


extrapolated to the national traumas of many postcolonial African nation-states or, in fact, the continental trauma of the African state.

*African Migration Narratives* comprises 15 chapters divided into four parts that are thusly named: Part One: “African Migration on the Screen: Films of Migration”; Part Two: “Forgotten Diasporas: Lusophone and Indian Diasporas”; Part Three: “Migration Against the Grain: Narratives of Return”; and Part Four: “Migration and Difference: Indigeneity, Race, Religion, and Poetry at the Margins.” All these parts (and their constituting chapters) work together coherently to, as the editors point out, “braid together different language groups and geographical regions by being attentive to Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone areas” as well as to “encapsulate a range of media—novels, memoirs, film, and other forms of visual cultural productions.”

In all, *African Migration Narratives* is an extremely important addition to our contemporary contemplations of migration in Africa and around the world. The book’s huge focus on historical materialism and the intricate workings of global geopolitics, without doubt, helps the African reader to begin to see where “the rain began to beat us,” as Achebe would say.

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*Politicising World Literature: Egypt, Between Pedagogy and the Public*

By MAY HAWAS  
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In *Politicising World Literature: Egypt, Between Pedagogy and the Public*, Dr. May Hawas attempts to position Egypt’s modern literary history outside the postcolonial paradigm by providing us a close reading of literary and historical texts in multiple languages. Whereas postcolonial theory suggests new borders for the canon of world literature by using the comparative method to question the political and historical realities of the world, world literature provides scholars with alternative literary frameworks in which they can address issues in national literatures that are unrelated to colonialism.

Chapter One, “Love in the Time of World Crises,” addresses Waguih Ghali’s *Beer in the Snooker Club* (Egypt, 1964) and Milan Kundera’s *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (Czechoslovakia, 1984). Here Hawas argues that Kundera and Ghali’s works contest the mainstream concept of the nation by dramatizing the rift between the nation and individual characters whose interests transcend their national affiliations and whose perception of the nation and its location in the world is based on its relation to other nations.

In Chapter Two, “Moving Like Rivers Through Us,” Hawas illustrates how Tsitsi Dangarembga and Leila Ahmed explore the complex dynamics of race and gender in women’s struggle in Zimbabwe (*Nervous Conditions*, 1988) and Egypt (*A Border*

*Passage: From Cairo to America*, 1999). For both authors, the nation is a “biological” artifact crafted from the formative experience, spaces, and lives of the women protagonists. Hawas argues that both novels embrace new dynamics to interact with the postcolonial legacy from a feminist perspective that puts women’s experiences at the heart of the postcolonial question.

In Chapter 3, “The Case of the Strange Familiarity between Andrea Camilleri and Tawfik al-Hakim,” Hawas portrays the aesthetic dimension of the novel by bringing Tawfik al-Hakim’s *The People of the Cave* (1973), a play, and *Diary of a Country Persecutor*, a detective novel, into a comparative dialogue with Andrea Camilleri’s *The Terra-Cotta Dog* (1996). In the Arabic tradition of Iqtibas (literally, lighting one’s fire from another’s; therefore, any literary borrowing, adaptation, or quotation) Camilleri’s novel draws on Al-Hakim’s. In these texts, al-Hakim and Camilleri’s protagonists’ mount a sociopolitical critique of law enforcement and the judiciary that is regional in scope rather than national.

Chapter 4, “Circumnavigating the Canon,” tackles Amitav Gosh’s *In An Antique Land: History in the Guise of a Traveler’s Tale* (India, 1992). Here Hawas demonstrates how Gosh revisits historical texts to recontextualize the circulation of travelogues from the tenth to the fourteenth century. Gosh’s novel represents a historical perspective on an “everyday nation” by bringing up subaltern voices and subelite groups who were engaged in circulating travel writings. In her discussion, Hawas reflects on the exchange of travelers’ stories across Africa and Asia and on Arab-Islamic literary history, which chronicles the circulation of literary texts within a reading culture that promotes pluralism.

“World Literature: Negotiation and Equilibrium,” the last chapter, invokes Taha Hussein’s argument in “The Modern Renaissance of Arabic Literature” (1955) that literature is a site for political and intellectual dialogue between nations and a pedagogical tool for redressing the exclusion of the cultures of oppressed peoples outside and inside national and regional borders. May Hawas outlines Hussein’s pluralistic vision of literary studies, which defies the recurrent wave of “populist nationalisms, religious fundamentalism and authoritarian governments” (95).

Hawas’s reading of the interweaving variables of the individual, the nation, and the world is microscopic. For her, world literature broadens inquiry into the postcolonial condition by complicating the binaries of nation/world, self/other, colonial/postcolonial, White/Black, hybrid/pure. It provides a larger scope for literary scholarship and reshapes the canonization of literature by expanding the binaries of the imperial networks without overlooking the marginalization or subordination of postcolonial texts.

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