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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Worlds in Transition: Evolving Governance across a Stressed Planet

JOSEPH A. CAMILLERI & JIM FALK

Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2009

704 pages ISBN 9781849800341

Researchers in social and physical sciences increasingly recognise that addressing solutions to global environmental problems requires communication across traditional academic boundaries. With my training as an ecologist, I adopted this perspective to justify my credentials for reviewing *Worlds in Transition: Evolving Governance across a Stressed Planet* by Camilleri and Falk, and assumed that ‘stressed planet’ referred to environmental concerns. Indeed, the authors include environmental issues among our planet’s stressors, “Global warming had created a challenge of unprecedented complexity, involving interactions between a vast number of sectors, sites, and institutions, across the entire social and biophysical system in which humans were both participants and actors.” Yet the ambitious scope of this book goes well beyond the subject of climate change and related policy. It spans time scales from the earliest stages of human evolution to changes in governance across social and biophysical systems at the global scale. Among the topics reviewed are evolution, warfare, information transfer, economic and cultural hegemony, and global public health, all in the context of governing organisations which evolve with major turning points in world history, especially in the modern era. Indeed, I was ‘thinking small’ in my inference of what ‘stressed planet’ means. Camilleri and Falk think big. Human population growth, atmospheric pollution, and global cultural inequities and conflicts all fall under the ‘stressed planet’ umbrella.

Incredibly, the authors are fundamentally successful at integrating the breadth of the subject with an astounding depth on each section. With few flaws, this assemblage of diverse facts and carefully constructed syntheses will be valuable for intellectuals motivated to address the governance challenges of our transition out of the ‘Modern epoch’. Innovation in governance will only occur through purposeful blending of the often disparate languages of natural and social sciences. Building new solutions requires explicit knowledge of the complex evolution of humanity’s current cultural, biological and governmental institutions, which any motivated reader will find here.

Some aspect of human nature engenders every generation to think it is living in the most tumultuous time in history. My initial reaction to the authors’ claim that our

present position in history is a unique and momentous ‘period of transition’ was sceptical ascribed to this quirk of cultural egotism. I reversed my sentiment, however, as the compelling case for the current status of our stressed world was argued. Our abilities to move information, pollute, reproduce, heal and destroy are at levels never before attained. We have ‘entered a period of consequences’ in regards to how global and regional governments create policies and prioritise among these issues, and major changes in world governance are swiftly approaching.

As a US citizen, albeit one frequently critical of my government, I was surprised to be slightly defensive at the authors’ contention that one of the major current transitions in governance is the decline in American hegemony. Yet as the authors’ case for this trend is expertly and dispassionately presented from many angles, I was compelled to agree. While being the cause of a substantial component of the global stress of the Modern period, my culture’s pre-eminence is declining simultaneously with the emergence of a multilateral governance structure which will lead the ‘new epoch’. The authors are equally thoughtful and diplomatic in their recognition of conflicts beyond US hegemony including broad East–West and Global North–Global South divides: “western dominance, in particular the tendency of the west to believe in the universality of its own cultural norms and to define progress as synonymous with its own achievements, was seriously in question”. This basic change in perspective for much of the Western world, although perhaps initially difficult to acknowledge for some, is both an imperative and inevitable consequence in the evolution of human history’s approaching chapter.

This book demands the reader’s willingness to learn a large volume of details and ability to make broad connections throughout. I was most absorbed by sections within my training (e.g. evolution, climate change and disease ecology), and the history of policy on these subjects was fascinating. However, I struggled to follow the narrative of subjects outside my expertise (Chapters 8, 10 and 11). This occurred despite my interest in the overall subject and general willingness to learn. Certainly, I will not be alone in this response, and others may struggle with sections I found easier. My difficulty is reflective of the broader challenge inherent in the book’s ambitious scope. The implicit risk is that delivering on the breadth of the subject fails if the depths of the sections alienate even a motivated reader. At some threshold, detail obstructs synthesis, and neither is effectively communicated.

What I needed from the authors in these rare moments were anchors in the sea of information. Potential stabilising mechanisms which I felt were lacking include a more frequent return to the book’s thesis, a greater emphasis on the interconnection embedded throughout each chapter and a parallel chapter structure (e.g. identical headings, outlines or an overarching conceptual diagram). Finally, and with full disclosure of my scientific writing bias, a greater emphasis on brevity could be employed. As excessive detail derailed effective synthesis in places, so did excessive verbiage, especially in the introductory chapters. This may represent a broader stylistic point of contention between social and physical sciences. It is my reflection, however, that the discipline of brevity in scientific writing could improve the delivery

of information in other fields. Of course, the converse criticism applies to scientific writing from other disciplines, and with great merit. Yet it is apparent to me that writing style and convention is another obstacle, and a non-trivial one, inhibiting synthesis across disciplines, and a challenge for readers of a book with this large breadth of information and depth of detail.

This book is timely, expertly researched, successfully executed and will prove prescient regarding our current state of transition. It is my sincere hope that many different types of readers find it and assimilate its varied teaching points. If so, *Worlds in Transition* will add to our cultural 'reflexivity', and inform the refinement of global governance policies and priorities for our stressed planet in the coming years.

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Youth Identity and Migration: Culture, Values and Social Connectedness

F. MANSOURI (Ed.)

Champaign, IL: Common Ground Publishing, 2009

226 pages ISBN 9781863356213-3

This collected work is framed by the experience of youth growing up in an era of increasingly complex ethnic and cultural diversity. It addresses the social connections that migrant youth have and seeks to identify their well-being as the next generation of workers, educators and adults. The book is a collection of 13 chapters divided into three broader themes of: cultural adaptation and well-being, the social experiences of migrant youth, and migrant youth and the new media. The book looks at how day-to-day exchanges, education and media relate to identity for migrant youth. It also takes a critical stance in assessing issues of access, inclusion and social capital for these young people. The book provides a broad engagement with migrant youth including work that encompasses new, second and third generation migrants, refugees and Muslims.

In the introduction, Mansouri addresses Vertovec's concept of superdiversity (p. 12) and argues that this new era of diversity is more complex than census data and recourse to country of origin enable us to identify. The works that follow support this argument and also contribute to an understanding of this complexity. One of the clear contributions this work provides is that of situating migrant youth in a new epoch to that of their parents, an age where media enables youth to create and engage with global communities. This is described as a departure from their parent's transnationalism, as the youth in these studies are connected to not only others from their ancestral communities, but also other minorities in their own locale, and globally (pp. 53, 157). This 'unity in difference' is a recurring theme of the collection and is given different representations in the chapters by Mansouri and Miller,

Santoro, and Hopkins and Dolic. Another strong feature of the collection is the reference it provides to the different experiences of education by migrant youth. In Arber's work, which discusses popular racism in the teaching profession, we engage with migrant youth coming to a largely monocultural school as transnational consumers of white middle-class education. In Santoro's study a contrast is provided by addressing the lack of ethnic minority teachers in schools with a multicultural student body. These works along with the chapters by Latrache and Windle highlight the global context of contemporary teaching and the need for teachers to gain professional competence in real-life multicultural settings. Both the unity in difference and educational themes provide insight into the social connections of migrant youth and their well-being and inclusion.

The fact that this work is largely a collection of Australian research does not detract from the wider implications of its findings. As the youth in several studies indicate, contemporary migrant youth in Australia share much with migrant youth globally, and also more generally with all youth growing up conversant with new media and in multicultural surroundings. However, a number of chapters look beyond Australia and the book includes research on Arab youth in America and France, and a comparison of educational disadvantage between Australia and France. The book also does much to integrate the subject of Muslim youth, too often dealt with as a separate concern, into broader debates of migrant and ethnic minority youth. Similarly, refugees, Turkish, Indigenous Australian and Pacific Island youth are all included in various debates that are focal on the experience of being young and a minority, rather than being a particular ethnicity. Generally, the chapters in the book are complimentary and readers interested in one or two specific chapters will find value in the rest of the volume.

The book is slightly impeded by the lack of clarity that the table of contents provides, where chapter numbers are omitted and the detailing of chapter sections is included at the expense it seems of their full titles. This is made prominent by the fact that there is no index to trace themes across the anthology. I note this precisely because the collection of texts are complimentary, in some cases even reiterating a theme, such as unity in difference, or providing different perspectives on similar themes like multicultural education from both student and teacher points of view. The engagement with well-being and health is at times nuanced and uneven. This is made more distinct in the concluding chapter by Paradies *et al.*, who note that the health impacts associated with the experience of racism are most well established in terms of negative psychological effects and social behaviour (p. 214). The strong case these authors make highlights the need for some of the previous chapters to have made more of these connections. In addition, an issue that was lacking across the book as a whole was an acknowledgement of gender difference; this is only really touched upon briefly by Francis in reference to Pacific Island migrants (p. 198). This is a little disappointing as the volume handles the complexity of addressing a variety of different ethnic groups most competently, making their experiences relevant to both the reader and the other works within the collection.

On the whole, the book is a timely addition to the field of minority youth studies and includes a balanced collection of conceptualisation, research and analysis. The issue of migrant youth health as an important issue is given context. A connection is made between the subtleties of social inclusion, well-being and friendships, and educational success, criminality and ill health. The authors achieve this by engaging in themes that are at the forefront of youth research, media use, ethnicity and education. It is relevant and useful to youth researchers in Australia, and similarly to those beyond the region.

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In Your Face: A Case Study in Post Multicultural Australia

MARGOT FORD

Darwin, NT: Charles Darwin University Press, 2009

250 pages ISBN 9781921576058

Margot Ford commences her analysis by acknowledging the widespread assumption that Australia has gone beyond multiculturalism and can now be considered a 'post multicultural' society. However, as Ford herself recognises, this conception has two contradicted meanings in the Australian context. Radical critics such as Ghassan Hage suggest the problem of official multiculturalism is essentialism, and it plays the role of legitimising the supremacy of the mainstream (Anglo-Celts or white) in Australian society. While intellectuals such as Ien Ang pursue the possibility of transcending this essentialist view of multiculturalism by employing a culturally and ethnically hybrid perspective, conservatives have tried to replace multiculturalism with more nationalistic concepts. From 1996 to 2007 the John Howard government removed the word 'multicultural' from the realm of public policies, and in its place opted to use more nationalist and assimilationist oriented terms such as citizenship and social cohesion. Many mainstream liberals admit the effect this has had on the national psyche, and this has been an important factor in Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's adopting Howard's vocabulary of national integration.

Given the above change, I have hesitated to accept the assumption that Australia is now a post multicultural society. As a sociologist from Japan, I started to learn Australian multiculturalism by reading books written by Stephan Castles and James Jupp, which Ford described as 'South-centric' literatures. After living in Canberra and Sydney for approximately four years, I returned to Japan to find that contemporary Japanese society is in need of the principles and policies of multiculturalism (*Tabunka Kyosei* in Japanese), because of the rapid increase in the foreign resident population. For Japanese scholars, multiculturalism in Australia as public policy is still relevant because it seems to provide important suggestions for Japanese society. However, as one of the translators of the Japanese versions of

Ghassan Hage's books, and through his and other works, I have learnt much from the critical perspective of Australian multiculturalism. Therefore, I have an ambivalent feeling; multiculturalism is still needed, but at the same time it must also be transcended. *In Your Face: A Case Study in Post Multicultural Australia* is a unique and important study because Ford tries to dissolve this ambivalence from the personal and local contexts of Darwin, located far from the 'Southern-centric' view of Australian multiculturalism. Based on this empirical research in Darwin she tries to define 'post multicultural Australia' as a social condition resisting neo-conservative and neo-liberal politics, and seeking to overcome the failures of multiculturalism.

Ford argues that according to the conservative perspective of 'post multicultural Australia', the cultural and ethnic diversity promoted by multiculturalism may cause divisiveness within society and therefore multiculturalism should be replaced. John Howard emphasised the importance of 'Australian Values'; he wanted to determine the 'core' values to be considered Australian. The government wants to decide the 'Australian values' because it wants to decide who 'true' Australians are, and by extension who are not. In the 2000s the Howard government relied on the 'Politics of Fear' to maintain public support, emphasising the threats of waves of boat people and terrorist attacks. The government warned that some citizens in Australia are not 'true Australians' and therefore should be assimilated and integrated, and if they are not able to be integrated, they must be excluded. According to the conservatives, the principle of multiculturalism (mis)recognises the existence of 'false Australians' that are potentially harmful to Australian society.

Ford suggests that there are two preconditions behind the conservative view of multiculturalism; 'Australia as a tolerant society' and 'ordinary Australians'. The former is a belief spread by the mass media and politicians: Australia is now a tolerant society, and except for a few extreme cases (such as the Cronulla incidents and attacks on Indian students) there is no longer any racism in the country. The latter is a politics that the government tries to reproduce and strengthen, wherein the images of 'ordinary' people in Australia have their 'ordinariness' defined as being racially white and from a Western culture. In this way conservatives view multiculturalism as already being outdated, and no longer relevant to a tolerant society free of racism. Rather than provide the dividend of productive diversity to 'ordinary' Australians, multiculturalism legitimises the vested interests of the left, intellectual elites and particular ethnic organisations.

To deconstruct the two preconditions, Ford focuses on 'racialised practices' in contemporary Australian society. According to Ford, racialised practices are "the ways *ordinary* and *everyday* social practices reveal deeply embedded constructions of the 'other' based on race" (p. 6). Ford's analysis reveals the existence of racialised practices both in everyday lives, and in the local politics of Darwin. Even in Darwin,

known as a racially mixed multicultural society, widespread racialised practices reproduce uneven power relations between 'ordinary/true' Australians and 'un-ordinary/false' Australians. Ford also suggests that the change of political discourses and policy programmes at the national level affects racialised practices on the local level. Therefore, Ford rejects the government's neo-conservative perspective on post multicultural Australia and instead, emphasises a hybrid/cosmopolitan vision of it. She suggests "post multiculturalism refers more to a definition that goes beyond cultural, ethnic or racial boundaries to take account of processes of identification that are more fluid, moving between identities seamlessly, rather than being named in only one particular way" (p. 44). Instead of the Politics of Fear of Howard, Ford expects the Rudd government to develop the Politics of Hope for unity and cohesion.

The vision for 'post multicultural Australia' Ford proposes shares much common ground with the project of cosmopolitan redefinition of multiculturalism by intellectuals such as Ien Ang and Gerard Delanty. They all contradict the view that multiculturalism promotes cultural essentialism and therefore causes the divisiveness within the national society. In her essay "Passengers on Train Australia", for example, Ang proposed the concept of 'cosmopolitan multiculturalism'; multiculturalism which promotes a kind of public sphere in which deliberative border-crossing dialogues among ethnicities and cultures. I myself strongly approve of such a cosmopolitan redefinition of multiculturalism.

Although Ford seems to agree with Ang's view on contemporary Australian society, there is the matter of difference in terminology, between what Ford refers to as 'post multicultural Australia' and what Ang proposes as 'cosmopolitan multiculturalism'. I think the difference should not be ignored. I worry that to call contemporary Australian society 'post' multicultural is, despite Ford's own hope for hybrid/cosmopolitan society, running the risk of actually assisting conservatives who want to revive assimilationism. I prefer to consider contemporary Australia as being in a period of seeking an 'alternative' version of multiculturalism rather than labelling it as a 'post' multicultural society. The federal government has seemingly abandoned the principle of multiculturalism, however, this also means that Australian multiculturalism is now going to be liberated from the burden of being the official discourse for national interests. It is an opportunity for fieldworkers, such as Ford and other intellectuals, to seek alternative principles of border-crossing dialogue and collaboration for the transformation of society. This is the 'hope' I felt, when I finished reading this interesting book.

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The French Atlantic: Travels in Culture and History

BILL MARSHALL

Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009

375 pages ISBN 9781846310515

This unique volume takes as its starting point the concept of diasporic notions of Frenchness, particularly the ways in which French and Francophone communities in the Americas implanted a lasting transatlantic presence even as their differences from one another undermined the myth of the singularity of French language and culture. Following a theoretical and methodological introduction, Marshall examines the cultural history of seven different French Atlantic spaces, paying particular attention to the ways in which their very presence reformulates accepted notions both of Atlanticism and of *francité*.

Marshall's study begins by probing what he calls "anxieties provoked by the 'Atlantic' in the wider French culture" (p. 2), emphasising the national(ist) focus that effectively excludes much of the colonial past and its corollaries of conquest and settlement from narrative formulations of the French nation-state. If the notion of the 'French Atlantic' exists problematically within a discursive, geographical and cultural network that the metropole seeks determinedly to disavow, it simultaneously compels us to come to terms with France's conviction of its own exceptionalism, despite the fact that "the Atlantic has involved massive movements of French-speaking populations" (p. 4). Marshall cites the perspective of Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, whose reinscription of the African experience of slavery and diaspora into accounts of Western modernity allows Marshall to postulate that "It is engagement with others, with difference, that constitutes what we term cultural or national identities" (p. 11). He then evokes the Martinican novelist and philosopher Edouard Glissant's vision of the cultural creativity and cross-breeding that emerged from the Caribbean colonial encounter, "a harbinger of [...] de-centred [...] and profoundly relational cultural realities" (p. 12). What is arguably most important here is that the twin positions articulated by Gilroy and Glissant allow him to posit the related models of diaspora and hybridity as the conceptual underpinning of the French experience in North America.

Marshall expands this thesis across seven chapters, tracing a vague arc from France across the Atlantic to French Canada, and then down through New Orleans into the Caribbean and ending (somewhat surprisingly) in Uruguay. Each chapter is devoted to a specific city in this odyssey, an argumentative and analytical structure that literally 'reads' the city from a multitude of perspectives; using history, geography, demographics, culture and language as so many discursive and analytical lenses allows him to excavate a thoroughgoing portrait of each city in turn before turning to representations of each city in literature and film. In reading Nantes, for example, Marshall quickly links the city's shipping and shipbuilding history with the Passage Pommeraye shopping arcade, a central historical, architectural and economic symbol of the city whose construction dates back to 1843. This allows him to evoke both

literary and cinematic inscriptions of the city – the one through Julien Gracq and the other through Jacques Demy – that uncover the hidden history of the slave trade in which the city played a central role. Indeed, by reanimating the occulted figure of the slave ship, Marshall is able to reinscribe the city within a framework of transhistorical and transracial spatialisation.

From the outset of the next chapter, key facets of La Rochelle's slave trading history are succinctly traced, showing that it takes second place to Nantes. But this by no means diminishes the scale of the efforts of the *rochelais* in this regard; by mapping family ties and generational intermarriage onto the principal economic nodal points of France's colonial enterprise (New Orleans, Saint-Domingue), Marshall is able to clearly demonstrate the centrality of this city, framed specifically through "the overall figures for expeditions from La Rochelle", in what he calls "the routine of slave trading" (p. 61). Thus the "relatively small urban space of La Rochelle has [...] been seen to generate vast realities in the French Atlantic because of commerce in goods and people, (religious) ideology, and the links between them" (p. 94). It is the demographic, commercial and cultural confluences of these cities, then, that also link them to the *collectivité territoriale* of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, islands of 236 square kilometres situated 25 kilometres off the coast of Newfoundland. Despite this displacement from the metropole, Marshall proposes a 'telescoping' view of geography that posits the territory as resembling a "microcosm of France [...] in its infrastructure of préfecture, gendarmerie, airport and other institutions that elsewhere would cater for a community a hundred times more populous" (p. 109). This seeming anomaly in French geopolitics gives way to a fuller rendition of the results of French trade as it interacted with French transnationalism; the history and growth of Quebec City and Montreal attest to the depth and breadth of the French diasporic presence in North America. From Quebec City's start as an "obvious centre for French settlement and trade" (p. 138) to its "dual function as port and fortress" (p. 137), the French mercantilist system made it a hub of trade and export as well as cultural and population growth until it was overtaken in population and importance by Montreal and Toronto, in turn, before the end of the nineteenth century.

Key transformations in the demographic, colonial and national framework of North America meant that Montreal as a centre of *francité* would be reinscribed over time as "a space of immigrant, second-generation, hybrid, intercultural and trilingual identities" (p. 170). Similar forces attend the trajectory of what is arguably Marshall's most intriguing and informative chapter, his reading of New Orleans. Typically subject to reductive rehearsals of nationalism that represent it either as a last outpost of francophonie, or a bastion of multiculturalism on an Anglophone-dominated continent, the multivalent, multinational network that nourished New Orleans highlights Marshall's theme of "the French Atlantic emphasis on routes rather than roots" (p. 219), and emphasises its "relation to Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, British colonies, and to woodlands and plains Indians" (p. 178). Indeed, paradoxes of intersectionality meant that while the French *Code noir* was amended in 1724 and 1728, "in particular to limit interracial sexual relationships" (p. 184), the period of

Spanish rule that followed the 1763 Treaty of Paris saw new arrivals that were “overwhelmingly French or Acadian” (p. 185). Its long-standing connection to Saint-Domingue, especially as a point of relocation and refuge for those fleeing the Revolution, made the diasporic presence of the latter “crucial for the prolongation of francophone culture” in this American city; the shifting shape of francophone culture in the Americas mediated “key contributions by this group [...] to literary and cultural life in nineteenth-century New Orleans”, aspects also to be seen in “the culture of voodoo, and in the Louisiana Creole language” (p. 190).

If New Orleans is “the pivot or nodal point of the French Atlantic, the place where native, French, French-Canadian, Spanish, Caribbean and Anglo-American influences and forces pass, settle, combine and are productive of the new” (p. 219), Cayenne and Montevideo form its southern border. Long known primarily for the notorious Devil’s Island prison and its representations in film and literature, Cayenne here traces an alternative to French Atlantic articulations of *francité*, with the fallout from departmentalisation, underpopulation, rocketry and France’s only surviving indigenous population shaping the identity of South America’s only non-sovereign territory in very specific ways. And so while some Guyanese literature – Juminer, for example – arguably reflects “the fear of the diglossic reality of Guyanais society” (p. 248), the work of others, like Damas, is “characterised by a virulent denunciation of colonialism and assimilation” (p. 241). On the other hand, while French migration to Montevideo – given impetus by the loss of Canada – had peaked by the mid-nineteenth century, “in 1843 the French [...] represented over half the foreign population, and a quarter of Montevideo’s as a whole” (p. 263). As a result, given the absence of a framework of conquest, “French populations contributed significantly to one of the distinguishing characteristics [...] of Uruguay [...] namely the large urban middle class”, and the further implantation of francophone outposts in South America (p. 269).

Remarkable in its range, then, this study combines geography, history, demographics, language, culture, literature and film to provide a unique perspective on the ways in which *francophonie* has been constituted in difference outside the French mainland. It deserves a place wherever ‘French Studies’ is taught or archived.

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Being Arab: Arabism and the Politics of Recognition

CHRISTOPHER WISE & PAUL JAMES (Eds)

North Carlton, Australia: Arena Publications, 2010

270 pages ISBN 9780980415810

As co-editor Christopher Wise states with regret, *Being Arab* “comes at a time of near total disintegration, if not irredeemable devastation, for secular Arabist thought and

social movements". The volume's purpose, he continues, was to make a "modest contribution . . . towards strengthening viable, secular and democratic alternatives to Islamist fundamentalism in the Arab world, especially its most lethal Wahhabist and Khomenist varieties". However, this unfocused, hodgepodge collection of 13 chapters of varying quality encompassing a variety of disciplinary and personal perspectives, plus two poems, hardly does so. To be sure, a close reading does reveal a number of useful points. It also offers some interesting, and usually neglected angles with regard to Arabism and Africa, including a fascinating discussion of the Muridiyya Sufi Order in Senegal by Fallou Ngom. However, this reader's overall feeling upon the book's completion was one of confusion and incoherence, even more than is often the case in collected volumes.

Wise's introduction sketches out the main themes of modern Middle East history as viewed through the lens of those who can only explain the 9/11 bombings as being the product of Western perfidy and domination. Britain and France first encouraged, then betrayed "the Arabs" during and after the First World War, imposing the nation-state system and supporting Jewish nationalism, in order "to divide and conquer Arab peoples for the benefit of European colonizers" (an overly simplistic conflation of the Zionist enterprise with French North Africa, where, unlike in the Arab east, there was large-scale European colonisation). In order to prevent the Arabs from creating a unified nation that would serve the interests of Arabs rather than the West, first Britain, and then the USA, supported Saudi Arabia, "the most virulent enemy of Arabism of the twentieth century, the Zionist state of Israel notwithstanding". Arabism did not fail because of Arab weakness, he writes, but because "it was relentlessly assaulted from the outside", with Britain and the USA deliberately exacerbating sectarian and ethnic tensions in the region, resulting in the rise of fundamentalism. Hence, the West today "bears . . . a tremendous responsibility to ensure the rebirth of . . . secular . . . Arabism, even a neo-Ba'thism" (!), which of course, unlike the original Ba'th, must properly treat non-Arab and non-Sunni Muslim minorities in its midst. This West-obsessed approach distorts the complex history of twentieth-century Arab politics, smacks of apologetics and absolves Arab actors from responsibility and historical agency, in both the past and the future.

Contributors to the volume, who come from a variety of academic disciplines and backgrounds, were asked "to consider the possibilities for an Arab cultural-political formation that moves between regionalism and cosmopolitanism in ways that offer alternative pathways to peace, reconciliation and wellbeing in the Middle East". But not very many were up to the task. Moreover, the book is overly weighted with chapters which focus on Jews and Israel, an additional obsession that hardly speaks well for the proponents of a modern, forward-looking and proud Arab identity. This group of chapters includes Ned Curthoys's "Diasporic Visions: Al-Andalus in the German-Jewish Imaginary", Matthew Jess Atwood's "Democratic Potentials: Bish Arabism in Israel-Palestine" and Paul James's "Displacement: In Cities of the Unrecognized". Even Ali A. Mazrui's "Afrabia: From Divergence to Afro-Arab Convergence", the text of a lecture delivered in Egypt at the Bibliotheca Alexandria,

devoted considerable space to what he called the “Euro-Jewish convergence” over the course of history.

In addition, prominent place is given in the volume to Ella Shohat, whose personal history as a child in Israel of Iraqi Jewish parents who had experienced the trauma of being dislocated, has informed her intellectual orientation in a variety of fields, including a sharp critique of Zionist discourse as articulated through the history of Israeli cinema. Shohat’s contributions to the volume are twofold, an English translation of her introduction to the Hebrew-language version of Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, and a lengthy conversation with her on matters ranging from art history to a post-colonial writing of feminism. Each offers considerable intellectual food for thought, but little concrete material related to the advancement of secular Arab nationalism. By definition, Shohat’s treatment of Fanon is, like so many other contributions in the book, Israeli-centred. Moreover, she introduces Fanon to readers in the new millennium without reference to the shortcomings of his understanding of Algerian realities, which have been powerfully brought to the attention of the English-speaking world by James D. Le Sueur’s edited version of Mouloud Feraoun’s *Journal, 1955–1962: Reflections on the French-Algerian War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), and accompanying framing essay.

Only one section of the book purports to deal with the core questions of Arabism and nationalism. Here too there is a lack of focus, and wide variations in quality. Jamal R. Nassar’s essay, “Arab Nationalism and Islam at the Crossroads”, demonstrates little awareness of the recent scholarship in the field of Arab nationalism, and concludes with categorical statements that are more expressions of hope than grounded in analysis: for example,

A synthesis between secular nationalism and Islamism is likely to emerge over time. . . . The Arab challenge to the West is likely to emerge as the unifying force for Arab states. . . . In sum, the Arabs are at the dawn of a new awakening that is likely to give them a sense of confidence they have lacked for the past few centuries.

Gilbert Achar expresses the utopian hope for “an enlightened drive towards Arab unity”, whose inclusiveness will then evolve towards a “no-state solution”, while also calling for a democratic Palestinian state on both sides of the Jordan River which would replace the Jordanian monarchy. Ralph Coury is almost alone in attempting to engage the scholarly literature on Arab nationalism in order to rescue the idea from those Western academics and policy makers who, he says, “have regarded it as inherently bad and negative in its effects”. He goes after just about everyone who has written on the subject, from Elie Kedourie to Rashid Khalidi, from Bassam Tibi to Hazim Saghiyya, from Edmund Burke III to Larbi Sadiki, from James Gelvin to Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski. One may disagree with the core of his analysis, the overtly political agenda which guides it and the faith that pan-Arab sentiment will again meaningfully reappear on the stage of history, but also wish that the book contained more such treatments.

Hala Abu Taleb waxes poetically regarding the meaning of “Arabness” in our time, calling it

a troubled soul wandering between life and death, too sophisticated to let go, and too explosive to be left alone. . . . Arabness for the majority of Arabs is the pain that is just too hard to erase or even live without. Arabness exists somewhere in our various realities as a constant reminder of our failures, betrayals and abducted reams. It is the sorrow of all our conflicting identities and agitations, our stolen lands, souls and memories. It is personal, painful and defiant. . . . Whether form of national identity or a limited form of nationalism, all agree that it once existed. . . . Today they long for it and dwell on it as a source of national memory and identity in the hope that it will one day return.

How to get there remains the conundrum for the believers in Arab unity, and this volume offers no help in that regard, nor is it likely to persuade non-believers to convert.

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Bollywood and Globalization: Indian Popular Cinema, Nation, and Diaspora

RINI BHATTACHARYA MEHTA & RAJESHWARI V. PANDHARIPANDE (Eds)

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Rini Bhattacharya Mehta and Rajeshwari V. Pandharipande’s edited collection, *Bollywood and Globalization*, examines Hindi films in the context of globalisation, adding to a growing body of work on this topic, for example, *Global Bollywood*, *Untimely Bollywood* and *Global Bollywood: Travels of Hindi Song and Dance*. Like many previous scholars of Hindi cinema, Bhattacharya’s introduction underscores the salient role of economic liberalisation in shaping the Bombay film industry and its narratives. *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (The Brave-Hearted Will Take Away the Bride, 1995), which realigns the feudal family romance and the nation, is (re)invoked by Bhattacharya as a key text, marking the shift from pre- to post-liberalisation Hindi cinema. Other less familiar markers, which Bhattacharya mentions, include festivals hosting Indian films, satellite channels which make Indian films available abroad, involvement of Hollywood as co-producers and the emergence of A.R. Rahman as international star composer. She rightly notes that “simultaneity” is crucial to this new form of Bollywood as well as the (re)imagining of the nation. Her astute observation could be further developed by examining the following questions: How is simultaneity incorporated in and propelled by practices such as transnational, concurrent theatrical releases, piracy, as well as the Internet (e.g. social networking

sites such as Facebook and Twitter, instant access to reviews and pirated films)? How does such simultaneity impact film production and reception?

The contributions, which follow the introduction, advance our understanding of the shifts in post-liberalisation Hindi cinema by drawing our attention to changes in genre and industrial contexts, the (re)production of the new on-screen patriarch, the dominance of Bhangra and the Punjabi body in Hindi films, screen patriotism and violence, the emergence of assertive female desire and queer sexuality as well as the rise of a “new ethics of individualism, enjoyment and freedom” (p. 76). Sangita Gopal’s absorbing essay, “Sentimental Symptoms: The Films of Karan Johar and Bombay Cinema”, contends that Johar’s films invoke well-known features of *masala* film such as sentiment and family in order to establish ties with the history of Bombay cinema and the diaspora. However, even as these films signal these affective attachments, they rethink them. In Johar’s films, the family no longer functions as the coercive arbiter of justice, but rather as a more loving transmitter of values. Most scholarship on ‘family films’ suggests that the family assists in dealing with the onslaught of liberalisation. While Gopal does not deny this function of the family, she perceptively points out that in Johar’s films, the family supports rather than restricts desires; in short, the family, along with the state, is liberalised.

Unlike Gopal’s essay, Meheli Sen’s engaging article, “It’s All About Loving Your Parents’: Liberalization, Hindutva and Bollywood’s New Fathers”, shows the resilience of the older model of the feudal family, where the patriarch is the locus of authority. Through an analysis of *Mohabbatein* (Loves, 2000), *Ek Rishta: The Bond of Love* (2001) and *Baghban* (The Gardner, 2003), Sen demonstrates how Amitabh Bachchan’s stardom is mobilised to renew our affective investment in the figure of the father. Sen’s rich textual analysis could be buttressed by attending to production contexts of these films. Taking a cue from Gopal’s essay which considers the role of the family in the Bombay film industry, one could examine the role of the patriarch in this industry. Here, both *Mohabbatein* (Loves, 2000) and *Baghban* would offer fruitful insights, given that the former is a Yash Raj Production directed by his son, Aditya Chopra and the latter is a B.R. Chopra production (Yash Chopra’s elder brother with whom he parted ways) directed by his son Ravi Chopra.

According to Purna Chowdhury’s “Bollywood Babes: Body and Female Desire in the Bombay Films Since the Nineties and *Darr*, *Mohra* and *Aitraaz*: A Tropic Discourse”, we witness the emergence of a more aggressive and frank depiction of female sexuality in post-liberalisation Hindi films. Chowdhury primarily deploys textual analysis to craft her argument. Her claim could be further developed by placing her textual analysis in dialogue with other contexts, namely, the history of Hindi cinema, female star personas and operations of the film industry in a growing capitalist market. For example, in the case of *Darr/Fear* (1993), one could compare Chawla’s sexual performance for her on-screen husband with a similar show put on Vyjayanthimala in *Sangam* (Confluence, 1964). One could examine whether Juhi Chawla’s star persona as middle-class girl next-door, challenges or facilitates her expression of sexual desire.

Dinah Holzman, “Between *Yaars*: The Queering of Dosti in Contemporary Bollywood Films”, argues that while queer relationships continue to be a “casualty of heteronormativity” in *Kal Ho Na Ho* (Tomorrow May Not Come, 2003) and *Masti* (Mischief, 2004), they are acknowledged. In contrast, in earlier films such as *Sholay* (Flames, 1975) such relations and desires were simply repressed. More specifically, she suggests that the presence of gay jokes in post-2000 Hindi cinema points to a familiarity with the existence of homosexuality. Holzman’s argument provokes critical questions: If queer sexuality is now visible, on what terms is it allowed this new visibility? How has economic-liberalisation (i.e. the opening up of economic borders) facilitated and framed this new cultural and political openness?

Turning our attention to the prominent use of Bhangra and the Punjabi characters in Hindi films since the mid-1990s, Anjail Gera Roy’s “Is Everybody Saying ‘Shava Shava’ to Bollywood Bhangra”, shows how this strategic deployment enables on and off-screen channelling of desire and pleasure. She astutely lists Bhangra’s multiple functions in Hindi films: staging family unity, visualising romance, enabling older characters to express their sexuality, and providing suitable thumping rhythms for a spectacular item number. It is this mobility that allows Bhangra to move easily from sites of traditional weddings to modern clubs.

If the articles by Chowdhury, Holzman and Gera embrace new on and off-screen desires and pleasures generated by Hindi films, Gautam Basu Thakur’s “Globalization and the Cultural Imaginary: Constructions of Subjectivity, Freedom & Enjoyment in Popular Indian Cinema” seeks to problematise them. Examining, *Guru* (2007), *Dor* (The Bond, 2006) and *Yun Hota To Kya Hota* (What If, 2006) via a Lacanian lens, Thakur claims that these films support the project of economic liberalisation by encouraging individual enjoyment and freedom. While Thakur’s argument is certainly provocative, one might complicate this argument by situating these films in the other contexts. For example, one could consider how *Dor* mobilises the conventions of the western and re-envisions *dosti*/friendship. How might these new contexts support or challenge the insights derived from a Lacanian analysis? Given that *Dor* is a remake of an award-winning Malayalam film, *Perumazhakkalam* (Monsoon Season, 2004), a comparative study might advance our understanding of questions of ethics, enjoyment and freedom.

Manisha Basu’s deft contribution “*Rang De Basanti*: The Solvent Brown and Other Imperial Colors” argues that in placing the worlds of the MTV savvy generation and anti-colonial revolutionaries on the same plane *Rang De Basanti* (Paint it Saffron, 2006) collapses the complexities of colonial and postcolonial histories. While Basu skilfully charts how *Rang De Basanti* employs documentary film style, Aamir Khan’s stardom and All-India-Radio to transform would-be-yuppies into revolutionaries, it is left unclear in what precise ways this transformation does violence to post/colonial histories.

Finally, in “Imagined Subjects: Law, Gender and Citizenship in Indian Cinema”, Nandini Bhattacharya skilfully explores how Hindi cinema represents and engages with the history of violence. More specifically, she considers the impact of such

representations on the construction of female citizenship. For example, she shows how films such as *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* (Mutiny: A Love Story, 2001) and *Veer Zaara* (2004) appear to interrogate state accounts of Partition which aligned Hindu women with India and Muslim women with Pakistan by re-storing the Muslim women to their Hindu and Sikh lovers in India. This restoration, however, holds Pakistan culpable for the division of India and suggests that since these women are happily returning to India, Pakistan should follow suit. While Bhattacharya's argument is compelling, one might think about how Shah Rukh Khan's stardom in *Veer Zaara* supports and/or challenges this reading. Also, given that *Gadar* was inspired by the Punjabi film *Shaheed-e-Mohabbat* (Martyr of Love, 1999) where the hero is unable to reunite with his wife and subsequently commits suicide, a comparative analysis might yield fresh insights into the construction of male and female citizenships.

As a whole, *Bollywood and Globalization* increases our understanding of post-liberalisation Hindi film. My interventions suggested above call for methodological expansion and comparative analysis. By locating these films in varied contexts (e.g. history of Indian cinema, film production and film theory) and studying them in concert with films from other film industries in India, we would gain a broader understanding of Indian cinema in the context of globalisation.

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