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Raphael Dalleo, ed., *Bourdieu and Postcolonial Studies*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016. vi + 221 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. £75.00 UK (hb); \$120.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978-1-7813-8296-7.

Review by John Strachan, Lancaster University, UK.

Of all the “-isms,” postcolonialism is surely one of the most frequently belittled. Even among scholars not entirely resistant to the insidious influence of French thought, accusations of irrelevance, impenetrability, self-indulgence (or worse) are *de rigueur*. This culture of derision seemed to crystallize at the moment when, in 1998, Homi K. Bhabha’s masterpiece of lucidity, *The Location of Culture*, featured in the pages of *Philosophy and Literature*’s “Bad Writing Contest.”[1] In the twenty-first century things have, arguably, gotten worse. First, the renewed imperialism of U.S.-led interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan posed severe and existential questions about the relevance of postcolonial analysis. Second, as Raphael Dalleo observes in his introduction to *Bourdieu and Postcolonial Studies*, the arrival of Third World intellectuals in the Western academy has given rise to anxieties about the institutionalization and academic respectability of a field that has always defined itself as being outside, activist, and oppositional (pp. 1-3). At a time of seemingly infinite variety in the form, ambition, and directions of travel of postcolonial studies, observers might be forgiven for looking back with fondness to the poststructuralist good old days of Said, Spivak, and Bhabha.[2]

The present volume, while refreshingly open and honest about this state of affairs, wastes no time on disciplinary navel-gazing. Implicitly, Dalleo considers the fortunes and “troubled terrain” (p. 13) of postcolonial studies a microcosm of the ways in which poststructuralist and Marxist approaches have undergone a deconsecration in Western academia since the turn of the century. He offers a brief yet comprehensive and compelling survey of the recent history of the field, highlighting both the enduring influence of poststructuralist approaches and the diversification of the field since the mid-1990s. A central element in this latter development has been a materialist turn grounded in “the emergence of sociological approaches to postcolonialism...that offer an opportunity to redefine postcolonialism’s potential for intervention and critique” (p. 1). Moving beyond both the “high theory abstractions” of an earlier generation and the notion that postcolonialism has somehow become institutionalized and collaborative with capitalism and neoliberalism, Dalleo stresses the potential for Bourdieu-inspired analyses to reposition the debate around book history, the archive, and an understanding of postcolonial writers (and critics) in terms of their relationship to—and agency within—a given field (pp. 3-4).

Postcolonial habitus/field is not a new idea, nor does it necessarily exclude the poststructural. The first three substantive chapters of *Bourdieu and Postcolonial Studies* are re-workings of previously-published material by Graham Huggan (the “newly consecrated” field-leader (pp. 5-6)), Chris Bongie, and Sarah Brouillette.[3] Bourdieu’s theorization of the matrix of cultural capital, institution, and agency resonates throughout. Huggan’s chapter emphasizes cultural production “as a field never fully controlled by capitalist institutions” (pp. 6-7). It explores the complex processes of legitimization that are central to Bourdieu’s understanding and the tensions between postcolonialism’s attempts to valorize

the local while at the same time acknowledging the global processes and rhythms in which cultural production occurs (pp. 24-25). His postcolonial exotic is, therefore, dialectical, contingent, and strategically oppositional, occupying a “site of discursive conflict between a local assemblage of more or less related oppositional practices and a global apparatus of institutional/commercial codes” (p. 44).

Chris Bongie—characterised by Dalleo as something of a bridge between the older poststructuralist method and the present materialist turn (p. 7)—explores tensions between the “exotic” and “popular” appeal of postcolonial literature. He observes the lack of *rapprochement* between cultural studies and postcolonial studies and argues for the renewed importance of literary approaches in mediating this separation. Brouillette’s work serves to frame the final five chapters in her focus on the “processes of corporatization and globalization at the heart of the mainstream publishing industry” (p. 80). Striking a note that echoes in many of the later contributions, she argues that the self-consciousness of many postcolonial writers can be attributed to concerns that “making one’s persona available for consumer access within a global industry” equates to selling-out (p. 99).

Something of a departure from the above, Roxanne Curto’s essay sets Bourdieu’s work in the Algerian context from which it emerged and seeks to locate him on the spectrum of intellectual debate over Algerian independence—critical of the “extremism” of Sartre yet equally dismissive of the optimistic reformism of Camus and Germaine Tillion (p. 109). She explores the similarities, differences, and potential for constructive dialogue between the materialist approaches collected in this volume and an earlier, foundational strain of postcolonial thought represented here by the work of Bourdieu’s Algerian contemporary, Frantz Fanon. The colonial crucible represented a unique disruption in the relationship of habitus to field, characterized by Bourdieu as hysteresis and by Fanon as the “white mask” through which the French language, educational system, and other administrative practices were experienced and accommodated (pp. 103-104). Where Bourdieu and Fanon come closest is in their understanding of the ways in which war revolutionized Algerian society, Bourdieu looking to the revolutionary potential of the urban proletariat, Fanon to the vanguardism of the *fellahin*. If Bourdieu can be described as insufficiently attentive to the role of race and psychology, Curto suggests, his model nonetheless allows for a more rigorous approach to the complexities and contradictions overlooked by Fanon in his effort to equate the slave trade with the plight of the Algerian peasant (pp. 105-107). Taken together, and in dialogue, Curto argues, the work of Bourdieu and Fanon offers a richer understanding of the relationship between race and class and a means by which “to approach issues of alienation and assimilation, tradition/modernity and violent and symbolic domination” (p. 117).

The final five chapters present new material and take the form of case studies in the publication history of various postcolonial writers and producers and the dynamics of authorial and editorial intent and agency. Together, they focus on “institutions of publication, dissemination and consecration” and the array of “forces shaping postcolonial literature” (p. 13). Michael Niblett makes the case for “style as habitus” in adapting and applying Bourdieu to the BBC’s *Caribbean Voices* program and to the work of its long-time editor of the 1940s and 1950s, Henry Swanzy. In his role as gate-keeper and promoter of “local colour”, Niblett argues, Swanzy can be seen to have originated what would develop into a “transformative vision of the world” rooted in and, at times, dependent upon contemporary political and social concerns and yet irreducible to them (p. 134).

Caroline Davis asks whether the South African writer Oswald Mtshali was subject to the gamesmanship of his editors and questions the applicability of Bourdieu to a context in which race, not class, appears to be the primary determinant of habitus. Ultimately, “asymmetrical author-publisher relationships” (p. 155) hold sway, as they do in Stefan Helgesson’s study of national literature in South Africa and Brazil. In these contexts, Helgesson argues, “the English language provides a qualified magic key to international circulation” (p. 173). Nonetheless, Helgesson, like Niblett, concludes with a reasoned and persuasive message of hope and authorial autonomy.

Kris Singh introduces Austin Clarke's "The Man"—a story of a Barbadian immigrant to Toronto—and Clarke's correspondence within another Caribbean author, Samuel Selvon. Seen through the lens of Bourdieu, Clarke and Selvon's experiences as authors simultaneously connected to and isolated from a given field allows for a better understanding of subtlety, complexity, and the range of possibility and difference among writers of the Caribbean diaspora. Finally, Nicole Simek offers a Bourdieusian reading of Patrick Chamoiseau's *Un dimanche au cachot*, focusing on the concept of anamnesis as a means of recovering forgotten histories and remembering what is now taken for granted. Here, Chamoiseau's use of irony, tongue-in-cheek, and meta-fiction can be seen as (more or less successful) attempts at recovering autonomy by challenging familiar and reductive postcolonial labelings of his work.

Bourdieu and Postcolonial Studies is a credit to Liverpool University Press and to their increasingly world-leading series *Postcolonialism Across the Disciplines* and *Francophone Postcolonial Studies*. Its chapters represent a successful and illuminating synthesis of new and previously published material, theoretical engagement, and rigorous sociological analysis. At the same time, it invites readers to rethink their understanding of literary centers and margins and the flow of power between them. The volume's authors are clearly aware of—and sensitive to—the travails, crises, and fragility of the field and, together, they make a persuasive and reassuring defense of the possibilities for resistance, opposition, and renewal in postcolonial literature and postcolonial studies. The most obvious potential criticisms—the lack of specificity of Bourdieusian theory when applied beyond the limits of the Hexagon (and Algeria), and the ability of any such theory to adapt and expand so as to apply to local specificities and global generalities—all seem to have been anticipated and addressed.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Raphael Dalleo, "Introduction"

Graham Huggan, "Writing at the Margins: Postcolonialism, Exoticism and the Politics of Cultural Value (from *The Postcolonial Exotic*)"

Chris Bongie, "Exiles on Main Stream: Valuing the Popularity of Postcolonial Literature (from *Friends and Enemies*)"

Sarah Brouillette, "Postcolonial Authorship Revisited (from *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace*)"

Roxanna Curto, "Bourdieu and Fanon on Algeria"

Michael Niblett, "Style as Habitus: World-Literature, Decolonization and *Caribbean Voices*"

Caroline Davis, "Playing the Game? The Publication of Oswald Mtshali"

Stefan Helgesson, "Fields in Formation: English Studies and National Literature in South Africa (with a Brazilian comparison)"

Kris Singh, "Archived Relationships: Pierre Bourdieu and Writers of the Caribbean Diaspora"

Nicole Simek, "Irony in the Dungeon: Anamnesis and Emancipation"

NOTES

[1] Dinitia Smith, "When Ideas Get Lost in Bad Writing: Attacks on Scholars Include a Barbed Contest With 'Prizes,'" *New York Times*, Feb. 27, 1999.

[2] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1988); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1993) are the defining works in the field.

[3] Graham Huggan, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London: Routledge, 2001); Chris Bongie, *Friends and Enemies: The Scribal Politics of Post/Colonial Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008); Sarah Brouillette, *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace* (New York: Palgrave, 2007).

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