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Book Reviews

Aleksandar Stević and Philip Tsang, editors. *The Limits of Cosmopolitanism: Globalization and Its Discontents in Contemporary Literature*. Routledge, 2019. Pp. 198. £115.00.

Aleksandar Stević and Philip Tsang's edited book *The Limits of Cosmopolitanism: Globalization and Its Discontents in Contemporary Literature* is a recent installment in the Routledge Studies in Comparative Literature series. Introduced by Stević and Tsang, the volume includes ten essays that substantially engage with and reflect on the limits of cosmopolitanism, exploring various contemporary literary texts from diverse locations. This book offers a necessary analysis of cosmopolitanism, interrogating the obstacles it faces amid resurgent nationalist and regionalist sentiments in the contemporary epoch of globalization.

The essays are divided into three sections. Four essays examine the hegemony of cosmopolitanism—"when its outlook is actively imposed on others" (13)—and explore cosmopolitanism's key frames and tropes from theoretical and practical contexts; three essays consider subjects of displacement, particularly issues of exile and immigration, which create anxiety, dualism, and tension regarding identity, nostalgia for home, (be)longing, and cultural conformity; and three essays focus on circulated objects in commercial and mobilized global networks. The essays critique the ideology of cosmopolitanism as a predominant norm and scrutinize issues such as transnational identities, (im)migration, and global circulation. The contributors draw from a wide range of literary texts and key theoretical concepts from leading theorists such as Arjun Appadurai, Étienne Balibar, Homi K. Bhabha, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Edward Said, Timothy Brennan, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Martha Craven Nussbaum, Stuart Hall, David Harvey, and Rebecca L. Walkowitz. They find that cosmopolitanism entails a paradox: as Stević and Tsang argue, "[c]osmopolitanism seeks to transcend certain limits—the limits of narrower communities in the name of an encounter with the world as a whole. At the same time, that encounter is always conditioned on and even defined by geographical, historical, and cultural limits" (1). The collection's contributors substantiate this claim by uncovering these limits in their essays. This timely book will be key material for researchers who study comparative literature, contemporary literature, cultural theory, and postcolonial studies.

The essays in this book are well-structured, scholarly, and thoroughly researched, and some are quite impressive and thought-provoking. Mukti Lakhi

Mangharam's essay, for example, expertly describes the importance of cosmopolitanism. Exploring Salman Ahmad's book, *Rock & Roll Jihad: A Muslim Rock Star's Revolution*, she finds that "Ahmad's embodied Sufism is built on a carefully cultivated process of self-transformation aimed at uniting with the divinity within the self so that it may connect with the divinity within others" (41). Ahmad's construction of (Sufi) cosmopolitanism is not only personal but also political: he offers an alternative to nation-state-centered cosmopolitanism and criticizes Indian and Pakistani nationalisms. Moreover, Ahmad's comparative approach to cosmopolitanism gestures beyond the South Asian nationalistic trajectory, "foster[ing] genuine cross-cultural respect and understanding" (34). In a similar vein, Suha Kudsieh's essay examines two Sudanese novels, exploring cosmopolitanism's inclusive values in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and "hyperconsumerism and the superfluous cosmopolitanism that resonates with globalization and open-market economies" (71) in Leila Aboulela's *Lyrics Alley*. Kudsieh argues that cosmopolitanism's specific forms clash in both novels, though in different ways: Aboulela focuses on the roles of "globalization and consumerism" and Salih highlights "the nexus between education and nationalism" (77). Kudsieh's argument is twofold as she finds "a simple binary" (between Manichean terms in *Season of Migration* and between two metropolitan centers in *Lyrics Alley*) originating from a "complex tripartite configuration" (formed by the cities of Khartoum, Cairo, and London) and asserts that "the uniqueness of the Sudan's history raises interesting questions about the nature of Sudanese worldview" in both novels (71). Ana Cristina Mendes' essay, one of the book's best, deals with topography, postcolonial social realism, and economic, cultural, and transnational neoliberalism. Exploring Sunjeev Sahota's fiction, she offers a radical critique of cosmopolitanism by describing inconsistent cosmopolitan experiences, transnational links, cultural and political status, and religious intolerance in the wake of the post-secular-religious turn. The failures of neoliberalism, the events of the Arab Spring, and the rise of fundamentalism, she argues, all create a space to "rethink community and identity, diaspora, and belonging" (65). Moreover, right-wing extremisms are on the rise, which Mendes ties to failed experiments in cosmopolitan conviviality.

Some essays in this book that deserve mention are detailed and complex. Tsang's essay links Michael Ondaatje's cosmopolitan aesthetics to his use of the English language. Examining Ondaatje's fiction, including *The English Patient* and *Anil's Ghost*, Tsang positions "disidentification as the *desire* . . . not only to transcend national boundaries but also to reject all identities" (106–07; emphasis in original) and establishes "Ondaatje's cosmopolitan aesthetics in a longer historical lineage" (106). Ondaatje's emphasis on disidentification

and use of historical figures justify his strong sense of cosmopolitanism, and his use of English "reveals a curious logic . . . : to be English, or to identify as English, is to have no identity" (109). Jungha Kim explores Karen Tei Yamashita's first novel, *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*, to analyze the issue of material eco-cosmopolitanism. She finds that "Yamashita extends the scope of cosmopolitanism beyond its humancentric genealogy to reach toward the landscape of clamorous agencies and their affiliations to come" (161). Her study finds in Yamashita's novel that the transformation of human waste into an animated plastic field, "the Matacão," gives the substance magically magnetic power "that entices the characters and brings them together" (161). Paul Tenngart, in the book's last essay, looks at climate fiction to explore cosmopolitanism in the wake of global warming. He argues that cosmopolitan lifestyles are greatly changed due to global warming in post-apocalyptic narratives. His study not only finds several types of cosmopolitanism in the novels but also gives a picture of various outlooks on cosmopolitanism in the climate crisis.

Overall, this collection is informative and important. A comprehensive conclusion for the book by the editors, along with a few more essays from Oceania and the Middle East, would be fantastic. Moreover, those newer to the field might find the book too complex and difficult. These are, however, minor flaws in a pivotal work that paves the way for further debates and discussions about the various forms of cosmopolitanism in contemporary (world) literature.

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