Reviewing Imperial Conflicts

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Edited by

Ana Cristina Mendes and Cristina Baptista

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INTRODUCTION

ANA CRISTINA MENDES
AND CRISTINA BAPTISTA

This collection adopts a broad conception of "conflict" by examining sites of conflict which include, but are not limited to, historical battlefields, contemporary areas of political strife and fictional renderings of imperial conflicts. A re-consideration of imperial conflicts is particularly pertinent in the case of the British Empire, which established an extremely varied and complex world in time and space. In its first phase, the North American colonies performed an important role in establishing the Empire. It then reached its height between the end of the nineteenth century and World War I by means of military domination in India, Southeast Asia and Africa, expanding its influence after 1919 up to the process of de-colonization, which commenced from the middle of the twentieth century. With so many diverse cultures involved and the ever-changing legitimate arguments proposed for colonialism, the British Empire created a vast volume of work of the most varied kind, including biographies and auto-biographies, travelogues, periodicals, political and economic essays, anthropological studies, paintings, sculptures, architecture, photography, poetry, stories and novels, all of which transmitted a plurality of voices with heterogeneous values and perspectives about the colonial experience.

To understand the contentious nature of imperialism, in addition to exploring the concepts of Empire, colony, colonialism and imperialism, it is important to analyse these individual and collective experiences, including the arguments for the benign "European civilizing mission," and the denunciation of covert economic interests. Another factor to be examined is the aggressive affirmation of British cultural superiority at the time, and the gradual consciousness-raising as to the value and legitimacy of different cultures conducive to dissonance, doubts and questions about the universality of the dominant culture and its manifestations. A third area of interest is the way in which the hierarchical social values in force in England at the time were transplanted to the colonies, and were subsequently transformed or maintained through political and domestic authority or were caught up in the collision between the attraction and repulsion towards other cultures.

This volume of essays seeks to investigate, across a wide range of texts and with an emphasis on the notion of conflict, the various forms, objects and modes of circulation that sustained the "European civilizing mission." Around two controversial and conflicting papers, authored by Robert JC Young and Bernard Porter, in this collection other researchers come together to complement the debate and attempt to offer resolution to the thorny issues that arise from reviewing conflicts within the particular context of the British Empire. Under the aegis of history and cultural studies, as well as film studies, the contributors in this collection share the common purpose of reviewing imperial conflicts while arguing for their own research agendas. From opposition and conflict, new perspectives on colonial and postcolonial cultural processes are gained. It is a known fact that when ideas are challenged this process enables the development of different approaches. In fact, the two papers by Robert JC Young and Bernard Porter, which fully substantiate the opinions or positions put forward by their authors, both frame the discussion and fuel the debate on various topics related to the broad theme of imperial conflicts.

In Part II, Porter's essay extensively demonstrates that contestation is endemic to the imperial enterprise. The critic concludes his essay by stating: "British imperialism was always fundamentally conflicted. We cannot understand modern Britain, or its imperialism, without grasping this." In a complementary fashion, Part I, inspired by Young's notion of postcolonial remains (or what remains after the boom and contestation of the relevance of postcolonial studies), sets the stage for a reconsideration of the role of the postcolonial in the twenty-first century. Framed by these essays, each chapter offers an in-depth study of particular texts with the problem of conflict as its core emphasis. Within this framework, this collection studies literary, cinematic, media and critical instances of imperial conflicts. The contributors identify and engage with recent pressing debates about imperial and postcolonial identity politics, achieved by an interplay of theoretical insights from the areas of literature and film studies, as well as from the fields of cultural and discourse analysis, drawn together to probe diverse manifestations of conflict.

In Part I, Robert JC Young launches the discussion around postcolonial studies, focusing on the challenges currently faced by this approach and its consequences for current critical production, arguing that this perspective continues to offer a very productive basis for transformative critique. Five different approaches to the postcolonial follow this opening paper, ranging from a study by Ana Cristina Mendes of a 2001 novel which presents a critical assessment of neo-imperial practices at the dawn of the third millennium, to a new insight by Felicity Hand on the episode of rebellion

which took place in 1905 in German East Africa, an early twentieth-century example of colonial resistance, to an overview by Bill Phillips of South African crime fiction, perceived as "an illuminating window on the Rainbow Nation," and understood as a non-canonical genre which expresses relevant local issues such as poverty. The chapter closing this section, authored by Mário Vítor Bastos, invites a comparison between two recent literary texts by Caribbean writer Derek Walcott in the context of the poet's lifelong production, focusing on a personal experience of aging and a balance of opposites.

The literary authors discussed in this subpart verify Edward Said's contention that "[m]any of the most interesting postcolonial writers bear their past within them—as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending toward a new future, as urgently reinterpretable and redeployable experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory taken back from the empire."[1] Acknowledging the importance not only of the literary but also of the visual as a material expression and forum of debate on Empire and colonialism, Part I includes a subsection dedicated to painting and film. Maria Jesus C. Relvas underlines the relevance of the Tudor Myth in the birth of the Empire and Patricia Rodrigues exemplifies the common procedure during the imperial period of naming local cities after women related to prominent colonial officers. In the closing essay of this subpart, Esther Pujolràs-Noguer showcases the contribution of film to the revisiting of the colonial past, and approaches the similarities between two pictures about colonial encounters—the fight for Indian independence and Columbus' arrival in the Americas—blending past with present, with the filmmakers, in a broad sense, being changed in the process.

Part II departs from a distinct ideological standpoint. A postcolonial approach allows for a re-reading of the Victorian past (and not only in Britain) and thus reveals new protagonists of the colonial experience. The first subpart underlines the public intervention of women, either at war or peace. Witnessing the outspread of feminist movements and the rising relevance of women in society, two essays recall joint personal and professional commitment, responsible for Victorian women's intervention in the public arena, be they as journalists, like Mary Frances Billington (Teresa de Ataíde Malafaia), or as barristers and writers, like Cornelia Sorabji (Cristina Baptista), whose contribution to Indian ethnography and conflict with local institutions was rendered in contemporary literature of diverse genres. Fuelling the readers' imagination, Victorian narratives,

[1] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 34-35.

besides witnessing conflict, explored several aspects of colonial experiences like the thug phenomenon as examined by Isabel Alonso-Breto, an example of the complexity of the label within the colonial context, responding to an agenda of domination. Stressing a different aspect of the relation between the British and the notion of Empire, the following essay by Stephanie Lonsdale enlightens an everyday life theme concerning the influence of British food in the Raj, when domestic practices were recreated in India by local cooks, and through which the practices of colonial attitudes can be traced. Another theme within the Victorian genres, discussed by Iolanda Ramos, is that centred on the explorers and their experiences, of which the search for the source of the Nile is an example and that resulted in a quarrel between Richard Francis Burton and John Hanning Speke, an episode that reveals tensions of class and stresses the role of the explorer as a scientific observer.

The closing section of Part II is constituted by three essays—authored by J. Carlos Viana Ferreira, Elisabete Mendes Silva and Carla Larouco Gomes—that highlight how public opinion mobilized issues during the imperial period. These chapters are prompted by Bernard Porter's essay about the Empire's contestation in Britain between the beginning of the nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth-century and the arguments that grounded it, rooted in the national belief in liberalism. This school of thought in its version of imperialism was at stake in the controversial foundation of the State of Israel, involving intellectuals like Isaiah Berlin in the debate. Another source of sheer ideological debate was the phrase "clash of civilizations," problematized by Leonard Woolf in the 1920s as a personal interpretation of the conflict of civilizations. Alongside the discussion about the legitimacy of colonialism and empire other issues, such as race, aroused deep controversy and were fuelled by imperial expansion, as exposed in an essay that explores the contrast between L.T. Hobhouse's views on social justice and the theories of social Darwinists.

The innovative perspectives present in this collection make it truly distinctive; furthermore, the very range of texts discussed broadens and deepens conceptual understandings of imperial conflicts. As Young argues in his essay, what characterizes the postcolonial is "the continuing projection of past conflicts into the experience of the present, the insistent persistence of the afterimages of historical memory that drive the desire to transform the present." The editors believe that the strength of this collection lies not only in the originality of its content and in the wide scope of critical approaches adopted by the contributors, but most relevantly in the fact that it tries to make sense of, in Young's phrasing, the "unfinished business" that was the British Empire.

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PART I.

POSTCOLONIAL AFTERLIVES

POSTCOLONIAL REMAINS*

ROBERT JC YOUNG

What remains of the postcolonial? Has it already perished, leaving only its earthly relics, forgotten books, abandoned articles floating in cyberspace, remnants of yellowing conference programs? So one might think on reading the obituary announced by *PMLA* in 2007: "The End of Postcolonial Theory?"[1] There, a group of apparently former postcolonial critics pronounced "it" over. The members of the forum, for the most part, discussed postcolonial theory as if it were an entirely American phenomenon, and even there as something of interest only to English departments. In that Anglophone characterization, the forum concurred with the more recent view of the French political scientist and director of research at the prestigious Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) in Paris, Jean-François Bayart—except that for Bayart the postcolonial is far too alive, prompting him to write a whole book objecting to postcolonial theory as an unpleasant Anglo-Saxon intrusion into the purity of French thought.[2] Despite its noisy appearance in contemporary French intellectual culture, Bayart dismisses the postcolonial by claiming that its sources are entirely French, even if its identity is Anglo-Saxon, which therefore makes "postcolonial theory" altogether superfluous.

The desire to pronounce postcolonial theory dead on both sides of the Atlantic suggests that its presence continues to disturb and provoke anxiety: the real problem lies in the fact that the postcolonial remains. Why does it continue to unsettle people so much? The aspiring morticians of the postcolonial concur in scarcely relating it to the world from which it comes and for which it claims to speak: that outside Europe and North America. The desired dissolution of postcolonial theory does not mean

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[1] Editor's Column, "'The End of Postcolonial Theory?' A Roundtable with Sunil Agnani, Fernando Coronil, Gaurav Desai, Mamadou Diouf, Simon Gikandi, Susie Tharu, and Jennifer Wenzel," *PMLA* 122 (3) (2007): 633–51.

[2] Jean-François Bayart, *Les études postcoloniales, un carnaval académique* (Paris: Karthala, 2010). For a response, see Robert JC Young, "Bayart's Broken Kettle," *Public Culture* 23 (1) (2011): 167–75.

that poverty, inequality, exploitation, and oppression in the world have come to an end, only that some people in the U.S. and French academies have decided they do not want to have to think about such things any longer and do not want to be reminded of those distant invisible contexts which continue to prompt the transformative energies of the postcolonial.

"Postcolonialism" is not just a disciplinary field, nor is it a theory which has or has not come to an end. Rather, its objectives have always involved a wide-ranging political project—to reconstruct Western knowledge formations, reorient ethical norms, turn the power structures of the world upside down, refashion the world from below. The postcolonial has always been concerned with interrogating the interrelated histories of violence, domination, inequality, and injustice, with addressing the fact that, and the reasons why, millions of people in this world still live without things that most of those in the West take for granted. Clean water, for example. This is not to say that "the West" is an undifferentiated economic and social space, and nor, of course, are those countries outside the West, as economic booms transform nations such as Brazil, China, and India into new dynamics that contribute to a shifting of paradigms of economic and political power that have certainly modified the sensibility of colonial dependency.[3] Far from being over, the twenty-first century is already the century of postcolonial empowerment. The widespread anxiety that this produces provides a further reason why Western academics want to deny the realities of the postcolonial.

The postcolonial will remain and persist, whether or not it continues to find a place in the U.S. academy, just as it did not need academia to come into existence. Postcolonial theory came from outside the United States,[4] and has never involved a singular theoretical formation, but rather an interrelated set of critical and counterintuitive perspectives, a complex network of paronymous concepts and heterogeneous practices that have been developed out of traditions of resistance to a global historical trajectory of imperialism and colonialism. If anti- and postcolonial knowledge formations were generated by such circumstances, peripheral

[3] The claim that the economic rise of India and China outdates the postcolonial forgets that rapid economic development in Asia is hardly new as a phenomenon: China and India are in fact latecomers, the latest in a long line of countries that have experienced such economic booms—they were preceded in Asia by Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. And yet the postcolonial has hardly become irrelevant to these postboom "tiger" cultures: indeed, a preoccupation with postcoloniality has only intensified there.

[4] See Robert JC Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

as they may seem to some metropolitan intellectuals, now, as in the past, the only criterion that could determine whether "postcolonial theory" has ended is whether, economic booms of the so-called "emerging markets" notwithstanding, imperialism and colonialism in all their different forms have ceased to exist in the world, whether there is no longer domination by nondemocratic forces (often exercised on others by Western democracies, as in the past), or economic and resource exploitation enforced by military power, or a refusal to acknowledge the sovereignty of non-Western countries, and whether peoples or cultures still suffer from the long-lingering aftereffects of imperial, colonial, and neocolonial rule, albeit in contemporary forms such as economic globalization.[5] Analysis of such phenomena requires shifting conceptualizations, but it does not necessarily require the regular production of new theoretical paradigms: the issue is rather to locate the hidden rhizomes of colonialism's historical reach, of what remains invisible, unseen, silent, or unspoken. In a sense, postcolonialism has always been about the ongoing life of residues, living remains, lingering legacies.[6]

The British Prime Minister David Cameron, for example, forgot to consult his Special Advisor in Postcolonial Studies before he led his November 2010 trade and business delegation to China, billed as the biggest ever in British history. Cameron clearly had not been reading Amitav Ghosh's 2009 novel, *Sea of Poppies*, either.[7] When the British ministers arrived at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing for the reception, they wore their Remembrance Day poppies in their jacket lapels, as people in Britain do every year in the week running up to Remembrance Sunday. The poppies symbolize the sacrifice of more than a million servicemen who have died on active service since World War I. The flowers reminded the Chinese, however, of a rather different poppy—the opium poppy, and therefore the Opium Wars fought by Britain against China in 1839–42 and 1856–60, which among other things, led to the concession of the British colony of Hong Kong. When Prime Minister Cameron and the British delegation arrived wearing their poppies in November 2010, the Chinese officials asked that they remove them, since they considered these poppies "inappropriate." In an echo of the famous incident when the British ambassador Earl McCartney refused to kowtow

[5] Arif Dirlik, *Global Modernity: Modernity in the Age of Global Capitalism* (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007).
[6] Cf. Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004); Achille Mbembe, *Sortir de la grande nuit. Essai sur l'Afrique décolonisée* (Paris: La Découverte, 2010).
[7] Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (London: John Murray, 2008).

before the Emperor in 1793, Cameron refused to back down and insisted on wearing his poppy. When he followed this refusal with a lecture on human rights, the historical irony was apparent to all but himself.

Whereas the British often forget the Opium Wars, just as Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States forget the international "eight-nation alliance" sent to Peking to put down the Boxer "Rebellion" in 1898–1901, in China the historical injustices of its semicolonial past lingers on in official memory, repeated tirelessly to every tourist who visits the Summer Palace in Beijing, where visitors are reminded that the original was destroyed by British and French troops in 1860. The perpetrators of violence forget far sooner than those subjected to their power. Derrida used to argue that there will always be something "left over" and in that sense the postcolonial will always be left over. Something remains, and the postcolonial is in many ways about such unfinished business, the continuing projection of past conflicts into the experience of the present, the insistent persistence of the afterimages of historical memory that drive the desire to transform the present.

The postcolonial remains: it lives on, ceaselessly transformed in the present into new social and political configurations. One marker of its continuing relevance is the degree to which the power of the postcolonial perspective has spread across almost all the disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, from classics to development theory to law to medieval studies to theology—even sociology, under the encouragement of postcolonial-minded scholars such as Arjun Appadurai and Paul Gilroy, has abandoned its former narrow national focus to turn to an interest in globalization in the present.[8] So many disciplines have been, so to speak, postcolonialized, along with the creation of related subdisciplines such as diaspora and transnational studies, that this remarkable dispersal of intellectual and political influence now makes it difficult to locate any kind of center of postcolonial theory: reaching into almost every domain of contemporary thought, it has become part of the consciousness of our

[8] Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner and Mayra Rivera (eds.), *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004); Lorna Hardwick and Carol Gillespie, eds., *Classics in Postcolonial Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Piyel Haldar, Law, *Orientalism, and Postcolonialism: The Jurisdiction of the Lotus Eaters* (London: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007); Lisa Lampert-Weissig, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010); Cheryl McEwan, *Postcolonialism and Development* (London: Routledge, 2008).

era. Inevitably, in each discipline in which it has been taken up, the postcolonial has been subtly adapted and transformed in different ways—in sociology's turn to globalization, for example, the historical perspective so fundamental to postcolonial studies gets largely removed. But how has the postcolonial itself changed in response to the historical transformations that have been occurring in the last decades, and, even more to the point, how should it change in the future? What conditions and situations have risen to a new visibility? What have been the greatest challenges to postcolonial analysis? And, continuing in the necessary mode of perpetual autocritique, what aspects of its own theoretical framework have limited the reach of its own radical politics?

In a reconsideration of the role of the postcolonial in the era of the twenty-first century that attempts to begin to answer these questions, I will focus on contemporary issues that have involved what can be characterized as the politics of invisibility and of unreadability: indigenous struggles and their relation to settler colonialism, illegal migrants, and political Islam. None of these fall within the template of the classic paradigm of anticolonial struggles, but they all involve postcolonial remains as well as prompting political insights that show the extent to which the postcolonial remains. What can be learned from them? They all invoke historical trajectories that have hitherto been scarcely visible, but which offer potential resources for critiques and transformations of the present. Since political Islam has highlighted questions of religion and secularism, I consider the example of the history of practices of toleration in Islamic societies, in which otherness is included rather than excluded. This in turn prompts the need for significant theoretical revision of a problematic concept appropriated by postcolonial theory from philosophy and anthropology: the idea of the Other.

The politics of invisibility

What has changed in the twenty-first century, from a postcolonial perspective? To answer the question in the first instance conceptually rather than historically, what the postcolonial eye can see more clearly now are the ways in which, like the conflictual meanings of Cameron's poppy, postcolonial remains operate in a dialectic of invisibility and visibility.

One of the most influential theoretical innovations of postcolonial theory has been the appropriation and reconceptualization of Antonio

Gramsci's concept of subaltern classes.[9] Modified and typically singularized into the idea of the subaltern, this concept has enabled subaltern historians and cultural critics to recover a whole arena of historical agency that had remained invisible while history was written according to exclusive protocols of nationalist movements or class conflict. The preoccupation with the subaltern can be interpreted more generally to suggest the extent to which the postcolonial has always been concerned with a politics of invisibility: it makes the invisible visible. This is entirely paradoxical to the extent that its object was never, in fact, invisible, but rather the "invisible visible": it was not seen by those in power who determine the fault lines between the visible and the invisible. Postcolonialism, in its original impulse, was concerned to make visible areas, nations, cultures of the world which were notionally acknowledged, technically there, but which in significant other senses were not there, rather like the large letters on the map that Jacques Lacan characterizes as the structure of the unconscious. To take a simple example, until very recently, histories of "the world" were really histories of European expansion. Even today, so-called "world literature" is only belatedly being transformed from its long historical containment within the same Eurocentric paradigm. So the politics of invisibility involves not actual invisibility, but a refusal of those in power to see who or what is there. The task of the postcolonial is to make the invisible, in this sense, visible.

Within academia, this task begins with the politics of knowledge, with articulating the unauthorized knowledges, and histories, of those whose knowledge is not allowed to count. In the world beyond, politics itself often involves a practice of acting in order to make the invisible visible so that its injustices can be redressed. A postcolonial perspective will be more alert in detecting the signs of such transformations, but it, too, can be belated in its recognition of the campaigns of subaltern historical agents. This would be the case with indigenous struggles, which have only recently come to be regarded as a central issue for postcolonial politics. The obvious reason for this is that, drawing from the history of anticolonialism that formed part of so many national narratives of emancipation, postcolonial studies did not give equal weight to the history of indigenous activism in what are, for the most part, long-standing postcolonial countries, such as those of North and South America. At the same time, there was a political-theoretical issue: indigenous activism uses

[9] For a differentiation between the Gramscian and postcolonial concepts of the subaltern, see Robert JC Young, "Il Gramsci meridionale," in *The Postcolonial Gramsci*, ed. Neelam Srivastava and Baidik Bhattacharya (New York: Routledge, 2012), 17–33.

a whole set of paradigms that do not fit easily with postcolonial presuppositions and theories—for example, ideas of the sacred and attachment to ancestral land. This disjunction, however, only illustrates the degree to which there has never been a unitary postcolonial theory—the right of return to sacred or ancestral land, for example, espoused by indigenous groups in Australia or the Palestinian people, never fitted easily with the postmodern Caribbean celebration of delocalized hybrid identities.[10] Postcolonial theory has always included the foundational and the antifoundational at the same time, indeed, it could be characterized by the fact that it has simultaneously deployed these apparently antithetical positions, a feature entirely missed by those who criticize it either as being too Marxist or alternatively too postmodern, though the fact that it is criticized on both counts is indicative. Suspicions about the foundations of established truths are not necessarily incompatible with, and indeed are more likely to be prompted by, the memories of an empirical, experienced history of colonial rule.[11]

While it is debatable whether the "third world" as such exists today, there is little doubt that the fourth world emphatically remains. With the demise of the third, the fourth world has risen to a new prominence, its issues thrown into starker visibility. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a transformation was underway in the long history of continued contesting resistance by tribal peoples, a history whose written articulation began with Bartolomé de Las Casas's *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1542), whose institutional initiatives included the setting up of the Aborigines' Protection Society by Thomas Hodgkin in 1837, and which culminated many years later in the global political campaign that produced the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007.[12] The scope of indigenous struggles, and the ways in which they have been articulated through the power of the UN Declaration and by the use of the internet and other media as a means of facilitating transnational affiliations and forms of political organization, has meant that in a new and powerful way, indigenous peoples have been able to assert themselves effectively and very visibly within an international arena against the power

[10] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 222–37.

[11] Cf. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999).

[12] Bartolomé de Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* [1542], trans. Nigel Griffin (London: Penguin, 1992); UN Declaration: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ unpfii/en/drip.html.

of the sovereign states that have oppressed them for centuries. The narrative of emancipation whose goal was national liberation through the Leninist model of the capture of the central state apparatus has been supplemented by a political dynamic that in earlier decades was only visible to radical intellectuals such as the Peruvian socialist José Carlos Mariátegui.[13] Despite these successes, however, oppressive forms of "fourth-world" internal colonialism continue to operate on every continent of the earth, particularly with respect to exploitation of natural resources that shows scant regard to the lives and lands of indigenous peoples. Who, though, is authorizing such exploitation? Thinking indigenous struggles through a postcolonial frame points to a topic that has remained comparatively neglected: settler colonialism.

In the arena of postcolonial studies, settler colonialism has managed, through its invocation of the tradition of colonial nationalism, to affiliate itself to the emancipatory narratives of anticolonial struggles—witness the widely circulated *The Empire Writes Back* of 1989, which assimilates all forms of colonial liberation into a single narrative of freedom from the imperial metropolis.[14] What this passes over is the degree to which settler colonies themselves practiced a form of "deep colonialism," a term recently revived by Lorenzo Veracini, which underscores the extent to which the achievement of settler self-governance enforced the subjection of indigenous peoples and indeed increased the operation of oppressive colonial practices against them.[15] In almost any settler colony one can think of, settler liberation from colonial rule was premised on indigenous dispossession. The emancipatory narrative of postcolonialism was not accessible to those who remained invisible within it. Indeed for them, national emancipation produced a more overpowering form of colonial rule, often enforced by a special contract for indigenous peoples distinct from that between settlers and metropolis.

The postcolonial question that remains is how indigenous emancipation, that is, the acquisition of land and rights not mediated or already conditioned by the terms of settler emancipation from which indigenous people were excluded, can be achieved. It also becomes clear that the same paradigm of sovereignty through dispossession applies to many nonsettler colonies, where indigenous minorities or historically

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[13] José Carlos Mariátegui, *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*, trans. Marjory Urquidi (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971).

[14] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989).

[15] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006).

excluded groups have found the freedom of a postcolonial sovereignty to mean comparable or even worse forms of oppression than under colonial rule, even if the political structure is that of a democracy. One leading marker of the nationalist drive for domination over heterogeneous peoples can often be located in the history of the language policies of the independent national state. What we need to recognize now is that the postcolonial narrative of emancipation and the achievement of sovereignty was in many cases deeply contradictory. The civil wars and the often continuing civil unrest that, in many cases, followed independence have often been the product of the nationalist creation of a deep colonialism that has sought to make indigenous people or other minorities invisible.

Today this practice has in certain respects become more widespread with respect to other kinds of minorities across the world. As some minorities make themselves conspicuous, others must live their lives unseen. Paradoxically, it can often be the visible minorities who are in certain respects invisible. In Beirut, when you go to a restaurant, the waiters who serve you will generally be local people, of one sort or another. But hidden below, and only visible when you go downstairs and glance into the kitchens, you see that those cooking and washing up are Bangladeshi. While indigenous peoples have been making themselves visible, a new tricontinental has developed. Not this time the militancy of the Organization of Solidarity of the People of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAL) that was developed in the 1960s, but a new subaltern tricontinental of migrants from the poorer countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, often fleeing state or other forms of violence, moving around the world in search of jobs and livelihood. These people form an invisible tricontinental diaspora, made up of refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, asylum seekers, economic migrants, illegal migrants, irregular migrants, undocumented migrants, illegal aliens. They remain almost invisible, working in unregulated conditions in building sites, hotel kitchens, brothels, cleaning lavatories, on farms, until for a moment they are thrown into sharp relief: when the media reports that the boat onto which too many are crowded has capsized off Lampedusa during the journey from Libya to Italy or off the coast of Morocco on the way to Spain or off the coast of Sudan on the way to Saudi Arabia or shipwrecked on the Australian coast at the end of the journey from Sri Lanka. These invisible migrants only move into visibility when they die in this way, or when they are arrested by border police or when they suddenly appear in their thousands fleeing war, as in the case of those who fled to the borders of Egypt and Tunisia from Libya in the spring of 2011—or when they are demonized by politicians in election campaigns. Otherwise, they remain as