories of nations. Trudell shows how Central America is ‘bleeding’ – ‘[s]ame as Palestine’ – a specific connection exists between El Salvador and Palestine that drives the Inter/national dynamics into focus. Unlike Lee and Trudell, who emphasise the notion of Palestine as a global symbol for justice, Revard suggests there is a psychic benefit of disempowerment: ‘and last war’s victims of the Holocaust may/ be next war’s seekers of Lebensraum in Lebanon or the West Bank; The Palestinians are/ the ones in concentration camps these days’, he writes in ‘A Response to Terrorists’. The poem resounds of Inter/national paradigms as does Edgar Gabriel Silex’s interesting poem ‘Chief Nany Appears in the Holy Land’. The poem is exclusively devoted to ‘a Palestinian/ no legs, one hand ... in the end he used/ his only hand/ to shoot at soldiers/ advancing/ on his house ...’, but the title of the poem is framed around a historical figure who was a Chiricahua Apache wounded fourteen different times defending his land (123). In this way Native poetry regularly converses with Palestine, as in the poems of Mahmoud Darwish and Russell Means. Darwish binds the Native to a foreign history by positioning him as a narrator of Palestinian dispossession while Means speaks through the voice of the Palestinian binding him to the aspirations of the Native in his poem ‘The Red Indian’s Penultimate Speech to the White Man’ (126). Salaita is of the view that this need for exploring Palestine as a symbolic possibility emerges from a desire for liberation and national survival in Native poetry. Means’s poems unfold the unnaturalness of colonisation in the lapsed humanity of the coloniser. The series of pointed rhetorical questions in ‘The Song of the Palestinian’ urges the need for an unspoiled environment as against the forced conquests of territories: ‘Do you understand being free?/ Do you understand the sand?/ Do you understand the rivers?/ ... Do you understand the air you breathe?/ Do you understand peace of mind?’ (127). These writers, Salaita deduces, thus perform an important function of Inter/nationalism by bringing together Native America and Palestine as ‘mutual actors in a wide-ranging struggle to re-organise the world’ (131) through cultural and political colloquy.

By referring to Gilles Deleuze’s interview with Elias Sanbar, the founder of the *Journal of Palestinian Studies* in 1984, Salaita makes it clear why an engagement in American Indian Studies is important to understand the decolonisation issues of Palestine. He invokes the 2002 essay by Gyasi Ross ‘Why I, as a Native American, Support the Palestinian People’ to suggest that suffering is never local: ‘Every person who strives for humanity also has a strong interest in preventing those same atrocities from occurring in another place in another time to another group of people – in this particular situation, to the Palestinians’ (160). This quotation concretises the author’s theory of Inter/nationalism. Conducting the work of Palestine solidarity in spaces that themselves are colonised thus renders the opportunities to examine Zionism not as an isolated phenomenon but enriches possibilities to penetrate into the roots of its origins. This powerful analysis of a method of

unsettling settler societies through an original and inclusive theory of Inter/nationalism will indeed place Salaita's work as a significant contribution for challenging colonisation in our times.

Arpita Chakrabarti & Anindya Sekhar Purakayastha

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***Poetry of the Earth: Mapuche Trilingual Anthology*, edited by Jaime Luis Huenún Villa, Spanish into Mapudungun translation by Víctor Cifuentes Palacios, Spanish into English Translation by Juan Garrido Salgado, Steve Brock and Sergio Holas (Interactive Press, 2014)**

Anthologies of poetry are often collections of disparate works that are representative of a region, a theme, or a school of thought, and the poems anthologised do not necessarily speak to one another but to a more general editorial organising principle. The poems collected and translated in *Poetry of the Earth*, however, have been arranged to work together cumulatively as well as comparatively and paradigmatically, making this a remarkable anthology notable for its broad scope while still retaining intimate cultural connections. Jaime Luis Huenún Villa, the editor who is also a Mapuche-Huilliche poet included in the anthology, provides an illuminating introduction outlining the long history of colonisation and the crucial role of poetry in obtaining autonomy and self-determination for the Mapuche people, but he does not impose a definitive thematic structure; rather, what he offers is a carefully orchestrated ensemble of seven distinctive voices which resonate through the valleys and across the mountains which the poets have so vividly evoked. The editing decision to have each poem in Mapudungun, Spanish and English supports this effect through repetition of Mapudungun words which are scattered throughout the Spanish and English versions, bearing witness to the strength and resilience of a remarkably mystic culture through showcasing a vernacular whose meanings resist assimilation into other languages. *Poetry of the Earth* more closely resembles a map delineating distinct points of reference onto a contoured and complex landscape, providing orientation for navigating the terrain. Pick up your copy of the map and commence your journey as soon as you can: the views are magnificent.

The seven poets featured in the anthology offer poems of mystic dreams and visions which remain entwined with landscape. In 'Perrimontun', Maribel Mora Curriao weaves voice, vision, landscape and loss together in a conversation between herself and the moon:

The moon I greeted as a child
 rose to kiss desires
 dissolving into nothingness.
 Daughter
 – it said –
 do not come out at dusk
 dawn flowers will cover your bones.
 Dreams will give birth [...]
 Daughter mine
 the cry of dawn opened your eyes
 and I abandoned you in the valley,
 but I keep the dreams
 you sowed as a child.

Book reviews: Poetry of the Earth: Mapuche Trilingual Anthology, edited by Jaime Luis Huenún Villa, Spanish into Mapudungun translation by Víctor Cifuentes Palacios, Spanish into English Translation by Juan Garrido Salgado, Steve Brock and Sergio Holas. Melinda Graefe.

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<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

Do not fear
they blossom from your hands
now the dawn flowers will give birth. (64)

A footnote explains that *perrimontun* is the supernatural experience or vision of a person initiated as a *machi*, or Mapuche shaman. The poets throughout the collection inhabit this mystic vision when visited by apparitions who speak to them about the continuing connection with land – often a land that they have been removed from – through the act of creating poems (the ‘blossom’ from the hands of the poet).

In ‘Apparition of Likán Amaru’, Bernardo Colipán’s evocation of a visitation from ‘black hawk’ compels him to write, and he describes what comes before the writing in terms of a fecund waiting, echoing Curriao’s sense of nature as providing a spiritual awakening and guidance through inspiration as germination:

No wind, my son, is as swift
or proud as your flight,

Likán,

The sun was your only seed.

Your first words were
open me
I come from the void
give me your writing. [...]

You and I are two roots
asleep in a millennial forest.

I am inside you.
This is why I search for you in the air.
In the purity
of the sun caught in your crystal. (22)

While the poems are mystical, they are also on occasion robustly physical in their evocation of cultural practices; in ‘Kollon Pürun’, Paolo Huirimilla conjures the rhythms and repetitions of dance as protest against the silencing of culture:

I’ve begun to put on the mask of kollón
and to paint my body naming the points of the universe
with white clay and ashes.
I dance with a sword and a wooden horse
in pursuit of wekufü.

I hit the coligües so that the spirit of bonanza follows.
The balance of things is present in my thoughts
yaom yaom yaom yaom
yapuen yapuen yapuen yapuen
sweat and memory, the dance of beings
the struggle of the silenced. (102)

The chanting of ceremonial words and the hitting of a bamboo cane, sounds that structure the poem and take us into the rhythms of the ceremony, evoke the good spirit, bonanza, after driving out the evil spirit, wekufü. The dance of *kollón*, we are told in an unobtrusive and accessible footnote, represents the maintaining of order.

In 'My Foye', María Isabel Lara Millapán uses an image of the sacred tree of life, the foye tree whose properties are used to heal, to feel her way as a poet via roots, branches and leaves:

My foye
My hands have reached your leaves
In the mystery of stars.

In the path of the moon
Your roots, branches,
Flowers and fruit
Came to find me,
And I walked with your life
Towards the forests of my heart. (181)

While many of the poems in this anthology explore the intersections of poetic creation, vision and landscape, there are also poems that speak of the devastating effects of displacement from land and alienation from labour. They are too many to explore here; I will quote in full a poem by Huenún Villa, 'Rauquemó Swans', that speaks about alienation, and the violence against nature that this alienation brings:

We searched for medicinal herbs in the pampas
(limpialpata and pennyroyal, mint and llantén).
The sun was violet, the grass covered in frost.
Rahue flowed dark without the light of fish.

We heard the bellows of cows lost in the market
and the noise of a tractor on the road to Cancha Larga.
We arrived at the river and called for a ferry,
a boat drew near in silence.

They spoke in hushed voices and gave us clubs

with sips of pisco for the cold.
We swam quickly to avoid cramp.
The mist enshrouded the bank.

Amid the rushes two bodies of sweet water
white like two moons in the night river
bending their two necks of broken silver
defenceless against the blows and the torrent.

Each of us took a bird by the tail or feet
and headed to the boat hidden in the trees.
Men lit their hunting lanterns
throwing the wounded prey into sacks.

We marched drunk, feathered in death
singing folk songs and pissing in the wind.
In the middle of the pampa we fell asleep
covered in grass, frost and curses. (145-6)

Overwhelmingly, the ‘balance of things’ (as Huirimilla puts it) is at play in the poems collected in *Poetry of the Earth*; nature and culture, life and death, and love and loss are brought into realistic equilibrium, in an act of writing which gestures towards a hope for future generations. Indeed, many of the poems speak to future generations, or ruminate on what possible future Mapuche children will inherit. This is where the poems are most powerful, in creating a regenerative community through writing. Roxana Miranda Rupailaf achieves this, in ‘Partner’, by allowing us to enter into her dream:

A horse flies south in the midst of battle.
A horse without wings mounted on a cloud,
calling me to the door of my dreams
where I am a filly blonder than the sun.
Indomitable as a thought
I whinny my illusions with an aroma of herbs.
I wake up.
The horse falls from the sky
and leaves me pregnant. (122)

This poem is sensuous in its evocation of colours, sounds and scents, and in writing the dream her vision takes on material composition, and in doing so a future generation, through dream and vision, are also given shape. The poem itself is pregnant. Omar Huenuqueo Huaiquinao also has his eye to future generations, observing ‘A child in the path of his dream’:

A barefoot child with hazelnut eyes

lying down in a cart
talks to the birds
chattering in the apple tree.
A hen scratches near the lingue.
The child walks with his hands in his pockets.
He talks to the chicks
and offers them ripe cherries;
he talks to the trees
and smiles, content. (214)

Here, the poet conjures a pastoral scene in a vision reminiscent of the Romantic poets, observing the child naturally finding his own path through imaginative play. The balance and simplicity in this lyric provide a contrast to the more anguished poems in the anthology, but this poem is deceptively political too, in the gentle chatter, offerings and smiles of the contented young boy who is resilient, and speaking and moving freely in a world of his own making. He points to possible futures.

The trilingual format is interesting for those who are not acquainted with Mapudungun or Spanish (as I am not), as we can immerse ourselves in the multiplicities each language has to offer by way of rhythm and sound. Out of the multiplicities of contending languages emerges a mystic vision enhanced by repetitions, and it is refreshing to see this mysticism rendered into English, as the language is forced into a fluid thought-world that it does not often easily accommodate. The meanings in many of the poems remain satisfyingly elusive – one cannot pin down these poems – and this is a strength of the collection as a cumulative experience: one dips in, and through visiting the poems the reader works towards an accumulated understanding through glimpses of a culture that is revealed to us as a gathering of individual visions. In reading the whole, a bigger picture builds, a montage of dreams wherein Mapuche culture is embodied and located. As Huenún Villa writes, the poets ‘have created in their works a territory that preserves and projects community and family histories’ (xiv). The editor, and the translators of this anthology – Víctor Cifuentes Palacios translating into Mapudungun from the Spanish in which the poems were originally written, and Juan Garrido Salgado, Steve Brock and Sergio Holas translating from Spanish into English – have succeeded in vividly and fluidly translating these histories to an Australian audience unfamiliar with Mapuche poetry and culture.

Melinda Graefe completed her PhD in English at Flinders University, and has published on nostalgia in historical fiction and on the poetry of Syd Harrex (with Molly Murn). She is currently ghost writing a biography of the Australian-born Cambridge classicist, Melian Stawell.

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Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.

<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

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 Oubriere'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 Oubriere'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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Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.

<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

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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Book reviews: *Biopolitics and Memory in Postcolonial Literature and Culture* edited by Michael R. Griffiths. Saba Idris.

Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.

<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

Dustin Crowley, *Africa's Narrative Geographies: Charting the Intersections of Geocriticism and Postcolonial Studies* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

Over the past few decades, owing to what has been called the 'spatial turn' in literary and cultural studies, scholars have paid greater attention to matters of space, place and mapping in their approaches to criticism. Postcolonial studies was among those fields in the forefront of this spatial turn, which makes sense considering the degree to which battles over land, territory and distinctive places – whether in terms of direct conquest or of ideological representation – lie at the heart of colonial and postcolonial discourse. Until recently, however, there have been few critical studies that aimed at connecting postcolonial studies with the expressly geocritical or spatial approaches to literature that have emerged in connection with geocriticism, literary geography or the spatial humanities. Dustin Crowley's *Africa's Narrative Geographies: Charting the Intersections of Geocriticism and Postcolonial Studies* addresses these overlapping and mutually reinforcing critical practices, while also providing analyses of key works of modern African literature. It is a welcome addition to the growing body of scholarship involving spatial and postcolonial approaches to literary studies.

Crowley's geocritical study eschews traditional geographical labels that had functioned to make the *local*, *regional* or *national* into static containers in which more significant events just happened to occur. Rather, in his own words, this book develops 'a model for understanding spatial dynamics in more flexible, conditional, and relational ways, allowing us to interpret and evaluate the complex geographic relationships and alternatives portrayed in African literature' (3). Published by Palgrave Macmillan in the *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* series edited by Robert T. Tally Jr., *Africa's Narrative Geographies* draws upon works of Bertrand Westphal, Andrew Teverson, Sara Upstone and Edward Soja, among others, to envisage how real and imagined geographic relations are key components to understanding the dynamics of culture and imperialism. Crowley relies on the geographical positions of African literature to understand the differential relationship between the gazing and gazed-at cultures. Crowley's research analyses and extends the works of five eminent African authors in a quest to decipher the spatial and social structures operating at global and local scales.

In Chapter 1, "My Black Land": Senghor's Construction of "Africa", Crowley analyses Léopold Sédar Senghor's essentialist treatment of Africa through his poetry of *négritude*. Senghor's attitude to *négritude* can be defined as a union of the cultural and ideological values with its expression dispensed through the works and lives of black Africans. Through his poetry, Senghor communicates with the social spaces of Africa and investigates their cultural and geographical estrangement from European spaces. Rife with suggestions to subsume Western habits into African literary expression, *négritude* seeks 'to recuperate racial blackness from colonial machinations' (31). Using a geocritical frame of reference, Crowley captures the pervasive agony of the black man in the white world, as Senghor's language of poetry (French), imagined in another language (African), is replete with metaphors of Africa's homogenisation in

1

Book reviews: *Africa's Narrative Geographies: Charting the Intersections of Geocriticism and Postcolonial Studies* by Dustin Crowley. Sirsha Nandi.

Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.

<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

the global context. Senghor's 'Africa' as a place is essentially conditioned by a 'fundamental continental commonality' (43). The outcome denies the conflicts of racial and cultural suppositions that pervades the broader and more nuanced African experience. Crowley reads his desire for a pan-African fraternity as somewhat simplistic and proposes a composite framework that would allow for social and cultural heterogeneity.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's anti-imperialism is the focus of Chapter 2, 'Place and Scale in Ngugi's "Universal Garden"', where Crowley finds that Ngugi's approach accommodates local/global tendencies alongside individual/community sentiments based on kinship and communal resistance, which thereby enables writers to construct new relationships and identities without having their roots planted solely in the traditional community. Crowley observes that Ngugi's vision of Africa is predicated upon community consciousness; divisive units such as place, ethnicity and nationalism, as well as natural and artificial boundaries between them, are compromised to include the marginalised populations. Ngugi's narratives also explore forms of psychological imprisonment that forbid political involvement. With emphasis on *Wizard of the Crow*, *A Grain of Wheat*, *The River Between* and *I Will Marry When I Want*, Crowley seeks to understand the interconnections between the global and the local. The unification of culture, ethnicity, race, place and scale is what he calls a *glocal* response. Ngugi's works represent the struggle of emplacement in a colonial realm that naturally displaces individuals and communities from the pre-colonised culture. This tension is unlikely to be resolved by mapping out geographies of imperialism due to Ngugi's inclination to engage in complex and shifting glocal forces.

In Chapter 3, 'Imagining the Global Village: Bessie Head's Narratives of Migration and Boundaries', Crowley continues to question the relationship between local particularity and a more global vision. One conspicuous feature that Crowley addresses is how Bessie Head's local village narratives explore society and culture at large within the limited scope of Botswanan villages posing as microcosmic Africa. Head employs a logic that would argue that, 'in order to belong to a place, one must deconstruct the boundaries of that place – boundaries that may operate in exclusive or repressive ways, but that may also have an important role in defining that place to begin with' (75). Head's fiction is suffused with colours of rural life, tranquillity and fulfillment, and her novels have the power to 'transform shattered lives and broken social structures, especially for women and outsiders' (79). Her protagonists echo her reflection of places as sites of healing and belonging. Crowley describes her multiscale understanding of geographical boundaries in the local and global scale with respect to the expansive Botswanan villages. In her works, place has a significant role in terms of thinking actions and relationships with the characters in the face of unforgiving conditions. Again, physical geography determines Head's society and culture, and Head uses her fiction to conduct modes of protest. Head's vision to embrace a globally inflected, egalitarian village is entrenched in her geographic imagination of a wider African perspective.

Chapter 4, 'Cosmopolitan Somalia: Place and Identity in Farah's *Maps* and *Links*', outlines Nuruddin Farah's visionary writing, which re-establishes a sense of communal Somali identity, grounded in the cognition of place and a sense of homogeneity. Farah's quest to

2

Book reviews: *Africa's Narrative Geographies: Charting the Intersections of Geocriticism and Postcolonial Studies* by Dustin Crowley. Sirsha Nandi.

Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.

<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

construct collectivity foregrounds involvement in collaborative activities by linking together through shared activities, thus creating boundedness and stability. Postmodern in his approach, Farah aspires to disintegrate a 'nationalist or clan-based narrative of identity and belonging' (103) in favour of a cosmopolitan ethos. Crowley asserts that Farah's novels censure limitations imposed by colonial geography, while expressing unbridled admiration for unrestricted boundaries and dissolved distinctions. With copious reference to *Maps* and *Links*, Crowley explores Farah's representation of place. Crowley asserts that Farah compromises imagined emplacement by envisioning a cosmopolitan Somalia, a place where inclusive identity is linked together though place.

In Chapter 5, 'Half Slum, Half Paradise: Abani's Global Cities', Crowley examines Chris Abani's treatment of global urbanity, which complicates the perception of mobility, hybridity and victimisation associated with cities. Crowley discusses Abani's endeavours to link cities, otherwise distant from one another, and to then inscribe them within the common experience of urbanity worldwide. Crowley observes that the shared dynamics of globalisation and urbanisation that shape Abani's cities also dominate the experiences of the characters who populate them. *GraceLand* and *Becoming Abigail* suggest ways in which migration is seen as a way Africa's urbanity is relationally constituted through its exchanges with the rest of the world. Abani applies postmodern subjectivity to all global cities accompanied by his realisation that metropolitan mixing is a part of common urban experience. Crowley maintains that this sentiment renounces the challenges and oppressive conditions of clan and nationalism within the African nation. At the same time, the experience of rootlessness and communal breakdown presents a threat to the ethical dimension of urban dwelling.

Crowley's conclusion offers a speculative discussion of the ways that geocriticism and ecocriticism may be productively bridged in postcolonial contexts. Pointing to the immense social, political and environmental challenges facing Africa's diverse cultures, Crowley argues that any ecological approach would benefit from the geographically informed critical study made available by spatial analysis, while noting that this geocritical approach, in turn, must be attuned to the environmental factors affecting space and place in the African context. Postcolonial criticism, in Crowley's view, thus brings spatial and environmental theory to bear on the wide range of cultural artefacts representing and shaping Africa today. *Africa's Narrative Geographies* offers an excellent example of the sort of work Crowley has in mind, and it is a good place for readers interested in African literature, postcolonial studies and spatial literary studies to begin.

Sirsha Nandi

Sirsha Nandi is a masters student of literature at Texas State University. Her research focuses on spatial associations in connection with the domestic space of the house, broadly understood by exploring themes of memory and trauma as these are addressed in three novels, each from a different period in American literary history: Nathaniel Hawthorne's The House of the Seven

3

Book reviews: *Africa's Narrative Geographies: Charting the Intersections of Geocriticism and Postcolonial Studies* by Dustin Crowley. Sirsha Nandi.

Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.

<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

Gables (1851), William Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* (1929), and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). Nandi holds bachelors and master's degrees from West Bengal State University and Rabindra Bharati University respectively in India. She also works in postcolonial theory and British literature.

Book reviews: *Africa's Narrative Geographies: Charting the Intersections of Geocriticism and Postcolonial Studies* by Dustin Crowley. Sirsha Nandi.
Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.
<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

Malsawmi Jacob, *Four Gardens and Other Poems* (Authorspress, 2017)

River of No Coasts

Malsawmi Jacob marked her arrival on the literary scene in 2015 with the publication of the first Mizo novel in English, *Zorami: A Redemption Song*. The poems in her latest collection, *Four Gardens and Other Poems*, are instilled with a rich mosaic of imagery, cultural matrix, social ethos, group laments, angst and reconciliation. Ranging from the lyrical and sensual to the harsh and plucky, from the personal to the political, and to nature, they confront both particular and imaginary circumstances in the daily acts of life of the individual and the community. Her earliest exposure to poetry was in the Mizo language, her mother tongue. Later, when studying English literature, some of Malsawmi's favourite poets were Blake, Keats, Shelley, Yeats and T.S. Eliot. As an adult she grew to like Emily Bronte, G.M. Hopkins, Dylan Thomas, Sylvia Plath and Pablo Neruda.¹ The fact that Indian English literature is a product of a multilingual, multicultural and philosophical *mélange* cannot be overlooked. Today, Indian literature is at its apex of creation with the contribution of both regional and national writers such as Malsawmi Jacob.

Like the poems of Pablo Neruda and his counterparts, Malsawmi Jacob's shimmer with an atypical sweet touch of simplicity, openness and lucidity that mark her poetic idioms as subtle, specific and razor-sharp; the poetic corpus contains an inviting discourse. Echoing the 'Song of Solomon' in her novel, Malsawmi drums up optimism:

The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of singing has come ...

Spiritual epiphany is a key factor in the protagonist's inner healing. Malsawmi has a poem entitled 'Zorami' in this collection, where a link to the novel is established. In the poem, 'Zorami', she vigorously asks, 'Waiting for another *thim zing*?' (a time of total darkness in Mizo myth) ('Zorami', 49). A couple of months ago I had an opportunity to read Malsawmi's novel *Zorami*, set in the peak of the Mizo National Front movement that began in the mid-60s and ended in the mid-80s. The insurgency affected every Mizo, whether in or out of Mizoram. They call it '*ram buai*', which means 'disturbance of the land'. Violence erases our shared humanity; however, *Zorami* ends with a prophetic note of hope and renewal of humane feelings.

Malsawmi's poems address the crisis of identity and the continental trials and tensions that are an integral part of contemporary living in cultural spaces irrespective of physical geography and cultural positions. Her musings range from identity crises to peace in the land; dislocation to rehabilitation; death to life, and life's small acts to roadside roses. She doesn't give up dreaming, even when she accounts for the river of life passing through a gutter.

There are seven sections in this series of 'moments of passion'; all parts are planned and organised so that the entire corpus looks like a well-knitted exotic fabric. The titles of sections are loaded with meaning. She blurs territorial engagements with the state and looks to the stars.

¹Jaydeep Sarangi, 'In Conversation with Malsawmi Jacob,' *Writers in Conversation* 4.1 (February 2017).

Malsawmi is an avid lover of territorial peace and in-group fraternity:

No hurting no killing in this country
the place only for lovers of peace. ('Peace Land', 106)

In Section 5, 'Angst', some poems are functional:

Why have you gone political?

they ask,

Why don't you just do
your thing? ('After Sunset', 81)

Malsawmi Jacob is aware of her literary and cultural roots, and that poetry benefits societies. She is a socially committed artist who refers to her land and people, and the trauma her people experienced during the days when vultures had a full meal, to 'keep up continuity'; in the political context of Mizoram, it is the vultures that can be relied upon to clean up the dead bodies (or the ills of society).

For Malsawmi, love is a companion of the poetic soul. The poet wants to sign in the 'peace accord' of minds:

The green river watches us
scattering pearls born out of pain ('A Dance of the Muse', 31)

She aims at envisaging a beautiful nation-state where people can live safely celebrating life's feast together. The cultural identity of a person is a marker for one's overarching sense of self-concept and identification. It is an affiliative construct. It is the image of self we develop from membership of social groups. Many poems in the collection are rich in the aesthetic responsibility towards life, contexts and manners of the time. Her poems are 'roses, tar and blood' ('Roses, Tar and Blood', 82).

Malsawmi consciously leaps into the pool of the nostalgic past, creating a sense of 'presence' through the poetic metaphors of 'absence'. The haunting presence of the metaphor of 'death' invests her poems with a sense of mystery, a sense that is indefinable and non-negotiable through embodied experience. She, like many other poets from North East India, discovers magic in nature, verdant with myth and dense with longing; the river has a soul. Her poetic sensibility calls on hearts to come out of the rain and into the sunshine, in search of poetry in the world:

The rain came down
it poured and poured
Neruda's tears? ('One Tuesday', 30)

Rain and rivers provide the vital dose that the great Chilean poet Pablo Neruda bestowed to overcome all kinds of solitude and anxiety. Malsawmi is an ardent lover of rain and rivers which

bring a promise of renewed vitality in life. Her aim is to achieve the cleansing of minds through the purgation of pent-up emotions: we feel our breathing rise and fall in every receding moment, we listen to the pitter-patter of rain, to a shower on the window pane, and feel the wetness in everything.

The past flows through the veins of Malsawmi's poetic lines: 'He's an old kite, positively past his prime' ('Old Kite', 74). When we whisk from one poem to another we listen intensely to the self-same message of loss. Malsawmi registers her unflinching faith, hope, dreams and cultural memories again and again through subtle imagery, metaphors and folk myths of her homeland. Nothing charges the imagination more actively than poems on the beauty that poets of all ages have found to be haunting the purlieu of thoughts, on the banks of the 'river of no coasts':

Gem of rarest beauty
calls in waking dreams
morning sunset moonlight
still black night
so I must set out in quest
leaving all I own. ('Quest', 25)

Malsawmi is a member of a rare and wealthy heritage from North East India. She is all set to blaze the trail of splendour and majesty with ethereal and magical poems which turn the tides of human hearts. For Malsawmi, tiny flowers adorn our crowns.

Jaydeep Sarangi

Jaydeep Sarangi is Principal at New Alipore College, Kolkata. He is a bilingual writer, academic, editor, interviewer, translator and author of a number of significant publications on postcolonial issues, Indian writing in English, Australian literature, marginal literatures and creative writing in reputed journals/magazines in India and abroad. He is on the editorial board of several refereed journals in different continents. Widely anthologised and reviewed as a poet and a critic on writings on the margin, he has authored six poetry collections in English and one in Bengali. With Rob Harle (Australia), he has authored five anthologies of poems from India and Australia. With Angana Dutta, he has transliterated and edited *Surviving in My World: Growing up Dalit in Bengal*. His other pioneering anthology (with Usha Kishore), *Home Thoughts: Poems of the British Indian Diaspora*, is in press. He may be reached at: jaydeepsarangi@gmail.com.

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Georges Baudoux's *Jean M'Barai: The Trepang Fisherman*, translated and with a critical introduction by Karin Speedy (Sydney: UTS Press, 2015)

Also available for free download via <https://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/books/georges-baudoux-jean-mbarai-trepang-fisherman>

Georges Baudoux's 1919 novella *Jean M'Barai: The Trepang Fisherman* is an extraordinary account of life in and around New Caledonia in the late-nineteenth century. Written by the son of French settlers, it nevertheless shows that its author was well acquainted with the range of lives possible in the colony beyond just those of settlers. His account of the life of a mixed-race and hence ultimately displaced man is generally sympathetic, even if he employs racist language and stereotypes to tell it. Framed by first person narration (is it Baudoux's voice?), we follow Jean, who is presented to us by his friend the narrator, as 'a certain type of character – characters who are quite widespread in the islands of Oceania but are nonetheless not well known' (50). This notion of typology is typical of its time, especially in reference to the colonised, but the novella mostly transcends this potential narrowness by presenting a distinctive portrait. Jean's life is indeed full of adventures, but the most extreme of them are not of his own choosing; in showing how the workings of colonial enterprise play out on the body and life of this individual character, Baudoux provides a critique of the power structures of his day.

Karin Speedy is well equipped to translate such a tale. She has previously written about New Caledonian creole, aspects of the French labour trade, and on other writings by Baudoux. Not only has Speedy translated a text which presents very particular challenges, but she has also provided a wealth of critical and contextual information on the author, the historical setting, and the languages employed within it. There are preceding chapters on the life of Baudoux, his literary career, and the choices made in translation. The original text includes the colloquial speech bichelamar, the New Caledonian version of a creole spoken through much of the Pacific by islanders working with Europeans and Americans, and this form of speech is reproduced here, being largely understandable to an Anglophone reader. This language is depicted as being spoken on New Caledonia, the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) and in the Queensland cane fields of Australia.

Of the various stages of M'Barai's life, one of the most disturbing is the time he spends in enforced labour in the cane fields. The novella shows very clearly that the 'labour' trade which provided the work force for the Australian sugar industry, was in fact a form of slavery, maintained by deceit, cruelty and violence. Despite laws passed to regulate it, recruitment was often sustained by kidnapping or at the very least by trickery and misrepresentation. Those who returned to their home islands often had little to show for their years of work, as 'expenses' were deducted in ways that could keep labourers working for years longer than they had contracted to do. Baudoux had a good understanding of conditions in Queensland, as many of his mining workforce had previously been in the cane fields.

Speedy notes Baudoux's interest in hereditary characteristics. The narrator often attributes M'Barai's actions and responses to his heritage. When he is plucky or persistent, it is because of his father's Breton heritage; when he succumbs to despair, drunkenness or shows no restraint, it is his Kanak blood that is the cause. An unusual phase of M'Barai's life concerns his

time spent as a prisoner in the New Hebrides, where, after being knifed and then shot, he is carefully restored to health in order to ultimately play a role as a kind of breeding bull, impregnating a succession of wives who are rotated through his prison compound. No explanation is given for this episode, but it seems to suggest that the racial heritage available through a mixed-race man will enhance the local 'stock' in the eyes of the locals. This is the most bizarre and potentially disturbing instance of racialised thinking in the text, which uses the racist language of its time throughout. This is especially so when it describes the labour trade, but this is not, in the end, a univocal text. Baudoux shows the reader a very clear-eyed picture of the exploitative practices involved in sugar production, from its highly dubious recruiting methods to life on the plantations, which is depicted as very like life in the American South under slavery. Speedy claims that Baudoux 'has left us with a multivocal text that both supports and subverts the binaries of savagery and civilisation' (40). In showing the material conditions of colonialism, the text goes some way toward condemning them, even if the narrator uses the language of racial science to describe his non-white characters at the same time.

As for the literary merit of the novella, it varies, and is difficult to judge in translation. At times the style is quite clunky, a characteristic enhanced by the ongoing use of short sentences. Despite this, it is still well worth reading. The more Anglophone and Francophone readers can gain access to each other's literary sources, the better will be our understanding of the whole Pacific region. Pacific Studies, and the wider field of transnational literatures, can only benefit from such cross-fertilisations. The hard work of translation is what makes this possible, and it is to be hoped that Speedy will be able to continue with more of this important work.

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Sharankumar Limbale and Jaydeep Sarangi, *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* (AuthorsPress, 2018)

In 1949, anticipating the pending and hard-won constitution of India, eminent Indian social rights campaigner B.R. Ambedkar soberly prophesised:

“On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value.”¹

Ambedkar then asked, “How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life?”² Close to seventy years later, in a world where – constitutional requirements notwithstanding – ‘the entire process of seeking administration [to higher education] reflects the discriminative nature of the institution’ and ‘[h]umiliation of one sort or another is woven into the life experiences of a Dalit student’, the apparent answer to Ambedkar’s question is equally sobering.³ It has taken a long time, and will yet take longer to achieve the dreams of freedom and equality for which he and many others strove. This problem – vitally a problem of privilege and subjugation – is one pertinent not only to India, but likewise in Australia, America, Britain, and a multitude of contexts in which certain members of the population enjoy access to opportunities, freedoms and comforts that certain (‘other’) members of the population do not.

In this context – this deeply problematic world – there is a crucial need for action to make visible the social injustices that persist despite all the battles human rights advocates have fought and the formal changes they have indeed won. Commendable, then, are the objectives of the Dalit literary movement – ‘to bring in awareness in society so as to restructure it into a society based on equality and liberty’⁴ – and of the new edited collection, *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt*, which gathers twenty erudite chapters, plus two interviews, all focused on literature’s social and political role in Dalit movements for human rights. This book holds currency not only in India, but in all countries and contexts where issues of privilege and subjugation continue to divide society and limit lives. Although the situations and issues may be different, and although these important differences should never be elided or overlooked, Dalit struggles and strategies may nonetheless provide a valuable

¹ Ambedkar qtd. in Deshpande, ‘Caste Quotas and Formal Inclusion in Indian Higher Education,’ *Beyond Inclusion: The Practice of Equal Access in Indian Higher Education*. Eds. S. Deshpande and U. Zacharias. (New Delhi and Oxon: Routledge, 2013) 13.

² Ambedkar qtd. in Deshpande 13.

³ Sukumar, ‘Quota’s Children: The Perils of Getting Educated.’ *Beyond Inclusion: The Practice of Equal Access in Indian Higher Education*. Eds. S. Deshpande and U. Zacharias. (New Delhi and Oxon: Routledge, 2013) 207, 212.

⁴ Limbale and Sarangi, *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* (India: AuthorsPress, 2018) 9.

Book reviews: *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* by Sharankumar Limbale and Jaydeep Sarangi. Amelia Walker.

Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.

<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

model for human rights activists and change-seekers across the globe.⁵ The questions for this review, then, concern the form of contribution that *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* offers the Dalit literary movement. In other words, how successfully does this book represent Dalit struggles in – and as – literature? To what extent does the collection in itself contribute to the Dalit literary canon, not to mention the social justice objectives around which that canon is built?

Indeed, *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* strongly represents both Dalit struggle and key literary works that have brought awareness to that struggle while simultaneously playing a part in it. In these ways, *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* offers a valuable contribution to the Dalit literary canon, to the Dalit movement, and indeed to social justice broadly. The purpose of this review now becomes to demonstrate how and why this is the case. In overview, the book possesses three particular strengths, each of which shall shortly be discussed in turn: the first is the diverse range of literary practices and voices the book's chapters collectively discuss; the second is the book's attention to intersecting issues of gender; the third is the additional insights that come through the editorial introduction and the two interview chapters.

A first strength of *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* is the diversity the collection encompasses. As Damrosch observes, the boundaries of literature are broad and growing broader as technological developments continue to offer new and different possibilities for creative communication.⁶ Contemporary literature includes not only prose and poetry published in book form, but also theatre, film, oral literature, autobiographical writing, electronic literature and multimodal texts. *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* recognises this and impressively manages, through its sequence of chapters, to represent Dalit literature from all of these categories. Rajeshwar Mittapalli offers a compelling critique of the emergence of Dalit characters as heroes in Bollywood films – one that secures the relevance of this book to fields of scholarly study and research including not only Literary Studies and Creative Writing but also Cultural Studies, Film Studies and the Social Sciences. Raju Das's account of Bangla Dalit Theatre similarly provides an analysis of interest to those working in the field of Performance Studies, as well as community-based theatre-makers including writers, actors, directors, producers, critics and theatre-lovers. The sometimes-overlooked genre of the short story is given the careful, sophisticated treatment it deserves in chapters by Indira Nityanandam (on Bama Faustina Soosairaj's *Kondattam*) and Ashok Gopal (on 'The Story of the Dalit Autobiographical Story' in Sharankumar Limbale's *Akkarmashi*). The role of electronic literature such as weblogs – sometimes overlooked – is likewise recognised in a chapter by K. Pankajam (248), the primary focus of which is poetry. Other chapters on poetry include those by Partibha Biswas (on Meena Kandasamy), Gobinda Sahoo (on Pitambar Tarai) and M.B. Gaijan (on Manohar Mouli Biswas). Chapters discussing novels include those by S. Horizan Prasanna Kumar (on Bama Faustina Soosairaj's experimental *Sangati*) and Rajeshwar Mittapalli (on Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*), which additionally considers film.

⁵ A. Walker (2016), Book Reviews: 'Three titles: *Breaking Boundaries*; *The Transnational Story Hub*; *Surviving in My World*,' *Transnational Literature* 9.1 (2016) 4.

⁶ Damrosch, *How to Read World Literature* (Malden, Oxford and West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2009) 7.

The wide array of literary genres and practices is a strength of *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt*, for it extends the reach of Dalit literature to a wide audience of potential readers with diverse interests. In connection with this, the book is also wonderfully diverse in the range of authors, voices and perspectives its chapters present. The word ‘Dalit’, after all, does not signify a single group of people with a single culture and set of interests: it is a collective term that can indicate many very different groups of people, all of whom possess their own distinct cultural values, practices, knowledges, struggles and strengths, yet are united through shared (yet also different) experiences of subjugation, and thus a shared struggle towards a fairer world. The differences between and diversities of these groups should not be elided or downplayed, for to do so would be to misrepresent, silence and erase Dalit people – one of the precise problems that the Dalit literary movement aims to combat. Instead, the distinct features of the diverse groups need to be brought to attention – and celebrated – and *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* responds to this need by explicitly considering Tamil Dalit literature, which to date has received less attention than it deserves (see 24 in the chapter by Nityanandam) as well as subaltern literature from Odia, which Sahoo (52) identifies as similarly overlooked, in addition to better-known sub-categories of Dalit literature including Bengali Dalit literature, Marathi Dalit literature and Gujarati Dalit literature.

In addition to the cultural diversity of the Dalit literary voices Limbale and Sarangi’s edited collection represents, the book is also commendable for its representation of female voices – as Indira Nityanandam points out, ‘when a woman Dalit writes, it is obvious that her voice is that of one marginalised three times over: economically, socially and also gender-wise’ (25). Partibha Biswas similarly observes how ‘regulation/repression of female sexuality is central to the institution and perpetuation of caste system’ (109). A second strength of *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt*, then, is that five of the chapters deal explicitly with issues of gender. These include chapters by S. Horizan Prasanna Kumar and Indira Nityanandam, both of whom separately consider the writings of Bama Faustina Soosairaj. Partibha Biswas offers a compelling investigation into ‘Caste and Gender Interface’ in the poetry of Meena Kandasamy, and Rajeshwar Mittapalli sensitively addresses difficult issues of violence in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* and Priyadarshan’s *Aakrosh*. Yet critical analysis of gender needs to consider not only women’s experiences of oppression, but also the complexities of masculinity and its social construction. This is given eloquent treatment in R. Arul’s chapter on “‘Presence” through “Absence” in J. Sanakya’s “The Men’s Ghat” and “The Echoing Voice is Indeed Yours””. *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* thereby draws out critical intersections between gendered oppression and the oppression of Dalit people. *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* can thus be considered an important contribution to intersectional feminist theory and scholarship, defined by American critical race theorist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw as

attention to the interface between the dynamics that constitute race, gender, and class power, as well as to the way these dynamics converge and rearticulate themselves within institutional settings to manufacture social punishment and human suffering.⁷

⁷ Crenshaw, ‘Thinking Intersectionally About Women, Race, and Social Control,’ *UCLA Law Review* 59 (2012) 59. I recognise that the word ‘class’ in the quotation from Crenshaw is potentially problematic, for class is not caste. I do not wish to elide or confuse the two. However, I do believe that the movements for caste equality and

Book reviews: *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* by Sharankumar Limbale and Jaydeep Sarangi. Amelia Walker.

Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.
<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt also offers startling insights into how gender issues intersect with Dalit struggles through presentation of an interview with notable feminist Dalit author Bama Faustina (by interviewer Jaydeep Sarangi). Bama shares compelling memories of her childhood, her relationship with her grandmother, and how experiences of oppression drove her towards literature as a means of activism. She reflects on Dalit literature as

the literature of oppressed people, telling about their pains, agonies, disappointments, defeats, humiliations, oppressions and depressions. It also speaks about their vibrant culture, dreams, values, convictions and their struggle for annihilation of caste in order to build a casteless society. It reveals their resistant and rebellious character, their strength and stamina to live amidst all odds and their resilient nature to love life and live it happily. It brings out their in born tendency to celebrate life and to fight against the caste ridden society by breaking through this inhuman system without breaking themselves. It liberates them and gives them their identity. It heals them and strengthens them to fight for their rights. (273)

This interview with Bama is one of two in the collection, which, together with the book's informative editorial introduction, form the third key strength of *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt*. The other interview features Jaydeep Sarangi and Angana Dutta in conversation with Arjun Dangle. In addition to a celebrated writer, Dangle has long been deeply involved in activist struggles in India, including Dalit struggles. He speaks compellingly about his involvement in these, and about how the experiences of his childhood motivated him to seek change. The editorial introduction, meanwhile, provides a detailed explanation of the Dalit literary movement's history and aims – one that dispels myths, maps key features of Dalit literature, and probes the generic implications of these features. In this way, the editors Sharankumar Limbale and Jaydeep Sarangi make the book accessible for international audiences, including those potentially not familiar with Dalit literature and/or struggles. Yet the introduction is also detailed and critical in ways that will provide fresh insights and perspectives for scholars already well-versed in these things – as the book overall provides numerous such insights.

Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt is successful in its representations of both Dalit struggle and key works of Dalit literature. This review has considered three particular strengths of the book: the diversity of literary practices and voices it encompasses; its attention to intersectional issues of gender; and the extra insights offered in the two interviews as well as the strong editorial introduction. Yet it must be noted that there are many other strengths to the book. For practicality's sake, it is not possible to discuss them all here, but readers are strongly encouraged to read and discover the book's many fascinating offerings. It bears appeal across a wide range of scholarly disciplines, including Cultural Studies, Film Studies, Performance Studies, Critical Race Studies, the Social Sciences, Creative Writing and Literary Studies. It is also a valuable read for all writers, theatre-

class equality share certain features and that those working on both (separate) struggles may share strategies and work as allies. My intention in using Crenshaw's quote about gender and class is to do just this.

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Book reviews: *Dalit Voice: Literature and Revolt* by Sharankumar Limbale and Jaydeep Sarangi. Amelia Walker.

Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.
<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

makers, performers, literature lovers and activists. Overall, Limbale and Sarangi's efforts in compiling this edited collection are to be commended and celebrated.

Amelia Walker

Amelia Walker began writing and performing poetry as a teenager. In her twenties, she worked as a nurse before returning to university to study creative writing and eventually pursue a PhD. She now lectures at the University of South Australia and is secretary of the Australasian Association of Writing Programs, as well as co-editor of the reviews section for TEXT journal. Her recent scholarly publications include a chapter in the collection Autofiction in English (ed. Hywel Dix, Palgrave Macmillan 2018) and another in Creative Writing with Critical Theory: Inhabitation (Eds. Dominique Hecq and Julian Novitz, Glyphi 2018).

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Jaydeep Sarangi, *Faithfully, I Wait* (Cyberwit Press, 2017)

Faithfully, I Wait is the sixth poetry collection from acclaimed bilingual poet, translator, editor, researcher and educator, Professor Jaydeep Sarangi. Of Sarangi's previous collection, *To Whom I Return Each Day*, Professor John Thieme of the East Anglia School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing wrote, 'Jaydeep Sarangi's poems are moving testaments to parallel lives lived on either side of walls. Personal and political, they summon up the evanescent beauty and small moments with a quiet reflectiveness that speaks volumes.' Literary critic Leonard Dabydeen similarly declared, 'to peruse poems in this book ... will rivet your mind and keep you spellbound with deep-seated soul searching.'

This is a formidable reputation for a writer to fulfil—and even more so in light of Sarangi's prolific achievements as not only a poet but also an editor of scholarly and creative books and journals. For instance, Sarangi is a founding editor of the journal *Teesta*, and co-editor (with Usha Kishore) of the recent anthology *Home Thoughts: Poetry of the British Indian Diaspora* (2017). Likewise impressive are the poetic linkages Sarangi has helped forge between India and Australia through projects including interviews and anthologies that pair Indian and Australian poets and literary scholars, helping to enhance cross-cultural understanding through the sharing of creativity and ideas. These projects, in addition to the literary strength of the work itself, put into action Sarangi's deep and sincere belief in 'transformation of society for good by means of poetry' (84). Furthermore, Sarangi has travelled extensively beyond his hometown of Kolkata, India (once known as Calcutta), delivering lectures, workshops and readings for universities and literary associations around the globe.

As the cover states, *Faithfully, I Wait* collects poems 'on rain, thunder and lightning at Jhargram and beyond'. The keyword here is 'beyond'. Indeed, this is the key strength of Sarangi's new collection – his capacity to go beyond. In deceptively simple ways, this skilled poet manages at once to situate his writing in particular places and moments while reaching out to readers who may never have been to those places or lived those experiences, but can, through language, connect across divides of geography, culture and language.

Jhargram is a district in West Bengal, approximately a hundred and seventy kilometres from Kolkata. Popular among tourists, Jhargram is known for its forests, ancient temples and palaces. In Sarangi's collection, these elements of Jhargram's beauty shine through lines such as those that open the collection's first poem, 'Love and Longing at Jhargram':

My days are care free.
Red soil is my first love.
The sapling I planted, is a full tree
where birds flock together, days end peacefully. (7)

However, the true strength of *Faithfully, I Wait* is that it digs deeper than the tourist version of Jhargram, also delving into:

Book reviews: *Faithfully, I Wait* by Jaydeep Sarangi. Amelia Walker.
Transnational Literature Vol. 11 no. 1, December 2018.
<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

... the forest land
its native links where I lost
my past. My ancestors breathed their last. (7)

Sarangi even dares ask:

What is that freedom?
My forgotten chapter of memory
sculpted on the walls of Kanakdurga Temple.
my lines are straight
Arrows fixed up
Invasion from my city burden. (7)

Such lines hint, by my reading, at the cruelties of colonialism and other historic as well as ongoing struggles. Here I am reminded of Thieme's remark about the 'personal and political' power of Sarangi's earlier poems: this is a strength that *Faithfully, I Wait* continues, and extends.

Another highlight of the collection is 'Elected *Babu*', in which:

Some men wearing dhoti
Came begging for vote like annual events.
Trees are witness. Promises given and forgotten.
Again promises. Time is ripe. (34)

If 'Love and Longing at Jhargram' makes the personal political, 'Elected *Babu*' shows the impact of the political on an individual person, on distinct lives. Sarangi reflects:

There was no development in last ten years
All promises denied. Public amenities—
Who can talk about these?
Justice cried on papers. Stories repeated. (34)

Then Sarangi zeroes in on the figure of 'Kalu', who

...chased them up to the road.
They couldn't say a word. They left. (34)

and subsequently

... took their manifesto
Between two levels of his teeth.
He made unintelligible words. Noises. (34)

This frustration with government and the impact poor government can have upon individual members of society reflects issues of relevance and relatability to readers well beyond the locale in which the poem is set – including but exceeding Australian readers. Here as

elsewhere in the collection, Sarangi reaches beyond borders, geographic and cultural, offering poetic lines and imagery as touchstones of connection and solidarity.

Another striking moment of connection – albeit in the realm of sport as opposed to politics – is forged through the touching poem ‘63 Not Out’, which, along with the collection as a whole, Sarangi dedicates to the late Australian cricketer Philip Joel Hughes. Sarangi writes:

No man can ever be so liquid
No touch is so palpable.
No life is so heavy with sighs.
Charioted spinning wheel
finds a destination—
nano space of human hearts
when night is windowless, tight and fisted. (68-69)

and at the end of the poem concludes:

All hearts are suspended,
eyes travel
leaf to leaf from morning to night,
other feelings abandoned. (69)

This is a deeply touching gesture, especially given that India and Australia are rivals when it comes to cricket – and this rivalry does, at times, sadly become far less than friendly. In this poem, however, and through the dedication of the book to Hughes, Sarangi demonstrates an ability to see past the superficial games of team affiliations and national pride. He reminds us that at the end of the day, any opposition on the field is far outweighed by the shared love of both Indian and Australian people for cricket itself – or for those of us who aren’t necessarily fans of the game, for poetry itself, or simply for the shared celebration of life, passion, love, language, learning and communication. For that, at the end of the day, is what I feel this collection gave me as a reader. This is what I feel it can give to other readers too – readers in Australia, in India, and beyond.

With skilful precision, the book captures moments of the specific, the unique. Yet it shows how these moments matter, how they can through poetry resonate far beyond the particular times and places of which Sarangi writes. These poems capture themes and issues of relevance to countless people in countless places. Furthermore, they do so through deftly-crafted imagery, lyrical inventiveness and a musical language of true grace. Consider, for instance, these understated yet striking lines from the book’s title poem:

Red spills into hearts, God sinking
in a hospital bed
at the end of my hard day, In a dark alley. (58)

This same poem enlightens readers as to the significance of the book’s title – namely the importance, for poets, of waiting. For

A poet has no home
Only a quest –
Waiting, faithfully. (58)

I now wait faithfully for Sarangi's next poetic offering. Like rain upon dusty earth, his words cleanse me, refresh me, and ready me for the new.

Amelia Walker

Amelia Walker began writing and performing poetry as a teenager. In her twenties, she worked as a nurse before returning to university to study creative writing and eventually pursue a PhD. She now lectures at the University of South Australia and is secretary of the Australasian Association of Writing Programs, as well as co-editor of the reviews section for TEXT journal. Her recent scholarly publications include a chapter in the collection Autofiction in English (ed. Hywel Dix, Palgrave Macmillan 2018) and another in Creative Writing with Critical Theory: Inhabitation (eds. Dominique Hecq and Julian Novitz, Glyphi 2018).