



Contemporary diasporic South Asian women's fiction: Gender, narration and globalization

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although this in-between space is evident in their work, McIntosh suggests that none of these authors “recognized the similarity of their portrayals of ambitious, mobile outsiders in relation to their people” (104). Chapters 4 and 5 consider francophone writers, all from Martinique, concentrating first on the background to their literary careers to reveal discrepancies in their positioning as writers, then on an analysis of specific writings. Here, in an impressive section about Glissant, McIntosh provocatively argues that assertions in his *Caribbean Discourse* are counter to his privileged intellectual status as a francophone emigrant, distanced from those observed.

Using concepts such as “junctional position”, “dual alignment” and “insider/outsider”, McIntosh interrogates the cultural gap between the authors’ own class positions and those of whom they write (refreshingly avoiding reference to Homi Bhabha’s familiar theory of hybridity). *Emigration and Caribbean Literature* is a fascinating read and a compelling contribution to Caribbean discourse.

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Contemporary diasporic South Asian women’s fiction: Gender, narration and globalization, by Ruvani Ranasinha, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 286 pp., £58.00 (hardback), ISBN 978 1 1374 0305 6

Ruvani Ranasinha’s new book provides an important re-evaluation of South Asian women writers, combining readings of canonical authors such as Arundhati Roy, Monica Ali and Kamila Shamsie with lesser-known figures such as Sorayya Khan and Tahmima Anam. Its close readings build cumulatively into an overarching argument for careful re-engagement with the topics of migration and diaspora, while demonstrating a considered attention to the material forces of globalization and the formal innovations of diasporic women’s writing. In so doing, this book will undoubtedly prove to be a cornerstone critical text for the future development of postcolonial studies.

Ranasinha helpfully situates her selected writers in the *longue durée* of South Asian migration to the UK. Contemporary discourses around migration – which have become increasingly virile and xenophobic in recent years, and into which her chosen writers intervene – are thereby understood as part of a longer history of anti-migrant sentiment, laws and other regulatory practices in Britain and the US. Indeed, Ranasinha’s study is rigorously historicized and attuned to geopolitical dynamics as they surface in, and shape the consumption of, South Asian cultural production: she links growing interests in anglophone fiction from Pakistan to an increased NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) presence and continuing US intervention in that country, and in Sri Lankan fiction to the violent conclusion of the decades-long civil war in 2009.

This historical nuancing is accompanied by a similarly impressive geographical disaggregation, which compares South Asian migration to the UK with similar movements to the US, Canada and other parts of Europe. Ranasinha also looks to regions of the UK outside London, most notably in northern industrial cities, where significant segments of the South Asian diaspora have settled. Meanwhile, she is similarly keen to kick against the tendency in postcolonial

criticism to focus on anglophone Indian fiction, emphasizing instead the importance of accounting for the “authors’ distinct subcontinental backgrounds of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka” (8). Throughout the book, Ranasinha focuses on both the transnational and the local as they are woven together throughout contemporary diasporic South Asian women’s fiction. Her point is to show how this body of literary writing, and what she calls the “geographic multilocality” of its authors (11), challenges national geographies and nationalist ideologies, a project especially pertinent in our age of increasingly militarized and solidifying national borders.

Perhaps most productive, however, is Ranasinha’s core question of whether the literary writing of the mostly privileged – especially in terms of education and class – women writers she discusses is able to speak to wider experiences of migration. Ranasinha is refreshingly ready to concede the possibly narrow migrant experience of these authors, before she convincingly explores how they and their literary writing are still able to transcend those narrow parameters through “their collective critiques of first-world models of feminism and emphasis on different varieties of feminism” (7). A cautious critical agility is required to move intersectionally between these layered stratifying lines of class and gender (refracted all the while, of course, through race), but Ranasinha navigates these with an admirable deftness. In so doing, she points to previous oversights and biases in postcolonial studies that the field must redress if it is to retain a politically relevant engagement with the increasingly complex and multi-local forms of inequality produced by globalization.

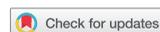
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Modernism in a global context, by Peter Kalliney, London, Bloomsbury, 2016, 190 pp., £21.99 (paperback), ISBN 978 1 4725 6965 3

D.H. Lawrence’s Australia: Anxiety at the edge of empire, by David Game, Farnham and Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2015, 348 pp., £85.00 (hardback), ISBN 978 1 4724 1505 9

The American Lawrence, by Lee M. Jenkins, Gainesville, FL, University Press of Florida, 2015, 160 pp., \$74.95 (hardback), ISBN 978 0 8130 6050 7

“Comes over one an absolute necessity to move”, D.H. Lawrence stated at the beginning of his 1921 travel book, *Sea and Sardinia* (1997, 7), in an imperative that resonates with a wider state of diaspora among writers following the First World War. Peter Kalliney’s book begins with a similar emphasis on “an aesthetics of motion”, which for him originates in “the very earliest stirrings of the [modernist] movement, long before it would ever be called modernism” (1). Kalliney cites Baudelaire’s poem “Le Voyage” (1861) as a paradigm whereby “Through the unknown, we’ll find the new” (qtd. 2), before he rapidly moves on, as if to demonstrate his thesis of “modernism’s restlessness” (23), to “an overview of five major theorists of global or transnational literature: Pascale Casanova, [David] Damrosch, Paul Gilroy, Franco Moretti, and Gayatri Spivak” (5).