Colonial discourse / postcolonial theory

EDITED BY
FRANCIS BARKER, PETER HULME
AND MARGARET IVERSEN

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Preface to the series

In the 1990s the new critical theory of the 1970s and 1980s is firmly established in university departments and publishing houses alike, but with the constant risk that its original cutting edge will be blunted by its currency. Hence our insistence on the three terms of the title of this series: the engagement of theory with literature needs to grasp the political questions at its centre.

Between 1976 and 1984 the annual Sociology of Literature conference at Essex provided an important forum for those interested in left literary and cultural theory in England. Ten volumes of proceedings were published, and some of the papers were collected under the title we now use for this series. The sequence of volumes to which this book belongs has a different configuration from that first series, but builds upon its work. The principles behind the intervention remain the same: the process is different. These books present advanced research by people working in this new critical field. Contributors have been invited with a view to achieving a mix of established and younger writers from Britain and abroad, representing a variety of relevant theoretical approaches. In each case participants have been asked to prepare a draft paper in advance of a symposium held at Essex. At the symposium the pre-circulated papers have been discussed, and the direction of the volume assumed a clearer shape. Papers have then been rewritten in the light of the discussions, the underlying commitment being to collective and dialogic methods of work and publication. The resulting volume has a much greater coherence (though not necessarily internal agreement) than the normal collection of essays, to register the terms of current debates, and to offer perspectives for future work.

The Editors

Introduction

There is little doubt that matters of colony and empire have moved centre stage in Anglo-American literary and cultural theory over the last fifteen years or so. And not before time. One factor involved in this move is the increasing globalisation of culture, especially the publishing phenomenon – first seen with the Latin American 'boom' of the 1970s – whereby so-called 'Third World' or 'post-colonial' writers, either writing directly in English or quickly translated, have been so successfully marketed. Another factor is the insistent pressure from 'the periphery' (India, Africa, Australia, Canada), with the development there of various critical and theoretical schools that have been 'writing back' to the metropolitan centres with a confidence and sophistication that have demanded attention. Indeed not just *writing* back: the movement of communities has become a complicating feature to which much attention has been paid, with terms like 'migration', 'diaspora' and 'nomadism' taking on new burdens of significance.

In addition – over a longer term – one could also chart a growing awareness within US and British political and intellectual culture that imperialism and colonialism, either directly or in their aftermaths, are still constitutive elements of the modern world and its conflicts. The evidence of Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam, Central America and South Africa eventually had its impact on at least sections of the left, and on the theory that had for the most part developed in isolation and ignorance of such matters.

If, as David Lloyd puts it in his paper, 'western theory' has been transformed and reconfigured as a result of its encounter with 'non-western cultures', then there is little dispute that the catalyst for much of the new work that has resulted, and still an indispensable reference point, was Edward Said's *Orientalism*, published in 1978. In July 1982, at the Essex conference on 'The Politics of Theory', Homi Bhabha gave a paper in which the notion of 'colonial discourse' received one of its earliest elaborations through a generalising and sympathetic critique of the argument made by *Orientalism*. Said, along with Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, were at Essex in 1984 when colonial issues were the central topic on the agenda for the conference 'Europe and its Others' although, interestingly, the term 'post-

colonial' nowhere features in those discussions. At the end of the decade, when we were discussing topics for the new symposium series, there was no doubt that enough innovative and important work had been done in the relatively few years since 'Europe and its Others' to justify another sustained investigation of current issues in the field of colonial and postcolonial studies. (For the relevant volumes of conference proceedings, see Barker *et al.*, eds 1983 and 1985.)

The Symposium was held in Wivenhoe House at the University of Essex on 7–10 July 1991. Following the model established by the two previous symposia, the draft papers, circulated in advance, were briefly introduced by their authors and then either discussed directly or allowed to trigger wider consideration of problems in the field. We have not thought it appropriate to give a detailed account of the discussions which took place at the Symposium: the papers, which have been revised – in some cases lightly, in other cases very fully – subsequent to the Symposium and in the light of those discussions, will speak for themselves, as must the implicit and explicit relations among them. However, we have drawn upon our notes of the discussions – particularly the final open session – in the following sketch of some of the issues that seemed of general concern to the people around that table.

The title of the Symposium, 'Colonial discourse / postcolonial theory', which, after some discussion, we have kept for this volume, incorporates two notions separated by that discrete slash which leaves their relationship undetermined. 'Colonial discourse' attracted little debate: over the last ten years it has become a widely used phrase, and there has been little dissent to the idea that there is an area of general and quite novel interest designated by the term. Two of the undoubted benefits of 'colonial discourse' as a phrase are that, firstly, it directs attention towards the interrelatedness of a whole variety of texts and practices more conventionally seen as belonging to their 'own' disciplinary realms, and then, secondly, it politicises that network by implicating it with the power relations of colonial hegemony. Said's deployment of Michel Foucault's terminology in *Orientalism* has been the subject of considerable debate, but the enabling consequences of that usage are evident in several of the symposium papers, perhaps especially in the five that open this volume, those by Mary Louise Pratt, Simon During, Peter Hulme, Annie E. Coombes and Zita Nunes.

The situation is, however, more complicated than a simple colonial/postcolonial divide might suggest, in at least two ways. For one thing, the phrase 'colonial discourse' itself belongs to the critical vocabulary of postcoloniality: indeed it has recently been endowed with the dubious privilege of the upper case in Aijaz Ahmad's distancing formulation 'Colonial Discourse Analysis'. 'Discourse' is a word inextricably associated with the post-structuralism of the 1980s (though its actual range of users is much broader), and in particular with Michel Foucault's project of the genealogical analysis

of modernity. The second complication is that, although 'postcolonialism' is often used in easy tandem with its apparent cousin 'postmodernism', one of the phenomena to which it presumably relates – viz. societies that have been colonies and are now not – would include (thinking just of the modern period) the USA, Haiti and most of the Latin American countries, all of which became in this particular sense 'post-colonial' during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The advantages and drawbacks of this historical time-depth to the notion of the 'post-colonial' have yet to be determined, although it is certainly true that the term's unnuanced use in the US case – as more recently, say, with Indonesia – would foreclose the vicissitudes of the actual processes of decolonisation and their various aftermaths.

Similarly, the (largely) Australian attempt to generalise the term to include just about all English literary works produced by societies affected by colonialism has been widely criticised as tending to ditch any specificity at all (Ashcroft *et al.* 1989; McClintock below, Shohat 1992, p. 102). Yet it could be argued that there is a wider sense in which, for example, Britain in the 1990s is a post-colonial country – a usage which asserts that the having of colonies cannot just be sloughed off by the gesture of sending a minor member of the Royal Family to preside over the raising of a new flag. The effects of having been a colonising power are still visible in political life, and still permeate that society's cultural production.

'Postmodernism' and its cognates have been at the centre of cultural debate in the west – and especially in Britain and the USA – at least since Fredric Jameson's 1984 article 'Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism' – although the term itself was regularly used by critics such as Ihab Hassan in the 1970s and was generalised into a cultural concept of some scope in 1979 by Jean-François Lyotard's *La Condition postmoderne*, the immediate stimulus for Jameson's attempts to think through the phenomenon of the postmodern as the cultural correlate of late capitalism. Whatever one's views of what is now commonly referred to as 'postmodern theory' – and the contributors to the three Essex symposia have been mostly although not unanimously hostile to its concerns and tendencies – the volume of analysis and discussion has at least allowed certain discriminations to emerge, between 'the postmodern', 'postmodernity' and 'postmodernism' for example, or even between 'post-modern' and 'postmodern', discriminations that have perhaps been most useful when returned to questions of 'modernity' and 'modernism' (cf. Barker *et al.*, eds 1992). Although it shows distinct signs of generating the same heat, and although the equivalent cognates are presumably available, the field of the 'post-colonial' has not yet been developed in the same (arguably scholastic) manner in the relatively few years since its entry into theory (though see Shohat 1992, p. 101 and Mishra and Hodge 1991). The editors have not, therefore, tried to impose any uniformity on the various formulations in the papers that follow – nor should variations of usage

be taken as the tokens of significant theoretical claims; though in this Introduction we have distinguished between 'post-colonial' used as a temporal marker and 'postcolonial' etc. to indicate the analytical concept of greater range and ambition, as in 'postcolonial theory' or the 'postcolonial condition' persuasively defined by Graham Pechey (below p. 153).

Nobody at the Essex symposium wanted simply to defend the term 'post-colonialism' *tout court*, though opinions varied as to its usefulness as an initial marker. The indiscriminate and often unhelpful proliferation of the term 'postmodernism' has prompted a healthy scepticism towards the rapid and often merely fashionable adoption of easy labels – a scepticism no doubt strengthened by the attacks on Fredric Jameson's attempt to make use of the idea of a literature of the 'Third World', a term of similar scope (Jameson 1988 and Ahmad 1989; and see the recent contextualisation of Ahmad's argument provided by his *In theory* (1992)).

We have maintained 'postcolonial theory' in our title, in part because – although initially intended only as a phrase within the working title – it was the rubric under which the papers at the Symposium were given; and in part because an interrogation of the implications of the term can to our minds be the stimulus to necessary reflections on the current state of literary and cultural studies within a global context. Herein lies the hub of an arguably crucial distinction between the areas designated by the signifers that cluster around the poles of 'the postmodern' and 'the postcolonial' respectively. Whatever its descriptive currency, 'postmodern' remains a problematic analytic concept because there is little agreement as to whether the term that forms its second part belongs to the register of the historical, the cultural, the socio-economic or the literary, all of which use 'modern' in different and in some cases quite incompatible ways (*pace* Marshall Berman's attempt to hold them all together). 'Colonial' is less of a problem: there may be legitimate discussion as to when European colonialism began (1095, 1292, and 1492 could all make claims), as to the very different forms colonialism has taken (Spain in America, England in India, etc.), and as to the immensely complex business by which the ends of colonialism are often now achieved by other means. Certain places in the world are also likely to remain challenges to such a formulation (though this is hardly uniquely true of 'postcolonial'): Ireland, Puerto Rico, South Africa. It would, however, be naive to imagine that such discussions and further discriminations are in any way *prevented* by the currency of the term 'postcolonial'. Just the opposite would appear to be the case to date, as Anne McClintock's chapter here on the 'pitfalls' of the term both exemplifies and acknowledges.

European colonialism was a real historical phenomenon that has had massive consequences for the world order. The currency of postcolonial theory has tended to bring into focus (or at least has been part of a larger process which has brought into focus) the centrality of imperial and colonial

issues to areas of study, such as the early modern period or the nineteenth-century novel, from where they traditionally have been given scant attention; and has encouraged the development of a critical and theoretical vocabulary which can deal with such phenomena – a trend to which this present volume bears witness.

Until the currency of 'post-structuralism' as a term coincided with the widespread adoption of Derridean-inspired reading practices (which interrogated prefixes with inquisitorial enthusiasm) – culminating in the familiar brouhaha surrounding 'postmodernism' and creating the vortex into which 'postcolonialism' as a term was sucked – 'post-colonial' seems to have proceeded along its own trajectory relatively unnoticed, being employed largely as a catch-all term to refer to countries that had once been colonies and are now independent: *Europe and Africa: issues in post-colonial relations* (Cornell, ed. 1981) is a representative title of this kind, although the formulation goes back at least as far as the well-known UNESCO collection from 1970, *Race and class in post-colonial society*. Other, more recent examples of the kind suggest that this generally unreflective but not especially problematic descriptive use continues to gain ground (see, for example, Olinder 1984, Neuberger 1986, Bayliss-Smith *et al.* 1989, Mitra 1990, Mayall and Payne, eds 1991).

In their Introduction to the collection of essays *Past the last post: theorizing post-colonialism and post-modernism*, Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin (1991) suggest that postcolonialism can be characterised as having two archives, related but not co-extensive, one which constructs it as 'writing... grounded in those societies whose subjectivity has been constituted in part by the subordinating power of European colonialism', and a second in which the postcolonial is conceived of as a set of discursive practices involving '*resistance* to colonialism, colonialist ideologies, and their contemporary forms and subjectificatory legacies' (1991, p. vii). This is a useful formulation. The different emphases of the two 'archives' are certainly to be seen throughout the range of chapters in the present volume, and there is clearly an internal debate over the relationship between the two, especially on the question of identifying and recovering the voices of resistance (see the chapters by Benita Parry and Neil Lazarus).

It might also be argued, though, *contra* the emphasis of Adam and Tiffin's volume, that postcolonialism, as scholarship and theory, relates more closely in its development (in the work of Said, Spivak and Bhabha, say) to the insights of that broad body of theory referred to as post-structuralism than to the postmodern phenomenon with which it is now contemporary. Simply put, postcolonial theory began from the recognition that the complex processes of colonialism and its aftermath needed for their proper analysis – especially at the discursive and psychological levels – a conceptual vocabulary made possible by post-structuralist theory (although in no sense simply *provided* by

it). (Cf. Shohat's suggestion that it is most usefully thought of as 'post-anti-colonial-critique' (1992, p. 108.) 'Aftermath' is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's term, a useful metaphor inasmuch as it both hints at the destructive effect of the colonial mower (read Gatling gun) and suggests in the rich mixture of the 'math' something of that transculturated residue that will form, for better or worse, the loam of future cultural production. 'Hybridity' and – to name the process – 'hybridisation' are the terms now most commonly associated with the attempt to theorise the ambivalence of this colonial aftermath. Annie Coombes's chapter contains an extended discussion of the terms, but they also provided a recurrent motif throughout the Symposium (for further discussion, see Bhabha 1993).

Mary Louise Pratt's chapter, 'Transculturation and autoethnography: Peru 1615/1980', gives several salutary reminders about the complexity of the issues at hand. To begin with she takes us back to Peru in the sixteenth century, the high period of Spanish imperialism in the Americas, paradigmatic of one kind of relationship between metropolis and colony, and of a sort very different from the deeply intimate relationship between Europe and the Orient, as studied by Edward Said, or from the genocidal clearing of the land that would mark the territorial establishment of later American nation states such as the USA and Argentina.

Three useful terms form the foundations of Pratt's chapter, the two in the title plus 'contact zone', a phrase she uses, as she explains in her recent book *Imperial eyes*: 'to refer to the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict . . .'. 'Contact zone' might sometimes look synonymous with 'colonial frontier', but while that latter term is grounded within a European expansionist perspective, 'contact zone' attempts to 'invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect' (Pratt 1992, pp. 6–7).

In fact, 'contact zone' correlates closely with the introduction of the term 'tribal zone' into recent anthropological work on colonial warfare: 'that area continuously affected by the proximity of a state, but not under state administration' (Ferguson and Whitehead, eds 1992, p. 3). In both cases the use of the word 'zone' indicates the importance of seeing the colonial encounter as productive of novelty – new spaces, new languages, new tribes – rather than simply a matter of subjugation or imposition. 'Contact' is a term that Pratt takes from linguistics, where contact languages refer to improvised languages that develop among speakers of different native languages who need to communicate with each other, usually in the context of trade. Such 'pidgins', as they are also called, become 'creoles' when they have native speakers of their own (Pratt 1992, p. 6).

This 'zone' is, amongst other things, a space in which the colonised respond and resist, collaborate and adapt, communicate and imitate. 'Transculturation' is a term that suits both characterisations of the zone: coined by a Cuban sociologist in the 1940s to replace the reductive concepts of acculturation and deculturation, it has been adapted into anthropological discussions of the colonial process and is here used by Pratt as a key term to help understand the ways in which 'members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture'.

Pratt offers two particular examples from the contact zone, Guaman Poma's extraordinary *New chronicle and good government* (1615) and the *tablas de Sarhua* (1980), contemporary painted panels, in both of which cases text and image stand in complex relationship to each other. Both are termed by Pratt 'autoethnographies', one of the characteristic indigenous responses from within the contact zone, and defined as texts 'in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them', constructed in response to and in dialogue with those representations and involving a selective collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the metropolis or conqueror.

There is here some recasting of literary history with a newly defined Latin American literature seen not as an offshoot of Spanish, or even as an adaptation of it, but as a fulled creolised development in which indigenous forms had a part to play: *testimonio* is one contemporary genre whose understanding can be enriched by this historical sense. In the particular case of Guaman Poma, his book was originally not recognised as text at all (because partly in Quechua), then not recognised as having anything to do with the colonial encounter, then not read with any understanding of its discursive complexity. It is still in no sense a canonical text, but Pratt – along with the critics she cites – has moved it on to the stage.

In not dissimilar vein to Pratt's analysis of the 'contact zone', Simon During discusses the border that was supposed to exist between the self-designated 'civilised' and their 'primitive' others and which runs like a stripe through the colonial period, constantly changing locations, thicker in some places than others, but never shrinking to the bare line which metropolitan thought imagined. At its widest that 'border' becomes a fully-fledged contact zone of the kind that Guaman Poma inhabited; at its narrowest it is merely the beach that European sailors walked across in the Caribbean or Pacific islands (cf. Dening 1980). During's chapter focuses, though, not on the experiences of those who actually crossed and re-crossed that border, such as Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre or Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, but on the Enlightenment writers who straddled or traversed it in fiction or in theory.

During's chapter is cast as an enquiry into the problem of identity-formation in the Enlightenment period, when traditional, filiative forms of identity were being challenged. It asks what new signs of individuality were

invented in a society which had repudiated inherited rank and family position. The title of the paper, 'Rousseau's patrimony', is half ironic – for Rousseau notoriously abandoned his children – and half serious since he was a key figure in the theorisation of legitimate power based on something other than family lineages. A host of intellectuals, including those that During calls 'modernist primitives', can be said to share in Rousseau's patrimony. Yet the notion of 'inheritance' is in this context, he shows, deeply problematic. Accordingly, During re-conceptualises 'inheritance' in terms of a repeated negotiation of a metaphorical border formed by the opposition between the present and the past, superstition and reason, despotism and liberty. More often than not this border passes between one generation and the next, especially between father and children. Or again, the border might be construed geographically as the division between the 'civilised' and 'savage' worlds. What makes this enquiry so complex and interesting is that the figures at its centre, Rousseau and Diderot, do not unequivocally occupy one side of the border or the other.

The patriarchal form of society, which Rousseau projected into the immaturity of the species, could easily be displaced on to the geographical plane. It is only a short step, then, to twist an enlightened opposition to patriarchal forms of power into a legitimation of colonial expansionism. More often, though, 'unpoliced' societies were themselves seen to be crossed by a conceptual border: as During remarks, 'they were patriarchal *and* they marked the threshold of that state of nature on which society ought to be grounded'. The contradictions this double valence caused in Rousseau's thought are clear: society marks a loss because children accept patriarchal authority and so lose their natural autonomy; yet at the same time it is the gain of knowledge passing from generation to generation.

From generational struggles, During moves to the way in which the relationship between husbands and wives was theorised. Again, the setting for this enquiry is displaced on to the 'unpoliced'. In Diderot's 'Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage', for example, an anti-patriarchal conception of familial freedom sits uncomfortably with a notion of male sexuality as naturally more aggressive and urgent. In this text and others, sexual violence is seen as one of the components of a destructive but necessary energy which propels men over the 'border' into the future, annihilating identity on the way.

A final identity dissolving/forming technique discussed by During is what he calls 'self-othering', which involves the appropriation of elements of another's identity. This could take the form of transvestism, adopting Oriental or other exotic attire, 'going native' or, somewhat later, becoming a 'Bohemian' artist. More important though, and certainly more available to women, is the fictional realm of romance in which self-othering is propelled by sexual desire. Here the unique self is precipitated through fusion with a particular object-choice. The individuating effect is all the more pronounced

when the choice is exotic: During offers a reading of Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* as just such a self-othering romance, which rounds off a paper which is a contribution to the postcolonial re-reading of the relationship between the dominant European intellectual tradition and the literature produced during the colonial era, but which also contributes to a process of re-thinking the Enlightenment that works counter to the simplicities propounded by Lyotard (cf. Hulme and Jordanova, eds 1990).

One of the threads running through the Symposium discussions and inflecting the fairly constant interrogation of the notion of the postcolonial was the pedagogic context. In the final session there was a discussion of 'transnational literacy' as an increasingly common and desirable skill which enables teachers to construct ambitious courses which challenge canonical orthodoxies without those teachers necessarily claiming 'expert' knowledge – in the traditional sense – of what they teach: even having, it was claimed, a responsibility to 'refuse to refuse', that is not to use 'lack of expertise' as a reason not to accept the pedagogic challenges. A certain degree of 'constitutive ignorance' could be, it was argued, a positive factor – especially given the obfuscatory role that claims to 'expertise' have often played within the academy.

This pedagogical situation was invoked by Peter Hulme, as he explains at the beginning of his chapter, 'The locked heart: the creole family romance of *Wide sargasso sea*', as a possible justification for the terminology of postcolonialism: it operates with some effectivity precisely at the level of such transnational literacy, a function which should not be scorned. Even here, though, the argument can work both ways. In a recent essay Ella Shohat writes about the *negative* implications of the very acceptability of 'postcolonial' as a term in the academy when sharper formulations such as 'imperialism' and 'geopolitics' frighten the horses at curriculum committees (Shohat 1992, p. 99). For Hulme – and this may be one example among many we came across of different nuances on different sides of the Atlantic – there are genuine gains made by the introduction of such terms as 'postcolonial' into the atrophied course-lists of British universities; with the corollary that real gains do not become disastrous losses just because cases are successfully made and demands acceded to.

Hulme's case with respect to *Wide sargasso sea* and postcoloniality is, however, a modulated one since he is responding to the danger of using the term as a loose catch-all which fails to acknowledge, or to see the need even to account for, the specificities of particular texts produced in particular historical circumstances, dangers that Anne McClintock (this volume) is as aware of as Ella Shohat. The proper response to this danger, Hulme argues, is to treat texts like *Wide sargasso sea* with the same amount of historically-informed attention as has conventionally been lavished on the canonical texts of the western tradition – if employing it to more point. In other words, the

specificity of *Wide sargasso sea*'s rootedness in the West Indian, and even more particularly the Dominican, situation needs recognition and study – however many more difficulties that study might entail (cf. Hulme, note 4). The substance of Hulme's chapter offers a preliminary account of what such 'local knowledge' (as he calls it) might suggest for a reading of the novel, reconstructing the work of literary production as a familial 'compensation' which re-inscribes – in compelling fashion – the colonial violence of the 1840s through a rewriting of one of the most resonant English fictions of that decade, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Hulme traces in some detail the changes that *Wide sargasso sea* makes in the course of that 're-writing': chronological adaptation brings it into line with Rhys's own family history; topographical transpositions represent not simply a substitution of Dominica for Jamaica but the 'intertwining of "Jamaica" and "Dominica"'; and changes in the family relationships also inflect the materials closer to Rhys's (Lockhart) family history. But even behind the family romance, there is, arguably, another history: Hulme's reconstruction of the Dominican record from archival material of one sort or another, while not wishing to short-circuit the 'fraught relationship between literature and history', none the less suggests the occlusion involved in the process of compensation.

But if part of Hulme's project is, as he says, 'to validate the local and the particular, even the familial', and thus to affirm the cultural differences that colonial discourse characteristically homogenises, this is not to say that it is impossible to move out from the particular to a wider historical context, in contrast to the postmodernism which begins and ends with the anecdote or the *petit récit*. Invoking Paul Gilroy's revisionist notion of the Atlantic world, Hulme is able to emphasise what Brontë and Rhys ultimately share in 'a larger world of which the locality forms only a part'. But this, in turn, is not again to 'collapse differences, but to argue for the need to understand the complex trafficking that exists between texts (and their authors)'.

This distinction is worth pausing over. In the postcolonial context the arguments for giving due consideration to the local are firstly that the discourse of colonialism has always operated by making the local (colonised) place secondary to the metropolitan centre, its history calibrated according to an external norm; and secondly that the stereotyping simplification of colonial discourse works by a similarly reductive dismissal of 'local' distinctions: its theatre is populated by figures like 'the Oriental', 'the savage', and 'the Indian', who have been divorced from particular times and places. Postcolonial work is, then, to a degree re-constitutive: to begin to understand local geographies and histories and to allow them to count in a way previously denied, are crucial counter-hegemonic moves.

There are, however, dangers to be avoided, notably that of falling back into an obsession with specificities, which can become another version of the empiricist fallacy in which all attempts to theorise are answered by the

supposedly irrefutable case of a counter-example – a fallacy of which the anti-theoretical theoreticism of some postmodern thinking is merely a special, and specially pernicious, case. As Bruce Robbins puts it, in an excellent discussion of these issues: while we must always avoid the 'easy generalisation', we need to retain the right to formulate difficult generalisations (1992, pp. 174–5). In other words, a commitment to 'particularity' is not *ipso facto* a rejection of the very possibility of any totalising knowledge and of the grounding of a politics in that knowledge; nor is it an end in itself – the local must be valued for something other than its 'localness'. Indeed, at the end of the day, like most terms that form binary oppositions (usually in this case with 'cosmopolitan'), a way will have to be found of overcoming the dualism (cf. Robbins 1992; Pechey below, pp. 154–7).

As we have already mentioned, one of the most prominent concepts – if it is a concept – of the postcolonial theoretical debate is represented by the term 'hybridity'. Certainly it was much invoked, and criticised, at the Symposium. In her chapter, 'The recalcitrant object: culture contact and the question of hybridity', Annie E. Coombes interrogates this term from the perspective of a critical discussion of an important recent series of exhibitions which, in a strategy that seemingly departs from the binary culturalist model of 'the west' and 'its other', foregrounded instead transculturated objects, and declared themselves harbingers of a new postcolonial consciousness. While accepting the potential strategic value of hybridity 'as an important cultural strategy for the political project of decolonisation', Coombes none the less questions critically the ways in which hybridity 'is transformed . . . in the narratives of the western art and ethnographic museum and [asks] what relations of power and transgression it can still articulate there'. In doing so, she argues with some trenchancy the need to avoid what she sees as the uncritical celebration in museum culture of a hybridity which collapses the heterogeneous experience of racism into some kind of scopic feast where the goods are displayed in enticing configurations which do nothing to challenge or expose the ways in which such difference is constituted in the first place and operates as a mechanism for oppression.

In tracing some of the terms which the notion of hybridity has given rise to historically – it is part of her case that this notion has a sedimented history, 'a particular pedigree in the discourse of both art history and anthropology' – Coombes turns back to a moment in the disciplinary history of British ethnography when debates over the assignation of aesthetic value to material culture devolved around precisely one such term: the issue of 'racial purity'. The example chosen is that of the Benin bronzes which, along with the Elgin marbles, have been at the centre of the museological and political debate about the restitution of cultural property. In 1897 the British Museum put on public exhibition three hundred cast brass plaques from Benin, causing considerable popular and scientific speculation about how works showing such

extraordinary technical skill and naturalism had been found in such quantities in Africa, including suggestions that their origin was the product of trans-culturation with Portuguese or Egyptian influences.

In charting the multiple discourses in which the significance of the Benin bronzes and ivories was imbricated, Coombes discusses the two key instances of representation of Beni women and that of Benin City from different discursive sites, in particular drawings and photographs in the contemporary illustrated press, and the supposedly more academic representations produced by the anthropological community. Then, focusing closely on the complex ethnographic and art-historical debate about the presumed 'degeneracy' of colonised, and particularly African, races and their material cultures, she demonstrates that there is a complicated, and often contradictory, ensemble of interests at work in this discursive formation, not least those of anthropology itself as it increasingly sought a public audience, professional recognition, disciplinary status as a science and state funding. Even when a 'purely' African origin was attributed to the bronzes – at some risk to the prevailing stereotypes of European racial superiority – it was arguably part of a strategy to enhance the status of the Ethnographic Department of the British Museum (at the expense of Egyptology) as the keeper of such anomalous works of African art; and more generally that of ethnography as such, as the scientific and ideological 'keeper' of the power to determine such questions.

Coombes brings the theme of the professionalisation of anthropology up to date by tracing the way in which it has sought to legitimate itself by proclaiming the need to conserve and preserve the artefacts in the custody of art and ethnographic museums, a rhetoric she dubs 'the disappearing world' phenomenon. But this in turn raises issues of the extent to which the museological discourse is in fact complicit with the colonial subjugation, the silencing and extinction, of the cultural producers themselves. The picketing by Survival International of the 'Hidden Peoples of the Amazon' exhibition at the London Museum of Mankind in 1985, and the boycott by the Lubicon Lake Cree of the exhibition 'The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples' which was mounted in Calgary in 1988 to coincide with the Winter Olympics and sponsored by Shell Oil, both exposed the way in which these recent exhibitions, while devoted to the 'hybridity' of cultural contact, none the less suppressed the indigenous peoples' accounts of such contact, and in particular neglected their continuing struggles for land rights which the museum's discourse of cultural conservation occludes.

Finally Coombes discusses the 1989 exhibition 'Les Magiciens de la Terre' at the Centre Beaubourg, 'one of the more notorious exhibitions to foreground hybridity as a condition of post-coloniality'. Coombes questions whether the exhibition's postmodern technique of bricolage, assembling artefacts indifferently from a wide variety of different cultures, does not in fact 'simply

revert to the pitfalls of the older cultural relativist model, concealing the distances between cultures while insisting that all are equal'. Coombes concludes her critique of the museological discourse of hybridity by suggesting that, in contrast to the 'philosophical relativism' of postmodernism's 'celebration of flux and indeterminacy as the product of the mobility of global capital', we need 'an account of "difference" which acknowledges the inequality of access to economic and political power... and would articulate the ways in which such differences are constituted, not only in relation to the western metropolitan centres', allowing us to explore the 'specific conditions' of hybridity, 'the how and the who of it'.

Ethnographic writing also features in Zita Nunes's chapter, 'Anthropology and race in Brazilian modernism', although in Brazil – in another salutary reminder of the complexity of these matters – the ethnography concerned was not charting a 'primitive' or 'savage' otherness across the civilisational divide, as in the cases studied by During and Coombes, but was in the process of forging a *national* identity which would – so the story went – break free of available European models. The problem which such writing had to confront was that the national search conducted by the political elites for a moment of authentic origin on which to construct a fixed identity for present and future always foundered on the irredeemably miscegenated reality of the Brazilian population. This conflict was addressed, Nunes writes, 'through the elaboration of a myth of racial democracy', a myth her chapter is concerned to unpick. In the course of her argument, Nunes takes issue with the well-intentioned efforts to define race as a construct independent of biology and with the optimistic view that Brazil has succeeded in 'deconstructing' race by means of miscegenation. Both views, she claims, can be used as a smokescreen behind which profoundly racist hierarchies continue to operate.

Her chapter focuses on the *modernista* movement of the 1920s, still an indispensable reference point for all discusions of Brazilian life and culture, and increasingly turned to as a forerunner of 'hybrid' cultural movements on account of its innovative and imaginative mixture of indigenous and avant-gardist motifs, symbolised by the famous *Manifesto antropófago* (*Cannibalist manifesto*). However, in an unusual move, Nunes sets her study of *modernismo* – and in particular of its classic text, Mario de Andrade's *Macunaíma* – against the anthropological and ethnographic writing of the 1920s and 1930s which had been investigating and theorising the racial complexity of modern Brazil. The key figures here are Gilberto Freyre, author of *The masters and the slaves*, and Paulo Prado, to whom Andrade dedicated *Macunaíma*. This contextualisation enables Nunes to pose some difficult questions to *Macunaíma*'s classic status within and outside Brazil, unravelling and exposing its occluded relationship to a 'local history' – looking at the materials from which Andrade drew and the alternatives he ignored –

in a way which has parallels with Hulme's reading of *Wide sargasso sea*.

The 'cannibalistic' thought of the Brazilian *modernistas* is tied in quite overt fashion to the metaphorics of the body – eating, incorporation, sickness. In these texts, however, Nunes finds expressed the fear that Brazilian modernisation – which would link Brazil to Europe and the USA – is threatened by a weakness and illness perpetuated by miscegenation, the black body figured as an alien being that may weaken the healthy (white) body. The implicit strategy for overcoming the threat was to eliminate the black race by assimilation into the white, even though the demographics of Brazil make that an absurd proposition.

The technique advocated in the 'Cannibalist manifesto' is to digest what European sources are useful to the creation of a national culture and to excrete the rest. *Macunaíma*, selectively borrowing from indigenous myth, re-inscribes the connection between race, contagion and illness and re-enforces a tripartite hierarchy of the races. Nunes demonstrates that the metaphor of ingestion turns out to apply to a white digestive system into which African and Indians are fed, assimilating what it can use, excreting the rest: 'For all the celebration of racial mixing that the cannibalistic approach to writing implies, and contrary to the usual readings of *Macunaíma*, there is no racial mixture in this book.' Instead we have the narration of racial democracy *and its residue*.

On one level Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's chapter, 'How to read a "culturally different" book', is, as she says, about the representation of a temple dancer. Amongst other things. Interwoven with reflections on teaching practice (what it means to work in Cultural Studies), on situatedness (what 'a feminist reader or teacher in the USA might wish to know'), and on the relationship between English and the vernacular languages (a topic also discussed by Graham Pechey for South Africa), is Spivak's analysis of R. K. Narayan's 1958 novel, *The guide*, contrasting the book with the later film version. The dancer, Miss Nalini, the temple dancer or *devadāsi*, is the character in the novel to whom Spivak gives most attention, looking at the available sources for grasping the kind of representation that Narayan makes, notably at Frédérique Marglin's uncritical *Wives of the god-king* (1985), and at the evidence available from the 'ancient texts'.

Spivak's careful reading of *The guide* is a gesture in itself, affirming the need to take seriously – from a postcolonial perspective – the realist fictions associated with an emerging sense of nationhood, recovering, in other words, what might otherwise be sloughed off as uninterestingly pre-post-colonial, in the most dangerous and shallow use of the term 'postcolonial' as roughly equivalent to 'magical realist' in its promise of a hyper-reality of international or at least mythical proportions cut adrift from any of those moorings in the muddy estuaries of local realities that might baffle – or so the argument goes – that 'casual unmoored international audience'.

Spivak wants, through her reading and the reflections that accompany it, to convey some sense of the complexity of what she calls the 'neocolonial traffic in cultural identity': the 'differences and deferments within "national identity" and "ethnic minority"'. In these circumstances the worst move is to slap down the label 'postcolonial' and move on; so, to describe the novel, she insists on the term 'Indo-Anglian' which, through its very unfamiliarity, provides what she elsewhere calls 'a clue to the road-blocks to a too-quick enthusiasm for the other', a further correlate to the 'sargasso' that Hulme discusses at the end of his chapter.

By contrast, the film version of *The guide* belongs to an era of post-Independence India when multi-lingualism and secularist multi-communalism were still the official ideology. With an eye on current tendencies in India, Spivak reads this as particularly instructive as a symptom of the erosion of decolonisation.

At a moment when questions of canonicity and pedagogy are so central to discussions in the humanities, Spivak offers an object-lesson in how the texts of 'global English' need to be read historically and/or politically in order to make the multicultural canon really count.

Graham Pechey's chapter, 'Post-apartheid narratives', brings the 'post' of a particular social regime in South Africa into connection with the 'posts' of postcolonialism and postmodernism, and opens with some valuable reflections on these terms in the context of recent South African history. In that country, Pechey suggests, the project of rapid modernisation by force and the stable if violent oppositions it engendered have come to an end. It is a moment when the long-standing discourses of anti-apartheid must undergo some reconsideration. These had typically aligned themselves unproblematically with modernity against what was construed as the anti-modern system of apartheid. The limited conception of the political conceived by these discourses is also now in question: for Pechey, the time has come to 'listen to the unconscious of political reason' and to engage with its cultural and spiritual repressed.

Pechey argues that the thesis which has long informed ANC policy, that apartheid constitutes a form of 'internal colonialism', needs to be re-read in this new context. That thesis maintains that in South Africa the metropolis and colony co-exist geographically in a tiered class-formation; it is a version of the Leninist narrative of history tailored to the special circumstances of South Africa. Against this vision, Pechey insists on the importance of the micropolitical and on the validity of the co-existence of heterogeneous histories which can be brought to light by putting *discourse* at the centre of analysis and looking at the multifarious ways in which collectivities and subjectivities actually constitute and reconstitute themselves. Yet, at the same time, he is prepared to concede that in actual fact the Enlightenment discourse of universal humanism as embodied in the Freedom Charter of 1955 was 'the most powerfully mobilising document of the country's leading democratic

movement'. Still, in its widely divergent receptions among a diversity of groups it might equally be considered a postmodern document.

The second section of Pechey's chapter looks closely at the polyglossic linguistic situation in South Africa. The Charter's authorised version is in English and, given the political prominence of Afrikaans, it is perhaps obvious that English should be touted as the language of neutrality, of the public sphere, and even of resistance. Pechey's post-apartheid perspective would seek to complicate this obviousness first by pointing out that the initial chapter of South Africa's forced modernisation was 'written in English' and then by observing that Afrikaans is far from being a 'white' language since it originates as a Dutch creole, which in turn developed from a pidgin spoken to and by slaves. As a product of 'the contact zone' it has, perhaps, richer resources for 'carnivalisation': Pechey certainly regards writing in the new hybrid forms of Afrikaans and English as a powerful decolonising gesture.

There is, however, a darker side to the post-apartheid situation. After the breakdown of the simple confrontation of state violence met by revolutionary counter-violence, there appears a proliferation of forms of violence. In the shadow of assimilationist ideologies we find movements of both the black and white right seeking to revive the old narratives of resistance to modernisation. Yet the binary logic of confrontation was also significantly altered, he shows, by the rise of Black Consciousness, a movement which shifted emphasis away from exclusively political aims and means and towards psychocultural and spiritual issues.

Writing in the 1980s demonstrates, on the one hand, blacks finally becoming the authors of their own narratives and, on the other, whites responding to the shock of the demise of liberalism. Pechey writes out of a conviction that postcolonial writing in South Africa (always clearly postmodern too, as an institution) challenges some of the assumptions associated with the Marxist/post-structuralist conception of literature as the imaginary solution of ideological contradictions. Ending on an optimistic note, Pechey sees both sorts of writing in South Africa as now working to reduce polar conflicts and engage in 'a dialogue of creoles of all "colours" overheard by the world'; though this optimism is immediately tempered by a postscript. The last word on apartheid is clearly yet to be written.

For obvious reasons, an examination of nationalism has once again become unavoidable for social and cultural theorists – as was reflected in the discussions at Essex, where nationalism was the only topic that threatened to polarise opinion. Both Benita Parry and Neil Lazarus start from the overlap between dominant (western-centred) disparagements of nationalism and deconstructive readings of the phenomenon in current theories of colonial discourse. Both look again at anticolonial nationalism and its contemporary theorisation by way of suggesting the continuing indispensability of national

consciousness to the decolonising project, a perspective that can usefully be contrasted with Pechey's.

The eventual topic of Benita Parry's chapter ('Resistance theory / theorising resistance, or two cheers for nativism') is Négritude, the forerunner of various kinds of 'nativism' that have tended to receive short shrift from the more theoretically sophisticated forms of postcolonial theory. She encourages a fresh consideration of Négritude as part of a larger project to theorise the variety of *resistances* to colonial power. Like Neil Lazarus, whose chapter follows hers, Parry is drawn back to the seminal work of Frantz Fanon, on which much postcolonial theory has been a commentary; to which she adds a consideration of his Martinican mentor, the poet and teacher Aimé Césaire, one of the founders of the Négritude movement in the 1930s.

Parry begins by identifying a fault-line within contemporary counter-hegemonic work around the question of whether or not the objective of restoring the colonised as the subject of its own history simply inverts but perpetuates the terms established by colonial discourse, while remaining complicit with its assumptions. Crucial issues of ethnic, national and cultural identity are raised by such a question, which is also addressed in many of the other chapters in this volume – especially those by Lazarus, Lloyd and Rosaldo. Parry's own position clearly asserts the value of attention to those moments of clandestine or overt countervailance, arguing that no system of coercion or hegemony can ever wholly determine the range of possible subject-positions. Her prolegomenon to the case of Négritude considers the arguments against this view, accepting the force of some but arguing the case for the 'unsententious interrogation' of even the most infrequently defended – of which Négritude is now the paradigm case. Her conclusion is that 'two cheers' can still be raised for this nativist project.

The usual criticism of the recuperation of figures of colonial resistance is that some mythical aboriginal essence is being sought, a quest both theoretically absurd – since we no longer accept even the idea of authentic *origins* – and historically blind – since the effects of colonial oppression cannot simply be wished away. Parry shows that the modes of resistance are themselves more subtle than this criticism would suggest, citing Wilson Harris's example of limbo-dancing and Edouard Glissant's theory of *métissage*, and drawing support from Stuart Hall's 'carefully modulated case' for a form of ethnic identitarianism.

Parry's reassessment of Négritude involves re-reading its dialogue with its critics, notably the Haitian René Depestre, who attacked its lack of political edge, and the 1960s generation of African philosophers and scholars, who were keen to distance themselves from what they saw as the spurious 'Africanism' of their predecessors. These sections of Parry's chapter also provide a useful background for Lazarus's discussion of Christopher Miller's *Theories of Africans* (1990), a book which takes such criticisms of supposedly

European-derived 'nativisms' much further. One of Miller's main targets is the work of Frantz Fanon: Parry, as one might expect, offers a usefully modulated account of Fanon as an ironic figure, recognising the literary subtlety and ideological complexity of his work, especially the early *Black skin, white masks* – her account of which complements Neil Lazarus's equally sympathetic but not uncritical reading of Fanon's second masterpiece, *The wretched of the earth*.

In his 'National consciousness and the specificity of (post)colonial intellectualism' Lazarus addresses the significance of forms of nationalism in the struggle against colonial domination, and considers the role of this term in some postcolonial theory. He begins by embracing Fanon's critique of bourgeois nationalism in the essay 'The pitfalls of national consciousness' written at the height of the Algerian war of independence, while wanting, with Fanon, to keep a space open for what, following Anwar Abdel-Malek, he terms a 'nationalitarian' consciousness as indispensable for the anti-imperialist aspiration of oppressed peoples. Lazarus examines the problematic character of Fanon's nationalitarianism in relation to the specific history of the Algerian revolution, and also discusses the complexity of such a notion in relation to the Marxist tradition of thought on the national question – Fanon having been criticised both for abandoning Marxism by having dissolved the perspectives of class struggle and socialist revolution into national aspirations; and for not abandoning a Marxism inextricably wedded to European paradigms such as that of the nation, which are seen by many as wholly inappropriate to African societies, as no more than colonial impositions.

As the title of his chapter implies, a central issue for Lazarus in the debate about national consciousness involves the role of the intellectual, a question which has been aggravated by recent debates in postcolonial theory where it has been in many ways a key concern – as indeed it was at the Symposium. He cites Benita Parry's criticism of the disparaging of nationalist discourse in recent, especially post-structuralist, scholarship on (post)colonialism, and notes how this is linked, in Parry's view of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's work specifically, to an '"exorbitation" or exaltation of intellectualism'. A corollary of the apotheosis of the postcolonial intellectual is the subordination or erasure of the evidence of what Parry calls 'native agency'. Lazarus doubts whether this charge can be consistently brought against Spivak, seeing the latter's theory of subalternity as more a theory of colonial representation than an account of native agency, even at the risk of privileging a 'deconstructive interrogation' over a 'radical historiography'.

Lazarus gives an extended and illuminating account of what he constitutes as a debate between Parry and Spivak, endorsing and criticising aspects of both their positions. He is particularly struck by Spivak's warning that we should be as watchful for the continuing construction of the subalternity in nationalist discourse as in that of imperialism, but none the less, where

Spivak 'balks' at the claim of a Ranajit Guha or an Edward Said that 'it is indeed possible for a movement or an alliance or a party to "speak for the nation"', it is on the possibility of this possibility – the nationalitarian rather than nationalist perspective – that Lazarus ultimately insists.

Crucial to this insistence is the relationship between the intellectuals and 'the masses'. Lazarus acknowledges the dangers of speaking *to* (rather than *for* or *with*) the people. But if there has been an 'exultation of the intellectual', there has also been an equally irresponsible '*intellectualist anti-intellectualism*, a post-Foucauldian disavowal of the problematic of representation, such that the very idea of speaking for others comes to be viewed as a discredited aspiration, and secretly authoritarian'. But Lazarus is convinced, with Adorno, that the socially instituted division between the intellectuals and the masses can be dissolved only by the transformation of society, and that until then theoretical dissolutions of the problem are merely ideological: Indeed, opposition to the notion of a national consciousness, and to a role for intellectuals in its formation, can itself become a radical elitism when in disparaging nationalism as a European derivative it ignores the 'huge investment of "the masses" in various kinds of nationalist struggle'. Citing the work of an intellectual and activist like Amilcar Cabral as an instance, Lazarus speaks of a dialectical process, a passage, in which intellectuals must play a key role, from 'local knowledge' – the terms are Cabral's – to 'the principles of national and social revolution', an 'articulation' which can be 'forged' between 'cosmopolitan intellectualism and popular consciousness'.

Lazarus invokes Partha Chatterjee's view of anticolonial nationalist discourse having a relation of difference from the bourgeois nationalism from which it none the less derives. He is, however, keen to separate this sense of the 'difference' of nationalitarian consciousness from Homi Bhabha's sense of the 'ambivalence' of colonised subjectivity, finding the latter's account of colonial mimicry, for example, too much the generalisation of a specific form, and thus too inattentive to the 'vastly differential thrusts, effects and modes of domination/subjection of colonialism as practised at different times by different powers in different parts of the world, or even within single but "unevenly developed" colonies'.

Lazarus concludes with a firm defence of the role of the intellectual in the formation of an appropriate nationalitarian consciousness. He cites Said on the contribution of intellectuals *as intellectuals* to the cause of anti-imperialism in the post-1945 era, and, evoking Lenin on the necessity of revolutionary theory, stresses the pressing need to construct – in Gates's phrase – a 'counternarrative of liberation'. Returning finally to the Fanon of the conclusion of *The wretched of the earth*, Lazarus invokes the idea of the possibility of a new humanism 'predicated upon a formal repudiation of the degraded European form'. Rather than abandoning 'the terrain of universality' to the projection of European forms (and still less buying into the postmodernist

response to the indefensibility of bourgeois humanism by 'abandoning the very idea of totality'), Lazarus affirms instead 'the specific role of postcolonial intellectualism: to construct a standpoint – nationalitarian, liberationist, internationalist – from which it is possible to assume the burden of speaking for all humanity'.

'Ethnic cultures, minority discourse and the state' by David Lloyd begins by defining the difference between the first two phrases of his title. While ethnic culture concerns the traditions, histories and internal differences of a community, minority discourse is formed in the teeth of the dominant state formation which threatens to destroy it. These terms are deployed to contest the major conceptions of culture circulating in the relatively new academic field of Cultural Studies. According to Lloyd there are three fundamental definitions in circulation: the notion of the autonomy of the aesthetic sphere prefiguring a moment of freedom and reconciliation; the Marxist critique of autonomy which makes culture determined by socio-economic factors; and finally, the anthropological definition of culture as the life-world generally. None of these accounts is ultimately acceptable. The first option is particularly suspect since for an ethnic culture reconciliation with the dominant culture would mean its own demise. Yet the other options also have weaknesses, not least that they do not treat their objects as specifically *cultural* products.

The particular problems thrown up by ethnic cultural formations are used by Lloyd to unsettle and re-conceptualise the whole field of Cultural Studies. In their light we are better able, for example, to reflect on the function of the aesthetic within the state. The aesthetic sphere has a synchronic position in its distinction from political and economic spheres and a diachronic moment as the imagined apex of the human narrative. From this vantage, ethnic cultures are often seen as not yet having developed autonomous art because of historical damage. The same is often said of working-class culture by those who seek in it a simulacrum of high cultural forms. This, Lloyd implies, is another function of the aesthetic.

Lloyd also shows how the particular circumstances of ethnic/minority culture cast doubt on the defining terms of aesthetic high cultural theory – totalisation and typicality. This is because of their deep heteronomy, formed as they are not only by the shift between the ethnic culture and its relation to the state but also by divisions within such communities which are crossed by differences of gender, class and even ethnicity. The typical Mexican or black is a concept imposed from outside. Or, as Lloyd observes, ethnicity is a 'retrospective hypothesis'. This leads on to another observation concerning the double and contradictory formation of the ethnic minority by the dominant culture: it wants to assimilate individuals so that they become subjects of the state, yet at the same time it wants generic representatives of their culture of origin. The exigencies of minorities throw the whole discourse of 'equal rights' into question. That discourse, Lloyd claims, 'is inseparable from the racist structure of its political formation' as it demands an abstract public sphere in which people constitute themselves as individuals and as such it is in direct contradiction with the constitution of minorities, that is, as generic not as individual subjects.

Like Neil Lazarus, Renato Rosaldo focuses in his chapter, 'Social justice and the crisis of national communities', on the emancipatory possibilities still extant in the idea of 'nation', though he wants to imagine national communities whose solidarity emerges more from diversity than it does from the usual calls for homogeneity. This desire, Rosaldo begins by admitting, is partly conditioned by what he calls the 'dreamtime' of the Gulf War, a frequent refererence point in Symposium discussions and a conflict Rosaldo likens to the battle of Wounded Knee when US cavalry massacred the Sioux at Pine Ridge.

Rosaldo adds two other initial vantage points for his discussion. The first pits two Mexican positions on national culture: that the very idea is the invention of a few urban intellectuals who ignore the pervasive presence of the indigenous cultures throughout the country; and that there is a real Mexican national culture which is precisely a culture of resistance to attempts at US domination. The second, Chicano perspective sees national culture from the point of view of a marginalised and excluded group whose history does not appear in the school textbooks – any more than does that of the Native Americans, African Americans or Asian Americans. The materials of Rosaldo's essay primarily concern the Philippines, but the underlying questions relate equally closely to the pressing matter of national community in the USA and are hardly without relevance to other 'western' societies.

Rosaldo charts some of the changes over the last twenty-five years in the Ilongot relationship to the nation state of the Philippines. The Ilongot simply do not regard themselves as Filipino, and yet have to respond as 'the nation' imposes itself in their land in a variety of ways – through landgrabbing, mining, resettlement projects, etc. As a result, over a very short span of years, Ilongot children have come to belong to a world very different from that of their parents – to the extent that the older generation now speaks of the younger as no longer Ilongot.

The Ilongot case allows Rosaldo to float the idea of 'cultural citizenship', which he takes to encompass both legal definitions and more local and informal notions of membership and entitlement: a hybrid term appropriate for an era in which ethnic minority groups constantly have to negotiate the vertiginous straits between strictly local identities and participation in the state. Rosaldo is interested in the consequent testing of the often tacit and fluctuating boundaries of imagined local and national communities.

The argument proceeds by way of an extended discussion of Benedict Anderson's influential book, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (1983), noting in particular his use as an example

of the Philippine novel *Noli me tangere* by José Rizal, a text to which Rosaldo returns later in his chapter to demonstrate now the 'horizontal egalitarian relations among men' in the novel are hydraulically related, as he puts it, to the exclusion of women, a dimension of the imagined community's fraternal bonds somewhat lacking in Anderson's analysis.

Anne McClintock's chapter, 'The angel of progress: pitfalls of the term "postcolonialism"', has frequently been referred to in this Introduction for its cautionary scrutinising of the term 'postcolonialism'. Her essay interrogates the theoretical and critical assumptions built into the very idea of post-colonialism, and represents a sustained address to the analytic and descriptive usefulness of the term when applied to the variety of contemporary national and regional situations. Many of the contributors to this book find the term useful, even indispensable, in some contexts (as McClintock herself does): none would deny the dangers of its slack deployment or want to suggest that it does not contain the kinds of pitfalls she outlines.

McClintock begins by examining the contradictory ideas of history that lay behind the presentation of the 1991 New York 'Hybrid State Exhibit'. While it was committed to a 'postcolonial' understanding of hybrid or multiple historical time, the physical organisation of the exhibition none the less articulated a linear, progressivist model of historical development, or, in McClintock's words, 'one of the most tenacious tropes of colonialism'. If postcolonial *theory* has 'sought to challenge the grandmarch of western historicism', as a *term*, '"postcolonialism" none the less re-orients the globe around a single, binary opposition'. McClintock remarks that this results in 'an entranced suspension of history', and the term 'reduces the cultures of the peoples beyond colonialism to *prepositional* time. The term confers on colonialism the prestige of history proper.' In other words, the world's multitudinous cultures are marked, 'not positively by what distinguishes them, but by a subordinate, retrospective relation to linear, European time'.

If the term is theoretically reductive, equally it radically oversimplifies descriptively the variety of 'crucial geopolitical distinctions'. It flattens the uneven development of post-colonialism; in its Eurocentrism it obscures who the colonisers and who the colonised may be or have been; it may be 'prematurely celebratory'; it is unable to distinguish the different forms of global domination that are extant (for example, 'colonisation', 'internal colonisation', and 'imperial colonisation'); it obscures the difference among the forms of decolonisation which have taken place; and so on. Citing a host of examples from throughout the world, McClintock's emphasis is on the variety and difference among types of colonial, neocolonial and post-colonial situations.

The reductionism of the term – from which McClintock wants to rescue the orientation of the newly emerging discipline of postcolonial studies – is part of a broader problem of historical theory. In a concluding section of her

essay McClintock seeks to account for the ubiquity of '"post"-words' in contemporary intellectual life. She attributes this phenomenom to a 'global crisis in ideologies of the future, particularly the ideology of "progress"'. According to her argument, the combined collapse of the US myth of progress (attendant on a shift of foreign policy after the global economic crisis of the late 1970s), and the later breakdown of 'communist progress' with the demise of the Soviet Union, has produced a 'doubled and overdetermined crisis in images of future time'.

'For this reason', McClintock contends, 'there is some urgency in the need for innovative theories of history and popular memory, . . . a *proliferation* of historically nuanced theories and strategies . . . which may enable us to engage more effectively in the politics of affiliation, and the currently catastrophic dispensations of power'. The alternative will be to 'face being becalmed in an historically empty space in which our sole direction is found by gazing back, spellbound, at the epoch behind us, in a perpetual present marked only as "post"'.

The Symposium itself was a valuable, entertaining and comradely event, and we would like to thank all the participants for making it so, and for their contributions to the volume that has resulted. In addition we would like to acknowledge the help of the following: The University of Essex, and the Departments of Art History and Theory and of Literature at Essex for contributions to the funding of the project; Lesley Theophilus for hospitality; Wendy Harfield for secretarial assistance; and Ian Pindar for making the index.

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Transculturation and autoethnography: Peru, 1615/1980

MARY LOUISE PRATT

> Que se nos guarden nuestras buenas costumbres y leyes que entre nosotros a abido y ay, justas para nuestro gouierno e justicia, y otras cosas que soliamos tener en tiempo de nuestra ynfidelidad.
>
> May our good customs and laws be retained that among us have existed and exist, suitable for our government and justice, and other things that we were accustomed to having in the time of our infidelity. (Quoted in Murra 1980, I, p. xix)

So stated a group of several hundred Andean indigenous leaders in a petition addressed to the Spanish crown in 1562, some thirty years after Pizarro's landing at Cajamarca, and ten years before the fall of the last Inca, Tupac Amaru, in 1572. This one-sentence item (like any other in this remarkable document) exemplifies the intricate transcultural pragmatics of communication under conquest. I begin, then, with a brief reflection on it. The language is Spanish, of course, native to none of the addressors of the document. It was produced here almost certainly by a bilingual scribe from conversation conducted in more than one Andean language. The mode of communication, alphabetic writing, is also European, there being no systems of writing indigenous to the Andes. The speech act, a royal petition, is also Spanish but probably intersected with the indigenous speech repertoire.

'Que se nos guarden' the statement begins, in a Spanish construction that is grammatically neither active nor passive voice, and translates as something like 'May it be brought about that [our laws and customs] are maintained for us' or 'May we be enabled to maintain [them]'. The subjunctive mode refers, as subjunctives do, to an uncertain future from a present marked in this case by cataclysmic upheaval. It calls forth a possibility, as subjunctives also do, from the position not simply of the conquered subject, but of the leadership of the conquered – authorised to address the conqueror, but in his language and discourse, and in tones of supplication. Who will determine this future? Who could and might ensure the retention of customs and laws, and how? The Spanish construction states no agent. In the aftermath of the clash between empires, lines of power and legitimacy are unclear, and the

mutual responsibilities of conquerors and conquered to each other are under negotiation.

'The good laws and customs that exist and have existed among us', says the second clause. The sequence of perfect and present verb tenses ('exist and have existed') marks the historical watershed of the European invasion in the invader's language, but from the point of view of the invaded. And of course, on this side of that before-and-after is the pronoun 'we', the collective Amerindian subject brought into being by the rapacious descent of the Spanish you/they. In the Andean petition that 'we' asserts itself (in the conqueror's language) as a subject specifically of culture (our laws, customs, other things it was our custom to have) and of history (that which existed, exists, should be maintained). Paradoxically (for such is the post-conquest state), the indigenous demand for continuity is predicated of a moral universe already assumed to be radically altered. The alteration is expressed by two terms: *buenas*, 'good', and *ynfidelidad*, 'infidelity' – may we keep the *good* laws and customs from the time of our *infidelity*. The bifurcated bases of Christianity – good/evil; Christian/infidel – are presupposed by the Andean speakers, or perhaps invoked as the shared basis for communication between themselves and Spanish authorities. The Andean leaders, so it seems, agree to insert themselves into these moral paradigms. Thus while calling for continuity with the pre-conquest world, they constitute themselves as other to their pre-conquest selves. Addressing the invader the leaders situate themselves within the Christian moral universe, and outside the Spanish legal, political and social universe. A highly strategic manipulation of the invader's linguistic and ideological apparatuses, surely. And a potentially challenging one, too, given its premise that goodness and infidelity can and did co-exist.

The invader's language appropriated by the invadee to address the invader; the invadee's interests expressed in discursive apparatuses adapted from the invader and redirected back at him. Not an unusual situation historically, not at all. But perhaps one that could bear more reflection, both by students of colonialism and imperialism and by students of language. One of the significant projects of what is called postcolonial scholarship has been to work out ways of studying colonialism and imperialism from the perspective of its non-European subjects. Perhaps it is this project that most clearly links postcolonial scholarship on the one hand and anti-imperial and decolonisation movements on the other. What, it has been asked, are the forms of socio-historical agency of the subordinated subjects of colonialism and imperialism? How can the negotiated, radically conflicted character of colonial relations be more fully represented? Work on such questions has made possible readings such as the one just done of the Andean petition, and indeed has brought texts like that one into the sphere of scholarly and political understanding. New questions have been raised by such inquiry.