

as unprepared for the moral demands of satyagraha. His white associates Henry Polak and Joseph Doke, liberal with respect to Indians, shared his prejudices against Africans.

Even with respect to indentured and working-class Indians, Gandhi's sympathies were mobilized very late, and in response to their own initiative in launching a mass strike in Natal. To those of his biographers, such as Ramachandra Guha, who suggest that the politics of the colonized could assume only finite and accommodationist forms at this historical juncture, Desai and Vahed point to the more capacious political and moral imagination of other contemporaneous critics—in South Africa, Britain, and India—of empire and of racism.

Desai and Vahed are to be commended for showing up the hagiographical limits of a good deal of the thinking on Gandhi. They are also adept at underlining the limits of his political imagination in his South African years, and his unwillingness to learn from his failures. But they tend to mar the effect of their findings both by adopting a tone of intemperate abrasiveness and by reducing all moral complexity to a diagnosis of racism (and, in some instances, sexism and casteism). In every instance that offers the possibility of moral complexity, they choose the more ungenerous reading, which is also the less interesting one. Though they describe Gandhi as “carefully ambiguous” (272) about caste, they read him as effectively a defender of that institution. This is a significant distortion of his positions. Gandhi's relationship to war is another case in point. His writings are (perhaps surprisingly) suffused with the language of war-making and soldiering. He admires soldiers for their fearlessness, which is manifested for him in the willingness to sacrifice oneself rather than to kill, and he commends this as a virtue the practitioner of satyagraha should cultivate. While one should not deny evidence of his moral compromises, his attitudes to war and soldiering are not invariably manifestations of hypocrisy or servility to imperial ends, as the authors would have us believe. Nor does it seem entirely reasonable to read Gandhi's account in his *Autobiography* of his compassion for the suffering of the Zulu victims of white brutality as a retrospective whitewashing of his own complicity; surely it is also evidence of a change of heart, however limited? In refusing to take on the challenge of these complexities—complexities that give us evidence of an historical figure simultaneously flawed and capable of moral transformation—Desai and Vahed produce a text that is considerably less compelling than it might have been.

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MELISSA DINSMAN. *Modernism at the Microphone: Radio, Propaganda, and Literary Aesthetics during World War II*. Historicizing Modernism. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. Pp. 247. \$89.99 (cloth).
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Melissa Dinsman's *Modernism at the Microphone: Radio, Propaganda, and Literary Aesthetics during World War II* valuably contributes to the burgeoning field of what one might call literary radio studies. It is often a difficult proposition to publish at the end of a first academic wave, when a field or subfield has been staked out as significant, yet before a robust methodology has emerged; such is the position of Dinsman's book, which builds on the contributions of Todd Avery's *Radio Modernism* (2006) and subsequent essay collections to reemphasize the salience of literary contributions to broadcasting. Surveying a host of writers who contributed to Second World War propaganda efforts—including George Orwell, Louis MacNeice, Dorothy Sayers, Ezra Pound, Archibald MacLeish, and Thomas Mann—Dinsman argues

that they used wartime radio to translate modernist aesthetics for a mass audience, thus blurring the lines between literature and propaganda.

The war was, in Dinsman's reading, a particularly fraught and paradoxically fruitful nexus for such efforts because of the intrinsic connection (most clearly delineated by Theodor Adorno) between war and radio; literary broadcasters deployed the medium, she argues, in order to combat its authoritarianism. As Dinsman sees it, the opportunity for forging networks (with listeners, or between broadcasters) in some way redeems and reverses the always-already-weaponized nature of radio—as in, for example, the wartime facilitation of cosmopolitan interchange in the BBC's Indian Section under Orwell and Z. A. Bokhari, or the transnational outreach of Thomas Mann. Most of these networks were in fact transatlantic, and although the majority of the chapters concern BBC operations, the book also emphasizes the central role of the United States as both audience and staging area for anti-fascist propaganda. Yet Dinsman's gestures toward large-scale theoretical claims are often less fully realized than the case studies themselves, which feature sensitive, granular readings of individual and often understudied works such as MacNeice's *Christopher Columbus* (1944) and Dorothy Sayers's *The Man Born to Be King* (1943).

Least successful is the first chapter, serving as a kind of prequel, in which Dinsman relies most heavily on the Adornian equation of radio and war as a frame for interpreting Orson Welles's *The War of the Worlds* (1940); this association is unconvincing when projected proleptically as a key element of audience consciousness. Oddly, Dinsman uses the film *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) to illustrate her claim that American audiences had already internalized the "socio-historical correlation between radio and war" (27), pointing to the Wicked Witch of the West's "Surrender Dorothy" skywriting as an enactment of radio ("language in air") that thus threatens invasion (32). Yet, as both Paul Saint-Amour and Patrick Deer have made clear (and as Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* [1925] illustrates), aerial presence in the interwar period had long itself been ominous, both memory and harbinger of war, without the need for an associational chain to radio. And Dinsman's argument for Welles's broadcast as an anti-fascist warning that rendered overt audiences' understanding of the war/radio connection—leading them to assume that Germans, not Martians, had invaded—is unfortunately too dependent on the now-debunked claims of audience "panic" promulgated by Hadley Cantril in 1940.

Dinsman sees in the final destruction of the media system in *The War of the Worlds*, and in the "latent comparisons between the survival of media and the survival of humankind" (53), a parallel to Adornian pessimism about media, a stance that her literary broadcasters did not share. Dinsman argues for the decision made by her subjects to broadcast during the war as a refutation of such pessimism, and of a Kittlerian media determinism "in which human agency has little to no role" (2). Yet in doing so she makes implicit claims for a modernist authorial autonomy that does not reflect the collaborative and institutional realities of radio production, and that her case studies in fact contradict. Indeed, her strongest chapters are those that acknowledge most clearly the role of "networks," whether technological, informal or institutional, in governing the character of the broadcasts she examines, not merely as an outgrowth of autonomous decision-making.

In this respect, Dinsman's most effective chapter is her analysis of Sayers's religious play cycle, which is grounded in details of BBC processes and the wartime relationship between the Corporation and the Ministry of Information. Sayers's 1941–42 plays on the life of Christ led to public outcry over what many deemed a blasphemous "impersonation." Dinsman, like Alex Goody (whose excellent recent chapter on the episode was published too late to be referenced here) focuses in on the disjunction between sight and sound as mobilized by the parties to the controversy, pointing to the unseen, "acousmatic" voice of God as perhaps most perfectly captured through the medium of radio. Dinsman deftly moves between theoretical, historical, and literary registers to argue for the play as multivalent propaganda, emphasizing simultaneously the need for Christianity as a national antifascist force and the unifying power of trans-historical, implicitly transnational, allegory. The use of American

accent for some of the apostles (a key point of contention for critics) becomes a synecdoche for an affective link between allies; similarly, Dinsman argues, the complex work of “cultural translation” (80) that marks MacNeice’s 1942 *Christopher Columbus* highlights the continuous process of wartime exchange.

Equally engaging, though representing a distinct shift to the metaphorical, Dinsman’s chapter on Thomas Mann very usefully surveys his propaganda broadcasts from California to Germany (by way of the BBC). Dinsman intriguingly explicates Mann’s audio presence in his homeland by reference to the modernist trope of haunting, including Mann’s own visits to séances and their use in his novel *The Magic Mountain* (1924). If this chapter most obviously justifies the term “modernist” in the title of her monograph, it also, though satisfying in its own right, feels methodologically distant from what has come before. The volume is ultimately most convincing as a set of distinct examples rather than an argumentative whole—yet it functions, too, as a vivid and salutary reminder of the centrality of radio to the conflict.

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GRAHAM DOMINY. *Last Outposts on the Zulu Frontiers: Fort Napier and the British Imperial Garrison*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016. Pp. 279. \$45.00 (cloth).
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Last Outposts on the Zulu Frontiers: Fort Napier and the British Imperial Garrison had its beginnings in 1995 as Graham Dominy’s doctoral dissertation at the University of London, under the distinguished South African scholar Shula Marks. Dominy has since served as a National Archivist of South Africa, editor of *Natalia: Journal of the Natal Society*, a research fellow at the University of South Africa, and currently, honorary research fellow at the Helen Suzman Foundation. Fortunately for us, Dominy has kept alive his passion for Fort Napier, and this more deeply researched and mature book is the result.

The establishment of the British Natal Colony, Pietermaritzburg’s occupation by the 45th Regiment of British infantry, and Fort Napier’s construction all began in 1843, following agreements made among the three major political powers in the region: the British, the Afrikaners, and the Zulu. The military occupation of Fort Napier lasted seventy-one years, the longest occupation by British forces of a single South African fort (except for the Castle of Good Hope, in Cape Town), and arguably the longest in all of Africa. It ended in late August 1914, when the South Staffordshire Regiment sounded the last “Retreat” and headed off to the Western Front.

In those seventy-one years, troops from Fort Napier participated in wartime campaigns only four times, totaling less than four years. The sixty-seven years of peace are therefore the study’s primary focus, structured chronologically and thematically over thirteen chapters.

In chapter 1, Dominy selects important garrisons in the British Empire—the “open space” garrisons, as Halifax in Canada; the “jailer” garrisons, as in New South Wales and Van Diemens Land in Australia; the Maori Wars garrisons in New Zealand; and the longest lasting of all Britain’s outposts, Gibraltar. He argues that Fort Napier’s uniqueness lay in its longevity, the stability (real or imagined) it offered in a volatile region, the cultural and economic influences it exerted, and, above all, the fact that it “influenced not only a settler society, but a major African society [the Zulu] as well, thus justifying the sobriquet, ‘The Last Outpost’” of the British Empire (9).