

cinema, as do L. López-Ropero and A. Moreno-Álvarez in their comparison of postcolonial English and Spanish art and artwork, and Sonia Sabelli in her perusal of Rastafarianism in the UK and Italy.

There are many interesting insights to be gained across the volume, including Kristín Loftsdóttir's discussion of the continuity of racialized otherness in Icelandic national discourse from a colonial to a postcolonial reality, and Manuela Coppola's chapter on Italian postcolonial literature. Coppola provides a very useful survey of a wide range of migrant/italophone/postcolonial Italian writing with many useful comparisons of the position of Italian migrant writing in relation to British migrant writing. She avoids falling into the trap in which anglophone postcolonialism becomes the implicit measuring stick for how far the locals have come along the postcolonial trail, and presents instead a status report on postcolonial writing in Italy that invites comparison with other countries.

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Postcolonial literatures and Deleuze: colonial pasts, differential futures, edited by Lorna Burns and Birgit M. Kaiser, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 220 pp., £50.00 (hardback), ISBN 978 0 2303 4825 7

Deleuze and the postcolonial, edited by Simone Bignall and Paul Patton, Edinburgh, Edinburgh UP, 2010, 310 pp., £24.00 (paperback), ISBN 978 0 7486 3700 3

Levinas and the postcolonial: race, nation, other, by John E. Drabinski, Edinburgh, Edinburgh UP, 2011, 234 pp., £60.00 (hardback), ISBN 978 0 7486 4103 1

Judging by the flurry of new books emphatically connecting postcolonialism and various continental thinkers, the crisis of postcolonialism as a mode of discourse is in full swing. Beginning with the post-9/11 backlash against cultural relativism, the radical critiques of postcolonialism formulated from the outside have now contaminated inside practices, reflective of the need for postcolonial theory to reinvent itself in the spirit of the times, bringing past thinkers and schools of thought to bear on the future horizons of a discipline ostensibly doubting its origins, its methodologies and perhaps its very *raison d'être*.

Postcolonial Literatures and Deleuze: Colonial Pasts, Differential Futures, edited by Lorna Burns and Birgit M. Kaiser, comprises ten astute, albeit tentative, essays that grapple with this kind of insecurity. The volume seeks new avenues and conceptual models to galvanize the philosophies of difference at the heart of postcolonialism, by “exploring the shared problems that both Deleuzian and postcolonial thought seek to address, critical analysis can uncover the common strategies employed by both in order to overcome the striations of power and hegemony (colonialist or otherwise)” (2). Despite what may appear as “post-thought” methodology, Burns and Keiser provide a significant contribution to the ongoing debate on the condition of the subject in the post-identity era, which builds on earlier work by Simone Bignall and Paul

Patton and develops Deleuzian readings of texts by Rachid Boujedra, Mohammed Dib and Nalo Hopkinson.

Deleuze and the Postcolonial, edited by Simone Bignall and Paul Patton, is an earlier and more productive enquiry than that offered by Burns and Kaiser, premised on a less presumptuous assumption of the mutuality between postcolonial theory and Deleuzian philosophy. An important opening essay by Andrew Robinson and Simon Tormey, "Living in a Smooth Space: Deleuze, Postcolonialism and the Subaltern", addresses Spivak's critiques of Deleuze, since "Getting beyond Spivak's early analysis is crucial for assessing the usefulness of Deleuze's and Guattari's work for the kinds of critical intervention which postcolonial theory seeks to develop" (21). Avoiding facile revisionism and easily made connections, contributors in this volume are content to identify core Deleuzian motifs and trace these to a body of representative postcolonial discourses. The congeniality of the analytical tools, the way in which Deleuzian categories of difference are shown to inform postcolonial discourse, point to a more nuanced study, certainly one more mindful of Deleuzian aesthetics. Among the themes under scrutiny, nomadic thought, "shame", deterritorialization, postcolonial cinema, and the postcolonial virtual, make for convincing explorations. Indeed, one of the greatest merits of the volume is that of acknowledging the limits and limitations of the postcolonial enquiry.

John E. Drabinski's study, *Levinas and the Postcolonial: Race, Nation, Other*, proceeds from the exemplarity of Emmanuel Levinas to western philosophy in general and the philosophy of difference in particular and the need to rethink his legacy in the context of postcolonialism and globalization. The philosopher of the Other, of "radical difference" par excellence, Levinas is the author of a body of work deemed to have invaluable potential for postcolonial critiques of cultural identity. Drabinsky explores how Levinas's radical phenomenological ethic can inform the framework of postcolonial alterity if it can be purged of its colonial inflections. Reading Levinas's ethic against postcolonial theories of difference, Drabinsky argues that Levinas's thinking needs to be decolonized for it to elicit an authentically Levinasian vision of self and other. Thus, in a gesture of rescuing Levinas from himself, Drabinsky makes a case for engaging his situatedness before applying his language of difference to the postcolonial subject. With this end in view, after revisiting key conceptions, the author proposes a shift in the framework of reference to factor in the complicated equation of difference, race and nation and to answer his initial question: "What would it mean to transmit and engage Levinas across borders of history, culture and experience?" (xiv).

While commending the acumen and interpretive vigour of this study, one remains sceptical about the authenticity of the theoretical pursuit it may inspire. It seems to me that Levinasian thought and postcolonialism derive from significantly different cultural approaches and that to enforce a common frame of reference would be prescriptive and mutually distorting. While alterity is constitutive of Levinas's identity model, built as it is into the very fabric of the human condition, the postcolonial condition of otherness is a construct informed by a plurality of hardly disinterested and unsituated methodologies. Levinasian thinking is constructivist; postcolonialism is endemically deconstructive. Levinas conceived of the other as a structure of inclusion, while the postcolonial enquiry deals in structures of exclusion. In Levinasian logic, difference is a metaphysical quest rooted in the epistemologies and ontologies of the subject, hence Levinas's declared interest in sameness and interiority rather than cultural difference. As a Litvak and a Talmudic scholar with a theological background, Levinas possessed a dialogic imagination which sought to think beyond interiority and intersubjectivity.

To read this transcendental horizon into the concepts of subalternity and indigeneity may inject metaphysics into the postcolonial problematic, while the questions Drabinsky formulates appear hardly Levinasian *per se*; rather, they strike one as characteristically postcolonial questions that he seeks to legitimate by having recourse to a Levinasian grounding:

How does thinking, being, creating, and acting as and from the position of the Other transform the meaning of the thought and imaginary of each? And what would it mean to infuse these postcolonial explorations of difference with the language of the ethical? (xiii–xiv)

In the final analysis, Levinas's creative and transformative potential for thinking otherness may lie in his distinct and unquestioned Europeaness. Without wishing to sound a nostalgic or retrograde note, Drabinsky's rereading risks politicizing rather than decolonizing Levinas, in which case, Levinas's legacy is perhaps best left unchallenged.

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Sufism in the contemporary Arabic novel, by Ziad Elmarsafy, *Edinburgh Studies in Modern Arabic Literature*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2012, 260 pp., £65.00, ISBN 978 0 7486 4140 6

Exactly a century after the publication of Muhammad Husayn Haykal's *Zeinab* (1912), widely recognized as the first modern Arabic novel, Ziad Elmarsafy draws attention to the prevalence of Sufi-inspired themes in modern Arabic novels. Focusing on a handful of popular novelists published since the 1940s, Elmarsafy explores how Sufi language, symbolism and characters have come to permeate the arabophone literary consciousness. As the author demonstrates, Sufi ideas constitute "an escape from time, history and mortality" (162) and, at the same time, can also function as a force to oppose "heavy-handed bureaucratic modernization and fundamentalist religion" (52).

Not only do modern novels incorporate Sufi expressions and intertextual references to the works of revered Sufi figures such as al-Qushayrī (d. 1072) and Ibn Arabī (d. 1240), but late-20th-century Arabic novelists have also taken up Sufi motifs "as a way of interrogating the limits of the creating self and the creative act" (1). That is to say, Sufi ideas are salient to the very way that novelists have conceived of their literary craft. For instance, similar to a mystic episode, a novelist's creative exertion enables access to an almost other-worldly fountain of inspiration, which in turn enables episodes of penetrating insight into both the profanity and marvel of human existence. Across selected texts, Elmarsafy explores motifs such as the nature of love and desire, responses to injustice, political transgression, hospitality, the boundaries of the creative self, divinity, sanity and insanity, and the limits of rationality.

The book is divided into an introduction and six chapters, each focused on the works of a selected author, including Egyptian Nobel Laureate Nagib Mahfouz, Sudanese civil servant Tayeb Salih, Tunisian intellectual Maḥmūd Al-Maš adī, Egyptian journalist Gamal Al-Ghitany, Libyan Touareg Ibrahim Al-Koni and Algerian Berber Tahar

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