



Dr John Casey

source of nongovernmental initiative for counterbalancing state power and introducing market forces into the delivery of public services. Progressives see them as the embodiment of grassroots activism that can help ensure that social services are effectively delivered to those most in need.”

He writes that the work of nonprofits focuses on the services government and business are not willing or able to provide: welfare, health, education, culture, environment and leisure services, indeed by outsourcing services, governments’ growing reliance on NGOs may only increase in the future.

He attributes the growth to the fact that people are disillusioned with traditional politics and the new

organisations provide more rewarding style of political participation than membership of a political party. The impact of new technologies has made communication and resourcing easier. In many countries nonprofits enjoy more trust, loyalty and interest of citizens than other social institutions such as governments, unions, political parties or commercial businesses.

Casey writes about globalization, the globalization of ideas, the internationalization of the nonprofit sector, the US model and he dedicates a chapter to social enterprises (commercial businesses with social purposes and the revenue generating activities) and emerging trends.

This is a fascinating, must read book for those interested or involved in the nonprofit sector. It contains a wealth of information and valuable insights about the place of nonprofits in the global arena and the implication of their increasing importance in society. R

Whither the colonised after the colony?

SAUDADE By Suneeta Peres da Costa, Reviewed by **JOSHUA BIRD**



The long shadow of the colonial legacy is a well-explored topic in literature. But what becomes of the colonised after the empire has fallen, receding back like a tide leaving behind a country transformed and often

culturally damaged?

Post-colonial authors such as Chinua Achebe and Salman Rushdie have all explored life in societies touched by colonialism, often through the lens of the colonised. However, the novel *Saudade* by Australian author Suneeta Peres da Costa engages with the postcolonial question in a new, multifaceted way.

The novel follows the young Goan woman Maria-Cristina, living in Angola during the final years of Portuguese colonial rule. In the age of empires it was common for people from the Indian Subcontinent to be redeployed – often involuntarily – to serve imperial interests elsewhere. Sizeable Indian populations in modern-day Fiji, South Africa and Malaysia are the legacy of such policies.

In the case of *Saudade*, Maria-Cristina’s father is a labour lawyer who works to shield colonial plantation owners from claims by indigenous workforces. Thus he represents an active force of colonial exploitation rather than a passive colonial subject – in effect, both colonised

and coloniser. How are we to understand colonial subjects who themselves become tools of colonialism?

As an Australian author, no doubt Peres da Costa drew some inspiration for this subject from Australia's own complex colonial legacy, as both a colony of Mother England and a force of colonial dispossession of the Indigenous. Just as generations of Australians were raised to see themselves as British despite being born on the other side of the world, Maria-Cristina's sense of national and ethnic identities sits uneasily within her.

Peres de Costa engaged with many of the same issues of cultural dislocation and colonialism in her debut novel, *Homework*, which explored the life of a second-generation Goan-Australian girl growing up in Sydney. In both works the Goans are a quintessentially colonised people, who adopted Catholicism and Portuguese cultural values, melding them with indigenous religious and cultural traditions to produce something unique. For Goans, the twin threads of empire and religion tie them to otherwise disparate countries from South America's Brazil to Australia's neighbour, Timor-Leste. The novel is peppered with detailed depictions of the food, music and languages of colonial Angola, each reflecting the cross-pollination of cultures facilitated by imperial reach. However, for Maria-Cristina and her family, their cosmopolitanism also brings fragility. Neither one thing nor the other, both colonised and coloniser, occupy a liminal state between many identities while never truly inhabiting one.

This sense of otherness is reflected in the mercurial concept of "saudade" in Portuguese. It is often described as a wistful longing or mourning for something lost, also something that perhaps had never been. For the Portuguese, the term became associated with the yearning for home experienced by the waves of emigrants that left the country after World War II to seek a better life. Saudade is also frequently applied to the sense of loss that characterised the decline and dissolution of the Portuguese Empire.

The situation of the central figure of Peres da Costa's novel represents a unique application of the concept, being an emigrant adrift from the cultural influences that shaped her, Goan and Portuguese, while being unable to put down roots in the only place she has ever called home. This yearning for a time and place never actually experienced is one that must resonate with many second-generation migrants.

As we follow Maria-Cristina from the childhood in colonial Angola to womanhood, the author vividly captures the spirit of the times, in particular the confusion of childhood when much of life seems mysterious and

vague. The decades that pass represent the growth of both Maria-Cristina's body and mind. Just as she becomes more aware of her nascent sexuality, she also begins to question the foundations upon which her young life is built – family, church and state. As she tests the limits of her own sexual power, so she also begins to question the received wisdom of her upbringing. Like many teenagers she chafes at the values imposed upon her by her parents, each a metaphor for the twin cultural influences of Portugal and Goa: her father an uncritical proponent of Portuguese colonial rule; her mother traditionally sari-clad, her eyes stained with charcoal.

Soon small cracks in the veneer appear. The image of the morally just state she grew up in is slowly replaced by an appreciation of the social inequality and violence inherent in the colonial project. Similarly, her first- and second-hand experiences of chauvinism and sexual violence undermine her faith in the family construct.

Over time, Maria-Cristina sifts through these cultural inheritances to identify those of true value to her:

"For so many years, I had been like a little bird, gobbling the food, words and ideas that she put directly into my mouth, already half-masticated. Now I began to consider what was real and what was not, what pleased me and what did not."

Once Maria-Cristina's awakening is complete, the novel's final section is dedicated to her attempts to negotiate her place in a post-colonial world. This final section feels a little rushed, with the slow, languid atmosphere of the novel's preceding sections replaced by flickering vignettes that rush through the years. While this may be a deliberate choice to represent the frenetic changes in the lead up to Angolan independence, the change in tone is jarring.

Overall, the novel is adept at capturing a sense of cultural dislocation, perhaps the most persistent artefact of the post-colonial experience. The movement of cultures, peoples and identities caused by colonialism is a disruption that, once done, cannot be undone. In her interrogation of this idea, Peres da Costa uses a single story to transcend from the specific to the universal. R