

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON CULTURAL MEMORIES AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY. D'HAEN, THEO and PATRICIA KRÜS, eds. *Colonizer and Colonized*. Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2000. 643 pp.

This lengthy work is the result of a selection of proceedings for the xvth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA), a great event which congregated 600 specialists from 52 countries in Leiden between the 16th and 22nd of August, 1997. The congress was divided in eight sections, according to the different aspects of the overall question, "Literature as Cultural Memory." *Colonizer and Colonized* is the product of the discussion aroused from the analysis of the manifold relations between this main question and the historical, social, cultural and artistic processes embedded in the process of colonization.

Interestingly, the book is divided in four parts, each of them focusing on a specific geopolitical axis. Thus, the first section deals with Asian memories, the second is devoted to American memories, the third centres on African memories, and the fourth discusses European memories, comprising forty-eight essays and a breathtaking scope of analysis. The perspective of the book is to a great extent interdisciplinary, and studies in history, sociology and literature often fuse to produce cohesive studies of both general concepts and conceptions, ideas or literary themes -like, for instance, in Tabish Khair's illuminating essay "Caste on Indian English fiction," or Nasr Abu-Zayd's "The Image of Europe in Modern Egyptian Narrative" - and more specific insights into individual authors, like Frederike Olivier's "Decolonizing the Patriarch —A Reading of Mark Behr's *The Smell Of Apples*, or James McCorkle's "Cannibalizing Texts: Space, Memory and the Colonial in J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*." The collection includes essays in English and French.

The brevity of the essays, the straightforward and clear organization of its sections and the novelty of many of the topics treated make of this book a stupendous reader in the field of postcolonial studies. The relation between colonizing and colonized nations are analysed so much through different historical periods, as through different, sometimes distant geographical (dis)locations, constructing a valid overview of the colonial phenomenon on a (trans)cultural

basis. Thus the very opening essay, by Dolores Romero López, offers a comparative analysis of three modernist representations of Japan in the travel literature of Rudyard Kipling, Pierre Loti and Enriquez Gómez Carrillo, producing a multiple intersection of four different cultural backgrounds. Likewise, Amaryll Chanady's essay "Cultural Memory and the New World Imaginary", though centering on the specific case of America, sheds so much light on the discussion of so central ideas in postcolonial criticism like patriotism, nationalism, and the invention of tradition, that many of her conclusions can be contrasted to the study of other cultural memories.

The (in)definition of identity and the (a)territoriality in which such identity may find a root becomes a central concern of the book. Consequently, the section dealing with European memories proves central to a reconfiguration of our ideas of the colonial and the postcolonial: such is Roumiana Deltcheva's concern in "East Central Europe as Post-Coloniality: The Prose of Victor Paskov." Leaning for long in the borders of indeterminacy itself, East Central Europe's position between practical and cultural independence and political and economic subjugation under Soviet domination rises the question whether the nations which were part of the formerly called "Eastern block" should be regarded as post-colonial areas as well. It is refreshing and compelling to find research done in this for-long largely neglected dilemma, and Deltcheva's analysis of Paskov's works are enlightened and revealing in this respect. On the other hand, the revision of German colonial history and literature finds an interesting discussion in Thomas Schwarz's "Colonialism and Exoticism: A Special Evolution of German Literature?", in a vein that shifts the emphasis from the Anglo-Saxon apparent "monopoly" of postcolonial thought to histories —indeed, to memories— to which the investigator in English does not usually have so much access. The discussion of authors like Rushdie, Walcott, Racine, Belli or Greene and the top quality of the materials presented ensure the researcher a great read and the scientific community a great advance in postcolonial studies.

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