embedded within the idea of colonialism as the colonizers traveled to far-off lands to spread "civilisation"(as we see in *Robinson Crusoe*), whereas in the last chapter he also studies how utopianism was the driving factor behind the establishment of the settler colonies too, namely, Australia and New Zealand. Hence the book presents a comprehensive study of a large number of postcolonial situations marked by the wishful thinking of utopianism.

In 2012, Ashcroft published the basic theoretical ideas of this new field of study ("postcolonial utopianism") as the "Introduction" to *Spaces of Utopia: An Electronic Journal*. There Ashcroft had posited that postcolonial literary writing has always been characterized by an irrepressible hope. Another basic proposition Ashcroft had posited there was the role played by art and literature in imagining a better future. The book-develops as well as elaborates on these basic ideas, which Ashcroft had written about earlier. In separate chapters, Ashcroft analyzes Asian, African, and Caribbean nations and their respective literatures to drive home the basic point that the postcolonial literatures of these nations are utopian as they debunk the bitter truth that, even after independence from the white colonizers, the better world has not been achieved.

*Utopianism in Postcolonial Literatures* is remarkable for its inclusion of a wide range of literary and visual art forms, namely, by Ayi Kwei Armah, Ben Okri, Arundhati Roy, Epeli Hau'ofa, Lionel Fogarty, Naji El-Ali, and so on. The discussion of the various art forms, which includes "Handala" and *Nation Estate*—the former a cartoon and the latter a photo project by Palestinian artists—culminate at the same point, that is, "hope."

Apart from the clear-cut discussion of utopianism in postcolonial literatures, Ashcroft also elaborates on the concept of utopia (and other terms related to it) in much detail. In Chapter 3, he distinguishes between two types of utopias—(i) the "product utopia" and (ii) the "process utopia." Althoughthe former refers to a regulated commonwealth utopia such as that found in Thomas More's *Utopia*, the latter refers to that utopia thatresults from the "anticipatory consciousness" of the desire for a better world. The first one is a utopia of form, whereas the second is a utopia of function. Here he also cites three types of contradictions thatcharacterize utopias and demarcate the very thin line between utopia and dystopia. Overall, *Utopianism in Postcolonial Literatures* is a must read for young scholars, and the fifteen-page long bibliography will also help one explore the critical field further.

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*India, Empire, and First World War Culture: Writings, Images, and Songs*
SANTANU DAS
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Based on ten years of research, Santanu Das's book *India, Empire, and First World War Culture: Writings, Images, and Songs* is an important study of cultural production

by and about people from the Indian subcontinent involved in World War I. These include Indian combatants and noncombatants serving in the armed forces, as well as Indian civilians affected by the 1914–1918 conflict. As "subjects" of the British Empire, approximately 1.5 million Indians were recruited to serve in the war effort. (Das is careful to explain that because India was undivided at that time, he uses *Indian* rather than *South Asian* as the historically appropriate term for inhabitants of what is now India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.)

As part of the centenary "commemorations" of World War I, there have been long-overdue efforts in Europe and elsewhere to fully recognize the participation of non-Europeans, whose activities and experiences in the war have also been a significant focus for recent historical scholarship. Within this context, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture* is a unique and ground-breaking study, not least because it is the first literary and cultural history of Indian experiences of World War I. In its exploration of cultural production, the book is remarkably inclusive, drawing not only on written literature (including poetry, drama, prose fiction, essays, letters, diaries, and memoirs), but also on visual images (photography, drawings, and paintings), as well as songs and archival material on oral performances. Indeed, one of the many great strengths of the book is the stunning range of voices and perspectives it investigates, including those of well-known authors (such as Gandhi, Kipling, Iqbal, Naidu, Nazrul, Tagore, and Anand), along with those of illiterate (but as Das emphasizes, *not* nonliterary) soldiers and laborers drawn into the war. Careful consideration is given to the experiences and representations of men and women, soldiers (or "sepoys") and officers, artists and intellectuals, medical and adjunct staff, laborers and servants, as well as people of all major regions, social classes, religious affiliations, and castes in India. Given the sheer variety of source material, one of the pitfalls of a book like this might have been a tendency toward fragmentation. Therefore, it is much to Das's credit that he has skillfully woven the diverse material into a coherent overarching structure that provides sufficient context and continuity, along with due attention to differences and details.

Running to more than 400 pages, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture* is divided into ten chapters within four parts. Part I, "The Restless Home Front," investigates the variety of motivations for Indians joining the war effort—ranging from poverty and desperation to coercive recruitment tactics to "aspiration and anxiety." Challenging reductive narratives about "loyal" and "rebellious" Indians, Das's examination of an impressive array of archival material illustrates the complex motives and ambivalent attitudes of many Indian recruits. Part II, "Race and Representation," astutely analyses representations of the Indian sepoy in Western visual culture and British war writing. In Part III, "The Sepoy Heart," the sepoys speak for themselves through letters, poems, prayers, and songs in Europe, Mesopotamia, and India. This material, which is likely to be less familiar to scholars and general readers, is particularly well chosen and perceptively analyzed. The chapters in the last section, Part IV, focus on "Literary and Intellectual Cultures," discussing the fictional and nonfictional works of prominent Indian writers and thinkers in relation to the war, including Tagore, Naidu, Guleri, Nazrul, Nand Singh, Anand, Aurobindo, and Iqbal. Throughout the book, Das makes discerning connections with the work of well-known Western writers such as Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, and Erich Maria Remarque, combining his distinguished scholarly background in European World War I literature with his dazzling knowledge of South Asian literature, history, and culture.

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As a literary scholar, I initially approached the book most interested in the writings of some of my favorite Indian authors, such as Mulk Raj Anand. However, I also found myself fascinated with the visual material, not least because of Das's sensitive interpretations. At every stage, Das's critical analysis is underpinned by an interest in the relationship between war and empire. Placing his material into a larger historical context, he critically investigates the links between (Indian) attitudes toward the war, the intense experiences it generated in India and abroad, critiques of imperialism, and the development of nationalist movements in India. Because of the variety and significance of the original source material it draws on, its illuminating textual analyses, its insightful contextualization, and its lucid style, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture* is an important and ground-breaking book that is also a great pleasure to read.

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