New Directions in Postcolonial Studies

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All academic disciplines go through phases of self-critique and re-definition and contradicting phases of calm consolidation. Postcolonial studies is currently in the former phase, with the last few years seeing an overhaul of the discipline through energy generated in both conferences and new texts. This self-interrogation is both a reassessment of the field's foundations and a consideration of the directions it might take in the future. Its own canon of literary and foundational theoretical texts are being re-evaluated, influenced by increasingly interdisciplinary input that is expanding the reach of postcolonial studies into such areas as human geography, macro-economics, Middle Eastern studies, and globalisation theories. The proponents of this impetus for change have been young academics whose interests and experiences lie outside of British settler societies, and leading academics whose earlier key works now need updating. Last summer, three major conferences representing three groups at the forefront of the field all engaged in the challenge of reshaping postcolonial studies: the Postcolonial Studies Association (PSA) second biennial conference, "Postcolonialism, Economies, Crises"; the European Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (EACLALS) postgraduate conference, "Reworking Postcolonialism: Globalization, Labour, Rights"; and the Warwick Research Collective (WReC) "Spectres of World Literature."[1] The key terms in these conference titles suggest the discipline's expansion from a strictly ex-colonial sphere of interest to one of global scale ("globalization," "world literature") and a concomitant aim to frame literary analysis within political and economic considerations ("economies, crises," "labour, rights"). This paper looks at the issues and interests generated during these conferences and in recent publications to discuss some of the implications of these new directions in postcolonial studies.

The study of postcolonialism[2] emerged in cultural and literary studies to describe the turbulent post-War period of national revolution and ethnic liberation movements in formerly-colonised countries. As its name suggests, postcolonial studies was initially concerned with recognising indigenous, minority and otherwise marginalised peoples' political, social and cultural rights previously denied by (predominantly) British, French, Dutch and Spanish colonial imperialism.[3] Postcolonial fiction brought to popular attention the unique imaginaries of peoples hitherto unvoiced, from indigenous and white-settler nations of North America, Australasia, Southern and Western Africa, and diasporic writers working between India or the Ca-

1 Second biennial PSA conference, University of Birmingham, UK, 7–8 July 2011; EACLALS postgraduate conference, University of London School of Advanced Study, 26–27 August 2011; "Spectres of World Literature" independent conference, University of London School of Advanced Study, 8–9 September 2011. Of the three, the PSA most clearly targets an ongoing re-evaluation of the field: following a preliminary conference "Rerouting the Postcolonial" (2007), the inaugural PSA conference was titled "Re-Imagining Identity" (2009), and next year's postgraduate conference will be "Re-evaluating the Postcolonial City" (2012).

2 The term's prefix misleadingly suggests the end of colonialism; rather, it is the marker of the troubling remnants of colonial discourse that underpin the modern nation-state and many Eurocentric norms still very much in circulation today. Indeed, the conflict between the supposed equality of national citizenship and the glaring disparities and exclusions still practiced is the subject of the majority of postcolonial fiction.

ribbean and the UK. In many cases acknowledged by the Nobel, Booker and Orange prizes for literature, postcolonial studies introduced to the English literary canon writers such as Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Anita Desai, Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, JM Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, VS Naipaul, Wilson Harris, Derek Walcott, Albert Wendt, Witi Ihimaera, Patricia Grace, Mudrooroo Narogin and Peter Carey. In their fiction, these writers have mapped the changes in their respective countries since the decolonising period, and their work has often shaped the dominant modes and themes of their respective national literatures to the present day. In following these changes, a postcolonial literary and cultural critique necessarily presents itself as continually contemporary, responding to evolving cultural expressions which reflect modern national identity(ies).[4] More recently, these literary questions of national identity have become increasingly caught up in the terminology and trends of globalisation, a nebulous term to pin down but which, across its various interpretations, has greatly changed the cultural and social make-up of nations, their politics and economies. The expansion of the discipline's remit from a study of national issues of identity and belonging to that of a global scale, informed by non-literary fields of macro-economics, political science, human geography, and migration studies, is at the heart of the current debates concerning the definition of postcolonialism.

If postcolonial studies is intended to truly map contemporary trends and changes expressed in cultural expression (fine art, literature, film and media), it must be flexible enough to constantly update its parameters in order to keep up with rapid change on national and international fronts. In the last decade alone, the post–9/11 response to terrorism, the rapid expansion of the EU, the global economic crisis, and most recently the 2011 revolutions named the "Arab Spring," have resulted in major world shifts in perceptions of identity, security, belonging, and community. The repercussions of these events have been felt throughout the developed world, including those countries labelled postcolonial. Some of the urgent issues engendered by these events include: the role and power of the state in and against neoliberal economics; national policies towards migrants and refugees; multiculturalism versus citizenship models of national belonging; the place of, and attitudes to Islam in Europe and North America; and the presence of China as a challenge to Western-centred world power.[5] These world events have had very real repercussions, creating new groups of minority and marginalised people, including Muslim communities in Western Europe, post-communist European migrants, the labouring under-class created by neoliberal practices in Asia and Africa, and peoples displaced by wars in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Such issues have trickled into literature in English from both sides of the Atlantic, both through mainstream writers, including Jeffrey Archer, Paul Auster, Iain Banks, Don DeLillo, Ian McEwan, and John Updike, and those commonly read as postcolonial, such as Shaila Abdullah, Monica Ali, Nadine Gordimer, Rohinton Mistry, Orhan Pamuk, and Kamila Shamsie. There has similarly been great interest in the voices of writers representing these minorities,

3 More precisely, postcolonial studies emerged out of "Commonwealth" or "Third World" literary studies in English departments in the 1960s. Hispanophone and Lusophone postcolonial literature predominantly centres on Central and South American identities, particularly the legacies of colonial slavery, indigenous extinction, and decolonising-period dictatorships. While early Francophone writers and theorists were instrumental in shaping the field, notably the Negritude movement spearheaded by Léopold Sédar Senghor, Jean-Paul Sartre's *Orphée Noir*, Frantz Fanon's *Peau Noir, Masques Blancs*, and Caribbean writers and activists Aimé Césaire and Patrick Chamoiseau, postcolonial literature is relatively undervalued and understudied in French literary studies.

4 This position further claims that literature is always contingent on the socio-cultural context of its time and place, a contextualization that has required much defending against the more purist forms of literary interpretation and theory promulgated in English and French literary academies.

5 The terms "the West," "Europe," and "Eurocentrism" are often used interchangeably in many disciplines. Although there ought to be more distinction made between them, I follow the common practice of using them synonymously to mean the Christian democratic liberal ideals of Western Europe and the USA which dominated world politics throughout the 20th century. Implied in my use of these terms is their exclusion of the East, following Edward Said's seminal study *Orientalism*. The terms are currently up for discussion.

including Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie, Afghani Khaled Hosseini, and Iranian women novelists Azar Nafisi and Marjane Satrapi. Novels such as *Half of a Yellow Sun*, *Purple Hibiscus*, *The Kite Runner*, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, and *Persepolis*, have become best-sellers in North America and Europe, where some even appear in High School English curricula.

The apparent mainstreaming of fiction that thirty years ago would have been classified as "Third World literature" has generated much academic interest around the role of the global publishing industry in shaping a literary marketplace. To use Pascale Casanova's key term "consecration" in *The World Republic of Letters* (following Pierre Bourdieu), mainstreaming strategies such as Oprah Winfrey's Book Club and the marketing hype of literary prizes has turned "world"[6] literature into an industry that, among other things, tends to exoticise cultural difference and support Western stereotypes of, for example, disempowered Iranian women (Nafisi), despotic West African governments (Adichie), intractable Indian caste violence (Mistry), and non-Western oppression of freedom of speech (Salman Rushdie, Orhan Pamuk). Postcolonial studies' keen interest in this phenomenon, first comprehensively surveyed by Graham Huggan in *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (2001), is supported by Sarah Brouillette's invitation to give keynote addresses at both the PSA and Warwick conferences. Following her highly successful *Postcolonial Writers and the Global Literary Marketplace* (2007), Brouillette's work on the economic and political influences on the creative industries speaks to postcolonial studies' self-questioning of its own implication in non-literary domains. While her PSA keynote on the role of UNESCO in book promotion and reception centred on the liberal idealist manifest of the creative arts, her WReC paper on Aravind Adigar's *The White Tiger* articulated the general ambivalence of many artists toward globalisation. While this novel is an oblique, crushing satire of the impact on a rural Indian community of political and corporate corruption in chasing individual wealth, Adigar's education, lifestyle, occupation, as well as his debut novel's reception — winner of the 2008 Booker Prize — is complicit with the global literary marketplace of world literature.[7] Interest in the book industry was also evident throughout the three conferences, including papers by Claire Chambers (Muslim British writers), Anna Bernard (Palestinian narratives of suffering), Emma Dawson (Indian "local" fiction), and Ranka Pimorac (Zambian bookshops) on differentiated marketing strategies of books for home and foreign publication.

On the surface, the dramatic global shifts of the early 2000s and their literature have nothing to do with the postcolonial, as they are not a direct result of nineteenth-century European empires. However, the dynamics and pressures of systemic oppression and exploitation, discourses of insider-outsider, and the human movement of labour migrants and refugees, all exhibit great similarities with those identified as colonially motivated. Similarly, much of the literature of these events employs the same narrative techniques and explores the same themes as postcolonial writing, including the social-realist testimonial mode, nostalgic framing of the past, and minority perspective of "writing back" against mainstream historiography.[8] The instinct to draw together the postcolonial with the global is further supported by postcolonial studies' theoretical parameters, which are broad enough to be applied to many cultures and nations not strictly ex-colonial. These include the mechanics and constructions of discourse, nation-building, historiography,

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6 The distancing quote marks around "World" literature is commonly used to suggest that such fiction does not represent the world (whatever that might be), but rather is written, more often than not, by middle-class educated immigrants living in Western metropolitan centres writing expressly for a Western publisher and target readership. The uneven translation of books is also a factor, discussed by Casanova. Critical attention to the recent explosion of world literature, the origin of which goes back to Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, include by Dan Damrosch and Franco Moretti.

7 James English's *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (2005) is another important text in this genre.

8 The term "writing back" was coined by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), a text instrumental in setting out the initial parameters of postcolonialism.

ethnography, and cultural identities based on concepts of home, otherness, and human movement. Thus it has been a seemingly natural jump to incorporate this new "world" fiction into the "new world" literature of postcolonial studies. The three conferences all included a significant number of presentations on literature describing these new movements in postcolonial terms, particularly in response to the PSA and EACLALS conference themes of economies, labour and rights. Anna Bernard's discourse analysis of international support for Palestinian Gaza described the Israeli treatment of Palestinians as apartheid and their ghettoisation as Bantustans, thereby inscribing Israel in the very postcolonial subject of institutionalised racism in South Africa. Bernard called for closer study of what postcolonial ideology can do politically: her analysis of the publicity surrounding the Gaza Freedom Flotilla considered the potential for crossing over from ideas and ideals to real political action. Paul Ugor presented a similarly action-oriented paper on youth existentialism in the Niger Delta caused by petro-chemical industry extraction driven by multinationals, which has hobbled the government and caused environmental devastation and local impoverishment. "Petrofiction," a term coined by Amitav Ghosh, also figured in Dieter Riemenschneider's address, on the Bhopal Disaster portrayed in *Animal's People*, and by Christiane Schlote, on oil migrant workers in the Gulf. From Western Africa to India to the Persian Gulf, the exploitation of labour, the complicity between corporations and the state, and the extraction of natural resources at the expense of human and environmental considerations makes "petrofiction" illustrative of what one recent collection of essays calls *Postcolonizing the International* (2006). "Petrofiction" exemplifies the expansion of postcolonial issues to a global scale, which might equally be described from the reverse perspective of the "global village"; the contemporary conflation of world-wide issues duplicated and repeated in various local forms.

In targeting topics of national and global crises, inequalities, and labour rights, each conference contested the failures and disillusions of the decolonisation period. What had started with great excitement about the potential of independent ex-colonial nations in South America and Africa has failed miserably, as attested by ongoing poverty and human-rights abuses as well as various forms of instability and corruption in many of these countries. In 2011, investigating the failures of decolonisation seems timely, running in parallel with increasingly mainstream criticism of neoliberalism arising out of the global economic crisis; both movements are rooted in the same post-War political and economic decisions. The Arab Spring, August London riots and the Occupy Wall Street protest, unexpected events that occurred after the CFPs were issued, seemed to further support these conferences' themes. The attempt to decode some of early postcolonialism's failed hopes and wishful thinking is behind the recent trend to re-evaluate and re-interpret some of its founding texts. In terms of assessing the discipline's place in contemporary literary and cultural theory, there is also the suspicion that misinterpretation of foundational texts has compromised the discipline's authority. One key difficulty is that as a resolutely *contemporary* field, the study of postcolonialism must be constantly updated, salvaging theoretical paradigms while disregarding the contexts, which may be out of date. The danger of disarticulating context from content is apparent. Common postcolonial interpretations of Frantz Fanon's work are illustrative: watering down his psychoanalysis to the politics of undifferentiated minority identity and belonging, and all but ignoring his call to violence as a necessary part of the Algerian liberation movement. In short, Fanon is held up as representative of a third-worldism that he never promoted (see Lazarus 2011, 162−82; Parry 2004, 13−35).

A further concern for the discipline is the suspicion that many of its founding theories are inadequate to describing the field's recent interests. While French literary theory, modernism, Fanon, and Edward Said seemed exciting in the 1970s, followed by the energy generated by the principles of hybridity and polyphony (Bhabha, Bakhtin, Spivak et al.) in the 1980s−1990s, today's postcolonialists find little in these concepts that is applicable to analysing world literature and global cultural flows. Indeed, over the two days of the EACLALS postgraduate conference, predominantly attended by early-career academics, the above-mentioned founding theorists were conspicuously absent, as was the usual roll-call of writers from

the Indian diaspora and settler-state indigenes. Their absence may indicate a move away from nation-based issues of identity and belonging and, more generally, might also reflect the rapid U-turn in Western Europe and to a lesser extent in the USA, away from espousing multiculturalism as a workable model of inclusive nationhood. Instead of these inward-looking, nation-based models aiming for cultural unity, the increasing use of terms such as cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, diaspora, and globalisation are outward-looking, and focus on sustained differences. A quick survey of collections of postcolonial essays published in the last five years reveals the discipline's interest in this shift, including *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* (2006), an indispensable reference updated with new sections on these topics, *Global Fissures, Postcolonial Fusions* (2006), an EACLALS conference proceedings in which each section articulates a different kind of globalisation,[9] and *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium* (2010), with essays generated from the first conference of what came to be the PSA and its affiliated *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*.

By contrast with the EACLALS focus on new trajectories around the subject of labour and rights, the Warwick-led "Spectres of World Literature" conference the following week was a concerted effort to evaluate postcolonial precepts. Whereas EACLALS ignored the founding fathers, WReC took issue with them, most comprehensively in Warwick Professor and conference keynote, Neil Lazarus, in *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, published just in time for this event, in July 2011. In Lazarus's book, in his keynote, and more widely throughout the conference, there was a tacit consensus that if postcolonial studies is to have any respect in the wider academy, it must be more methodical in defining — and sticking to — its parameters. The most theoretically-driven of the three events, this conference brought together Benita Parry, a matriarch of postcolonial studies and several of her much younger colleagues, ex-students and most recent graduates. Parry, a founder of postcolonial theory and now in her seventies, is still producing a steady stream of significant work remarkable for its great historical sweep and eye for illuminating detail. Few in the field match her ability to see through cyclical fashions to identify the underlying trends and problematics that underpin the discipline. This astute eye (and her equally renowned acerbic tongue) is exemplified in her latest book, the first part of which is titled "Directions and dead ends in postcolonial studies." At the conference, her immense generosity toward and interest in her ex-students, colleagues and fellow postcolonialists was remarkable to see and greatly inspiring at a time when job prospects and security in the humanities are at an all-time low. The crux of this conference was the presentation of the Warwick Research Collective's initial findings. The four keynotes (unusual for a two-day conference) and the roundtable session on "Combined and Uneven Development" in literary studies challenged the (mis)interpretation of many of the founding precepts of the discipline, including Marxism, modernity, "Europe" and "the West," Eurocentrism and Orientalism. It quickly became clear that the "Spectres" of the conference's title and the "uneven development" that WReC targeted refer to the state of postcolonial studies itself.

In the environment of general enthusiasm to apply postcolonial theory to ever broader cultural contexts — as evident at "Spectres" as at the previous two events — Lazarus's address, "Spectres Haunting: Postcommunism and Postcolonialism," offered a word of caution. Taking the example of a growing field of literary output and study from post-communist Eastern European writers and critics, Lazarus outlined the significant points at which post-communism does not mesh with postcolonialism. This contradicts the recent spate of publications arguing the opposite, based on similarities between British and Soviet imperialism, and, since 1990, identity issues of marginalisation and conflict between traditional and modern values.[10] Although Lazarus does not categorically discount the insertion of post-communist fiction into the paradigm, he exhorts that more work be done first on defining key terms "Europe" and "imperialism,"

9 The three sections are the global in relation to the postcolonial, to literature, and to politics and culture, respectively.

as well as Marxism, which is experiencing a comeback, mostly from younger scholars who did not witness the often bitter polemics of the 1980s.[11] While Lazarus might be right to call attention to spatial and temporal parameters lest the discipline spreads itself too thin, his position is complicated by the increasing presence of fiction in English by Eastern European first- and second-generation immigrants now contributing to British diasporic fiction, notably Marina Lewycka's *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* (2005) and Joanna Czechowska's *The Black Madonna of Derby* (2008). The inside is already outside and vice versa before the proverbial stable door is shut, a situation that once again describes the complex global flows that are not contained by national borders and homogenous identities.

Globalisation is the shadow looming large over all the above commentary. Neoliberal imperialism, in its guise as globalisation,[12] has simply replaced empire as the hegemonic discourse operating at all levels of society, from politics and economics to cultural expressions such as writing and book publishing and, importantly, the university system through which it is studied. Like colonial imperialism of the 19th century, neoliberalism is popularly accepted as inevitable, and even natural: globalisation's free market competition is akin to its colonial counterpart, social Darwinism. Like empire, today's multinational corporations have caused radical changes to social and family structures and the environment, mobilised migration to unprecedented levels, and widened the gap between wealthy and poor. Both structures were/are primarily economically motivated, and both used democratic governments to establish and maintain their hegemony through policies and force.[13] The similarities between colonisation and globalisation are surely the reasons why postcolonialists feel compelled to engage with ongoing — though differently inflected — issues of violence, discrimination and marginalisation. The claim "to be global is first and foremost to be postcolonial and to be postcolonial is always already to be global" has thus been repeated in the introductions to several edited collections.[14] Tapping into increasing criticism against neoliberalism spawned by the global financial crisis,[15] this summer's three conference themes demonstrated, once again, postcolonialism's counter-discursive contemporaneity.

My own contributions at these three events turned out to share the research interests and concerns of many other participants, although we have all come to the same observations and conclusions through dif-

10 Notable texts are Violeta Kelertas's *Baltic Postcolonialism*(2006), and Agata Anna Lisiak's *Urban Cultures in (Post) Colonial Central Europe* (2010). *Rerouting the Postcolonial* also includes an essay from this area and another from China, as the editors assert "the postcolonial has moved in recent years from being a historical marker to a more globally inflected term applicable to a variety of regions" (2). Interest in the field is supported by recent journal special issues: *After Europe* in *Postcolonial Studies* (vol 14/2, 2011) and the forthcoming *Postcolonial Europe* in *Moving Worlds* (vol 11/2, 2012). Surprisingly, this interest was not supported at the three conferences, with only one paper on the topic, Vedrana Velickovic's "And the Less Fortunate will Scrub Toilets: Eastern European Workers in the Western Metropolis" at EACLALS.

11 It appears the sting has not gone out of Marxism though: Terry Eagleton, who led a heated debate with Raymond Williams in *New Left Review* in the 1980s, has recently published *Why Marx Was Right* (2011), purportedly in response to the global economic crisis. Reviews and opinions are, again, strongly divided.

12 My definition of globalisation here is of the politically-driven hitching of the nation-state to free-market principles including deregulation, privitisation and competition, commonly termed neoliberalism. Rather than the particular manifestations of these national and global trends, I am interested in the way globalisation works as a pervasive discourse, as argued by David Harvey in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

13 My conflation of empire and globalisation is intended as broad brush strokes only. I am aware that the different forms of empire expressed in each colony and in different phases of each colony problematise the use of the term in the singular. Similarly, it is almost specious to talk of globalisation in the singular, without paying due attention to the individual histories of neoliberal practices in each nation-state.

14 Krishnaswarmy 2003, — and Hawley 2008, Wilson et al 2010 (1).

15 Among many other critics of globalisation, Zygmunt Bauman, Pierre Bourdieu, Duménil and Lévy, David Harvey, William Robinson and Joseph Stiglitz are often cited in postcolonial contexts. Furthermore, Hannah Arendt's 1968 *Imperialism* suddenly appears again, mentioned by at least three speakers (and myself) across these conferences.

ferent paths. My own disillusion with the field stems from the New Zealand context of institutionalised biculturalism and its effect on national literature. In particular, the clear failure of culturalism to address real social inequalities between white New Zealanders and minority Maori and immigrants clearly contradicts postcolonial theory's belief in the affective as the primary site of rectifying subalternity. Belief in the postcolonial privileging of identity, belonging, and self-definition was further undermined by my study of the indigenous Ainu of Japan. Not only is this community ignored, as are the several other minorities in a national discourse of blinkered homogeneity, but the majority of Ainu are at best ambivalent about their traditional culture's value. Ainu activists do not believe that their people's welfare is best served by recourse to nativist traditions or commercialisation of an exoticised difference. While postcolonialism seems intuitively suited to Japan's imperial history and contemporary marginalisation of its minorities, it is absent from scholarship in English.[16] Information, reflections and discussions gained from these three conferences will play a role in shaping my further, long-term and collaborative research on "postcolonial Asia."

As a way out of either recalcitrant nationalist discourses that avoid real engagement with cultural globalisation (such as Japanese),[17] or unreflective support for co-opting culture to market demands (such as in New Zealand), my recent research has sought modes of living that fall outside both national and global social structures. To this end, I have turned to post-apartheid South Africa, which is unique in having, almost overnight, rejected its colonial national foundations in favour of a neoliberal democracy that, nonetheless promulgates deep inequalities still split along racialised lines. My PSA paper, "Identity Crises and the National Imaginary: Searching for meaningful communities in post-apartheid South Africa" summarized a "postcolonial existentialism" of abjection and apathy common to fourteen novels published since 2000 by writers white and black, old and young, male and female. In the mid- to late-twentieth century, anti-apartheid activism united both sides of the divide through broadly socialist ideals, which engendered a writing of hope along lines of national community. Following the democratic victory in 1994, that commonality has gone. With nothing left to fight together for, contemporary literature is intensely individualistic and competitive — two qualities touted by the exponents of globalisation and endorsed by the ANC government. In writing that features homelessness, poverty, victimisation and subjection, all under a heavy cloud of senseless violence, neither nationalism nor globalism offers a structure of identification or meaning. In an effort to escape this bind, my paper at the "Spectres" conference considered one strategy that rejects the opportunities and attachments of both national "security" and the "freedom" of globalisation. In two South African and one Francophone Algerian travel novels, middle-class, educated characters choose nomadism in less developed countries and communities. Through the figure of the nomad, these novels advocate homelessness, passivity, muteness, and an overall lack of agency, which all contradict postcolonialism's drive for recognition for minorities through the very opposite: grounding, belonging, voice and respect as subjects. The strategies of resistance and positive identity construction in these novels do not use the precepts of postcolonialism to do so. My EACLALS presentation, "After the Honeymoon: Postcolonial Disillusions" went further to question postcolonial studies' self-gratifying sense of being the only discipline sensitive to and supporting of minority perspectives, through which it authorises its indictment of the many inequalities and abuses in the world. I claim that this authority is undermined by the fact that

16 I have found two exceptions in the field of literary analysis: John Lie's *Zainichi: Koreans in Japan: Diasporic Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity* (2008) and Fuminobu Murakami's *Postmodern, Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture* (2005). In sociology, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, an Australian Japanologist and therefore familiar with the postcolonial discourse of her own country, does mention postcolonial applications in passing, in her *Re-Inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (1998).

17 Certainly there is discussion about cultural diversity in Japan, but this is often written from an embattled position of counter-culture or marginalisation against a pervasive cultural nationalism. See, for example, Jennifer Chan (ed.), *Another Japan is Possible: New Social Movements and Global Citizenship Education* (2008) and Brian J. McVeigh, *Nationalisms of Japan: Managing and Mystifying Identity* (2004).

postcolonial critics, paralysed by a liberal reluctance to represent "the Other," have very little to say about intolerance, violence and discrimination prevalent *within* minority communities, such as South African black-on-black inter-tribal violence, Polynesian domestic violence, Indian caste violence, and other cultural practices condemned by human rights charters, such as female circumcision and lapidation. This paper, along with Malachi MacIntosh's contribution on the conflicting exigencies of exile, was taken up as a kind of touchstone for the conference's theme of "reworking postcolonialism," and we were invited to deliver the closing address.

These recent conferences and published texts all look back self-reflectively at the major moments, literary works and critical theories of postcolonial studies in order to remember the energies that sparked the new field of study in the 1960s, to reassess its successes and failures, and to see how far it has veered from its original direction. The discipline's make-over, led by the current experts in the field, is particularly timely for early-career academics such as myself, as we move into lectureships and editing through which we will take on more active roles in shaping postcolonial studies. Perhaps because it is a relatively small and new field, there is close interaction between professors, young academics, and graduate students. At these conferences, I was impressed by the energy, generosity and enthusiasm of the keynote speakers, the high level of participation by leaders in the field, and the solidarity and support among younger academics — many of whom are competing for the same jobs. The overall level of commitment to the discipline is remarkable and it is this, above all, which assures the health of postcolonial studies well into the twenty-first century.

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