space where official ideologies or party politics can be superseded or reconfigured in his own restaging of polar oppositions: that is, between majority and minority voices and actors, between positions for and against secularist institutions and instruments. Each chapter strikes comparisons between two texts, chosen for their significant disparities of subject matter, manner of narration and composition, referential or nonreferential representational strategy (e.g., realism, allegory, carnival, nonlinearity), and other aesthetic attributes deemed to complicate or unravel the rigidly dichotomous constructions governing political discourse and silencing minoritized voices. McNamara, however, funnels the exploration of alterity and resistance these pairings are intended to open through the dualistic language of mainstream politics utilized all throughout the book. Verbs such as "advocate," "refuse," "support," and "reject" reduce literary elements, innovations, and nuances—including what might be nonanswers to questions of belief—into "harsh critiques," "embraces," and, least transparently, "ambivalences." Texts are conflated with authors and imaginative literature read as coded testimony of opinion. Brief summaries of several theorists, including Marxist thinkers most wary of "tendentious" literature, are treated evaluatively and thematically—for example, as descriptors—more than deployed methodologically, as a strategy of engaging with "indirectness." Minority identity categories of ethnicity, language, sexuality, and socioeconomic status mainly appear on only one side of a binary, whereas, for example, the Michael Ondaatje-Carl Muller dyad that comprises the chapter on Burgher writing and the Sri Lankan Sinhalese–Tamil civil war could be effectively "triangulated" by a book such as Canadian writer Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy*, which (like Muller's work?) represents sexual non-heteronormativity with humor but of a far different kind.

Nonetheless, for its salutary introduction and its project's ambitions, *Secularism* should spark very important conversations within postcolonial and South Asian studies: perhaps especially at a time—after the book's publication but at this review's time of completion—when the BJP leaders being tried for the demolition of the Babri Masjid face imminent, yet additionally delayed, judgment, as the Supreme Court has ordered, by the Central Bureau of Investigation court.

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Experiments with Truth[1]
By HEDLEY TWIDLE
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Hedley Twidle's *Experiments with Truth* wrestles with the fretfulness of what it means to live in the postcolony through examining key life-writing and narrative

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nonfiction texts in transitioning post-apartheid South Africa. Reading this book, I couldn't help but think of Evita Bezuidenhout joking that "the future is certain, but the past is unpredictable." The quote is borrowed from an old Soviet joke responding to the manner in which individuals were erased from photographs after falling foul of Stalin's favor. At the heart of the joke/idiom is how in the construction of a supposedly clear future, there is an inevitable rewriting of history. In examining life-writing and narrative nonfiction works, including biographies, Twidle demonstrates how in post-apartheid writing, the past is constantly shifting. This shifting past takes place as post-apartheid, and more importantly, post–Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) South Africa makes sense of itself through texts that question how to read the past, to understand the present, and to plan the future, as different narratives jostle for dominance on the national stage. Although there is much debate and disagreement about the past, Twidle argues that what's important about post-TRC texts is how they demonstrate that "the death of apartheid was not a punctual event (as the TRC final report would have you believe), but an ongoing, uneven social process: one that is happening in different ways and at different tempos" (96).

In explicating the diverse and complex collection of South African narrative nonfiction in post-apartheid, where fact and fiction are blurred, we come to appreciate the complexity of familiar South African texts. This is particularly demonstrated in how Twidle examines Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko, and Sol Plaatjie and how they are constantly reimagined in post-TRC writing in many different ways that sometimes betray or misread the original writing. This is probably most evident in the ways that Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko are differently taken up in the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements—movements that had an explosive beginning but inevitably devour themselves in what Mbembe saw as a "discourse of fracture, injury and victimisation" that is built on the "privatised logic of neoliberalism" (204). In this book we are asked to critically engage with the very notion of "nonfiction"; we are asked to think about how does nonfiction, that comprises witness and testimony, become "the genre" of South African writing and more importantly "what cultural and psychic function is it serving?" (2).

The book is a writing experiment that engages other experiments in the South African literary sphere. The TRC final report is a constant throughout this book. This is partly because post-TRC South Africa is built on this report, the sins of apartheid—or a very specific version of these sins—are contained in this report. Much like the works of Mandela, Biko, and Plaatjie, the TRC final report is a contested document in much of the life-writing and narrative nonfiction in South Africa. In an age of "alternative facts" and "fake news," the question about the truth becomes that much more prescient. It is at this juncture that one can't help but invoke Michel Foucault's articulations that "truth isn't outside of power or lacking in power." Therefore, of course, much is at stake with the TRC final report and how it is taken up in post-TRC South African nonfiction. There are difficult questions about who owns the truth, and whose truth it is, that reverberates throughout nonfiction works as South African writers across race make sense of the transition.

In experimenting with the truth of the past in the present, there is the trouble of memory. As Evita Bezuidenhout's quote about the "past being unpredictable" suggests, when one writes about the past, the unreliability of memory looms large. *Experiments*

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with Truth is a reminder of the power but ultimately fallacy of memory, or rather put more forgivingly, the unreliability of memory. The complexities of remembering (and consequently forgetting) are the gray zones that narrative nonfiction trespasses. A great example of this is the much-contested work of Jacob Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia*, that Twiddle thoroughly engages with. This is an important text in post-apartheid South Africa dealing with the question of memory and nostalgia, wherein to the dismay of many Black South Africans, Dlamini speaks of Black joy even during apartheid. Dlamini is accused of making light of apartheid, but as Twidle argues, *Native Nostalgia* was not popular because it does "not easily fit received narrative templates premised on progressive and closure, and cannot be resolved into the binary of 'victims' and 'perpetrators' as formulated by the TRC Final Report" (49).

What is at stake here with *Experiments with Truth*, as what is at stake with narrative nonfiction in post-TRC South Africa, is "debates about historiography, knowledge production, and the ethics of representation" (20). In post-apartheid South Africa, whether it is debates about language and accents, about memory and remembering, about whiteness and privilege, about middle-class blackness and access, about who can write about whom and under what conditions—South Africans are grappling with anxieties produced by a society under momentous transition. Ultimately, Twidle and the nonfiction works he critically engages points us to "post-apartheid intellectual possibility" (139). That through the critical reading of post-TRC texts, we should endeavor to engage the ways that history is shifting, to confront our culpability in the present, and how we imagine the South Africa to come. In other words, we must be wary of the metanarratives of the past, like that of "victims" and "perpetrators," and how they shape (and often limit) our engagements with the present.

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Literature, Law, and Rhetorical Performance in the Anticolonial Atlantic
By ANNE W. GULICK
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In *Literature, Law, and Rhetorical Performance in the Anticolonial Atlantic*, Anne W. Gulick traces a long history of Black transatlantic anticolonial legal imaginative engagements with the newly emergent genres of first world law. She argues that anticolonial experimentation with first world legal genres, especially in the wake of decolonization in the Caribbean and Africa, was instrumental to the emergence of a distinctly declarative juridico-political genre that dates back to the North Atlantic revolutionary declarations. Anchoring her study on this transatlantic history of declarative genres, she mines an expansive archive of juridico-political texts: from Haiti's early-nineteenth-century founding texts to the late-twentieth-century postcolonial texts in Africa. At stake in this book is the need to unravel how these postcolonial declarative texts "undertake