

Introduction: *Queerly Postcolonial*

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PERHAPS LITERARY THEORY begins with Aristotle's *Poetics* but "the rise of theory" is quite recent. It has been closely associated with some overtly sociopolitical movements, first Marxism and feminism, then many others, including African-American studies. Two that have made a major impact since the 1980s are postcolonial theory and queer theory. In the last few years, many scholars have asserted that these are the hot areas and just walking through the door at an MLA lecture by Edward Said or Diana Fuss suggests the truth of this. But does the heat represent any sustainable flame? Or, more to my point here, what is the connection to the warm passions of those involved?

When this "hot area" comment is made to me, it has often had a personal edge. I have been involved in what is now called postcolonial studies since the early 1970s. Given that it really began with Alan McLeod's *The Commonwealth Pen* in 1961 and then the first Commonwealth literature conference in 1964, I was there quite close to the beginning. This is not true, however, of queer theory, as I began publishing and teaching in the area only in the early 1990s. Still, all my statements here on both fields are a reflection of what I see as my identity as a Canadian gay male. Where these three words fit within "postcolonial" and "queer" is part of this excursion.

"Commonwealth Literature Studies" began with Leavisite and similar methods applied to texts from the former colonies of Britain. The reference to the author of *The Great Tradition* might seem a strange one, but, as has often been noted,¹ F. R. Leavis believed ardently in the integration of literature and life and maintained that the best literary representation of human values

could be a source of such values in society. In the early 1960s, a number of concerns were expressed in Britain about the way literary humanism was proceeding in the remnants of the British Empire as its parts became independent. An example of that is found in the conference represented in a collection edited by John Press, entitled *The Teaching of English Literature Overseas* (1962). A number of participants stated that it was absolutely essential that the concept of English studies incorporate indigenous literatures in English from around the world.

One of the leading lights of this conference, and the flag-bearer of the new enterprise, was William Walsh, a Professor of Education, who subsequently published a study of Leavis. In a statement which would suit Leavis, Walsh claimed (as Press notes in his text), "the whole theme of literature is simply what it is to be a human person" (122). He and others then wished to look at humans from the Commonwealth. Thus the next stage was that 1964 conference at Leeds, which produced yet another collection edited by Press, *Commonwealth Literature: Unity and Diversity in a Common Culture* (1965). Enterprises such as the Heinemann African Writers Series would establish new "Great Traditions." Another element of literary politics was provided by Walsh's colleague, A. Norman Jeffares (the first editor of *ARIEL*, 1970-72), who recognized the Commonwealth possibilities of the Irish model. The Walsh-Jeffares intersection seems noteworthy as the base of postcolonial studies: blended with Walsh's humanism—to find the souls within these new literatures—was Jeffares's requirement of national liberation, literature as independence day.

The Journal of Commonwealth Literature began in 1965 but it had been preceded by an American journal, *World Literature Written in English*, in 1962. These seeds in the US lacked the polemical intentions of the British and were in many cases simply a reflection of immigration, as in the case of Alan McLeod, an Australian, and of institutional opportunities, such as the Modern Languages Association. Joseph Jones's time teaching in Australia led to his *Terranglia: The Case for English as World-Literature* (1965). Perhaps as a precursor of the American theory monster, Jones seemed less interested in the humans than the literary imperial-

ism suggested by his title's neologism. "In another twenty years, then—by the magic year 1984—one may venture to predict that the issue of a singular versus a plural literary history of English will have begun to resolve itself, in favor of the singular" (22). Is it too polemical to see the American assertion of Terranglia as a literary version of Coca-colonization? The American foresaw "one big English" while the British saw many little human societies in one language. Which one is the colonizer?

These moments in postcolonial theory could be compared to Elaine Showalter's two stages of feminist criticism: woman as reader, "feminist critique," and woman as writer, "gynocriticism." One might argue that the Commonwealth literature period is early gynocriticism but this might better be seen as before post-colonial criticism, just as earlier appreciations of Virginia Woolf are before feminist criticism. The base for the present is rather the anti-colonialism of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979), the equivalent of Elaine Showalter's feminist critique. There are many excellent early studies in the latter vein but the best analogy might be Judith Fetterley's *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (1978), which provides a convincing critique of male-authored fiction but almost completely avoids the obvious problem of female-authored texts. Thus *Orientalism* attacks the orientalists but has no apparent opinion on the writing of the orient.

Enmeshed in two controversial fields, I shall add to that by pursuing queer theory through one trajectory, the gay. The University of Toronto has just established a "sexual diversities" programme, which suggests one of the meanings of "queer": any sexual expression which might be seen as alternative. The most common non-pejorative use of queer, however, is more specific: a non-sexist umbrella term for gay and lesbian. I am following here only the gay side partly for obvious personal reasons but also to avoid the conflation of lesbian and feminist needs in the lesbian studies of the 1970s. Gay male studies provides a more clear focus on the concern for sexual deviance which is the base of queer theory. As has often been noted, gay criticism has not sufficiently acknowledged its debt to feminist theory, but this is primarily methodological. No reputable thinker has ever

claimed that the gay male is a logical product of feminism² but this is exactly the assertion about lesbianism made by 1960s and 1970s feminists such as Ti-Grace Atkinson.

In gay criticism, Jeffrey Meyers's *Homosexuality and Literature 1890-1930* (1977) might seem the equivalent of the "Commonwealth literature" stage, as the book concentrates on figures such as Oscar Wilde, André Gide, and Marcel Proust, the usual canon of "gaylit," although it blends with representation in discussions of Joseph Conrad and D. H. Lawrence (is the latter an insider or an outsider?). The next major stage after Meyers and other scholars with similar approaches, such as Jacob Stockinger, is the theoretical contributions of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, such as her term "homosexual panic," which explains the textual repercussions when an author represses homoerotic urges. Yet, like Said and Fetterley, her first attempts did not respond to gynocritical needs. She was beginning to see the possibility of what Stockinger had called "homotextuality," but her emphasis was still critique rather than support. One might note her deferential response to gay criticism of *Between Men*, in her preface to the second edition; she agrees with Michael Lynch's comment on the first edition: "this woman has a lot of ideas about a lot of things but she doesn't know much about gay men" (viii). She acknowledges that he "was so right," and her various comments on the topic since then describe her shift from a more strictly feminist position, in which her concern was describing the exclusionary sexism of homosociality, to identification with the position of gay men.

This, of course, is not an easy move. Edward Said's journey from *Orientalism* (1978) to *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) shows his difficulty in finding a position in support of the postcolonial voice. He touches on Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul, but his discussion of the Empire remains most comfortable not with the colonized but with such aberrant colonizers as Joseph Conrad. In many ways, this is the pain of the difference between the Leavisite discovery of the human within the postcolonial text and the poststructuralist search for fragmentation. Walsh was showing what the postcolonial text said while Said was showing what the colonial text could not say. It must seem at least somewhat

paradoxical that this most famous scholar of “the textual oppression” of the colonial subject should seem so unable to respond to the textual expression of the postcolonial subject.

“Textual expression” perhaps would be still better referred to as “creative expression.” No one has said that postcolonial criticism cannot be written. But the postcolonial critic seldom discusses a postcolonial text, except that of another critic. Some have suggested that the central division is between anti-colonial critique, of the sort done by Said, and postcolonial criticism, which analyzes postcolonial writing. If this is an apt distinction, then it looks like anticolonial critique has won and has even taken over the label of “postcolonial.” Recent discussion has used the term “postcolonialism” as though it has somehow become an ideology, or even a theology,³ although it seldom seems clear what that is. (Is anyone “anti-postcolonialism”?)

Perhaps this is the nature of today’s responses to imperialism, because while national liberation was a significant part of the Commonwealth literature venture, this was still at what has been called the Uhuru stage,⁴ after the Kenyan call for self-government. For most writers at that time, independence did not have the ironic tinge it had later. Thus academics were comfortable with a celebration of the authors and their texts. The critiques by authors such as Chinua Achebe were still sufficiently temperate that they did not disrupt such a paradigm. But the fading of the independence rose happened at the same time as the rise of French poststructuralism. As deconstruction was offering readings which often seemed in opposition to the texts being read, Michel Foucault was performing similarly subversive operations on history. Said’s *Orientalism*, with its overt debt to Foucault, thus reflects a confluence of various tributaries of the *zeitgeist*.

In my attempts at comparing the queer and the postcolonial, it is of obvious importance to avoid conflating the differences in histories. Perhaps there is today a website as racist as <www.godhatesfags.com> is homophobic, but if so I have not found it. While scholars such as Sander Gilman have made clear the pathologies associated with race, the view that non-white pigmentation represents disease, whether mental or physical, has not had mainstream acceptance in Anglophone cultures in

some time. In contrast, the perception of homosexuality as illness continues. Recent Canadian history has shown homosexuals just beginning to achieve the civil rights long accorded to racial minorities.

But also, as in that last line, I should reassert my own national position as a Canadian. "Postcolonial" is now a body of literature in the American academy, replacing a quite minor category called "Third World." As this homology has spread, like so many Americanisms spread, there is no room left for any cultures which might be postcolonial but are not "third world," "developing," or whatever is the latest euphemism for the poor and racially other (in the perception of the West). In the residue of the Commonwealth, the latter are the cultures which have been called the colonies of invasion, such as the Caribbean, South Asia, and Africa, places where the British no longer have much obvious presence, unlike settler colonies, such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, in which the dominant culture remains that of descendants of the British invaders, albeit much transformed. My comparison above, of homophobia and racism, suggests just such a narrowing of the field. Could there be a discrimination against "the postcolonial" that is beyond the usual one of racism? If there is such, it might be simply in the elision of its possibilities. While African-American criticism treats writing by African-Americans as its central concern, postcolonial criticism has little interest in writing by the postcolonials.

Routledge has become the emperor of theoretical publishing, and therefore at least a superficial assessment of these two fields can be found through examining two of its anthologies, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, edited by William Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, and *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, edited by Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin. There are many significant differences between them. The most obvious one is size. While *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* is almost 150 pages longer, it has only half as many articles. A difference in attitude is suggested by the ethnocentrism of the latter. That might seem a misnomer as the collection is certainly concerned with race but with little thought of nationality. Only three out of forty-two contributors were not

American residents at the time. One, Kobena Mercer, is British, and has now returned to Britain, and Monique Wittig is French; but the only locations for them in the biographies are their positions at American universities. Others might be in a similar position. It is as if the Americanness of gay and lesbian studies is a given that requires no justification, no explanation and no apology.

The Post-Colonial Studies Reader includes scholars from around the world, getting well beyond the emphatically American residency of the contributors in most “postcolonial” collections (and the British of most of the others). The introduction considers many of the problems in the field, such as what exactly constitutes colonialism, the tendency for postcolonial theory to become controlled by institutions in the metropolis, the importance of the intellectual analysis done *by* postcolonial societies as well as *on* them, and the importance of seeing the “settler” colonies in the contexts of postcolonial theory. This introductory emphasis on the contradictions of the field contrasts very strongly with *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, which mentions a few issues, such as the lack of historical material, but considers only one major controversy, the relationship between “gay and lesbian” and “queer.” In a very interesting example of *occupatio*, it states that “We have reluctantly chosen not to speak here and in our title of ‘queer studies,’ despite our own attachment to the term, because we wish to acknowledge the force of current usage” (xvii).

There are articles in both anthologies of course by the leaders in both fields, such as Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha in postcolonial theory and Sedgwick and Jonathan Dollimore in queer theory. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, however, has not full articles but abridgements. Some have criticized this⁵ but such an editorial approach could represent a belief in the collectivity of the enterprise, that the consideration of ideologies is more important than the singularity of the thinkers. *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* seems to think otherwise.

In both fields, the name has recently been a constant focus. The number of playful—and not so playful—turns on “postcolonial” might be suggested by the title of one collection, *Past*

the Last Post (Adam and Tiffin). Still, the competitors to “post-colonial literatures,” such as “New Literatures in English,” seem to have little purchase, most notably because in the case of cultures such as India the English part of the literatures might be relatively new but the literatures of the culture are ancient. That early contestant, “World Literature in English,” seems to have lost, if only because this “world” does not seem to include Britain and the US, a strange version of world.

So “postcolonial” rules, although not very happily. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* presents the editors’ view of the word: “it is best used to designate the totality of the practices, in all their rich diversity, which characterize the societies of the post-colonial world from the moment of colonization until the present day” (xv). And yet they consider this only in the specific cultures which are the object of their study, the old Commonwealth. They maintain the hyphen in order to keep their focus on colonization, in opposition to the slippage in other “posts” such as postmodernism and poststructuralism. Yet while the term “post-modern” certainly began in a temporal relation to “modern,” it now has generally accepted meanings that have little to do with that association, such as reification. Arguably, the same could be said about features of “postcolonial” such as hybridity. “Post-colonial” has become, like “postmodern,” a thing in itself.

The move by *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* to dismiss the problem of “queer” seems a bit ingenuous. In an issue of *differences* devoted to “Queer theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities,” the arguable founder of the field, Teresa de Lauretis, states that the “term ‘queer,’ juxtaposed to the ‘lesbian and gay’ of the subtitle, is intended to mark a certain critical distance from the latter, by now established and often convenient formula” (iv). In a note, she asserts the complete difference between her term and “Queer Nation,” at least partly, perhaps, to slip away from the latter’s difficult history, but also to avoid the sense of common identity asserted in Queer Nation. Queer Nation acclaimed a unity of those who deviated sexually from the norm. As well as gays and lesbian they included bisexuals and others who perhaps could best be described as “sex radicals.” Queer Nation wished to be a problem to the straight world while queer theory wishes to

problematize it. Thus it seems appropriate that the introduction to *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* ends by reasserting the term it avoids: “our choice of ‘lesbian/gay’ indicates no wish on our part to make lesbian/gay studies look less assertive, less unsettling, and less queer than it already does” (xvii). Do they wish the queer theory, which is unsettling to the self, or the queer politics, which is unsettling to the hegemonic “normal”?⁶

And which kind of “queer” is writing it? There are a number of male-written feminist texts, such as David Noble’s *A World Without Women*, but they are a very small part of the whole. Similarly, few contemporary texts about race are by “white” critics.⁷ To date, this is also true of queer theory, with Sedgwick the blazing exception, although this is changing, particularly in comments on lesbian literature by heterosexual women. Of course, just calling the writers homosexual is problematic in itself. As Foucault observed, homosexual as an adjective for sexual acts is clear while homosexual as a noun might be too broad a category to be useful. In any case, the homosexual identity is too much in flux for simple denotation. Still, this remains a field which like other minority discourses is a blend of analysis and the hortatory, a dissection and yet a call to arms.

Postcolonial cultures might seem less arbitrary, but they also have their contradictions. Alan Lawson has named the settler cultures “the second world.” This is an historical misnomer but it reflects a feeling that such places must be situated in terms of the colonies of invasion, the “real” postcolonial, those cultures which can no longer be called “the third world.” Every time that latter phrase is used I recall a time when I asked a class to describe the “third world woman.” One Kenyan student said, “Not me.” It seemed a particularly apt comment as the phrase seems much like Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” The “third world woman” is without agency or is not a “third world woman.” But postcolonial literatures are the speech of that woman who is not of the third world.

Recently books such as Deepika Bahri and May Vasudeva’s *Between the Lines* seem moving to make “postcolonial” a specifically South Asian paradigm. The reasons for this are no doubt complicated. One possibility is the importance of the work of

Spivak and Bhabha, which has placed Indian examples at the centre of our discussions. Another is that the Indian subcontinent represents centuries of interaction between British imperialism and an indigenous culture that was literate and highly sophisticated. A third, and I would argue quite central, is that South Asian emigrants are the only representatives of the colonies of invasion to achieve a significant presence in the universities of Britain and the US. Thus they become the institutional paradigm of what Spivak has claimed is the anomaly of the Asian intellectual. They also provide a specific form for the subject as critic.

The latter might seem a minor consideration, but it is of particular interest in terms of the historical development of the field. To return to the old Commonwealth literature paradigm: in the early days I was one of very very few in Canada who taught in the field who had not taught or studied outside the country and was not a product of recent immigration. Commonwealth literature in Canada was a realm of the new Canadian and the old colonial hand. This critical subject position has a reflection in the editors of the two anthologies. Thus the editors of *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* are quite simply gays and lesbians in the American academy (although Halperin has now left) and thus have no trouble with the complacency of their opening statement: "The forty-two essays gathered here constitute what we take to be some of the best and most significant recent English-language work in the field of lesbian/gay studies" (xv). On the other hand the editors of *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* live in Australia, a settler colony, and are one white Australian specialist in Caribbean literature, one white Australianist and one Welsh immigrant who specializes in African studies. This is a group for whom subject position is not a given.

Yet their own subject positions are seldom discussed by theorists in either field, within these anthologies or outside of them. Spivak and Sedgwick are notable exceptions. The ethnicities of Bhabha or Chandra Mohanty might be intuited but they are not presented. Similarly, the academic world "knows" the sexual orientations of Fuss and Judith Butler but not from statements in their works. Literary criticism has changed greatly from the days

of Walsh and Jeffares. But it has not gone very far in the direction of the self-analysis which has become so popular among ethnographers. Many—such as Mohanty—have claimed that such obsession with the subject position, in which the object of study gets no more attention than the subject observing, is simply navel-gazing typical of the comfortably powerful. But arguably it also disrupts the superiority of academic distance. Too much of both postcolonial and queer theory gives the impression of a nose well-elevated.

Today, the intellectual arguments of queer and postcolonial theory which seem to hold the most sway in the academy have come together. Bhabha acclaims features such as ambivalence and hybridity as highlighting the indeterminacy of the postcolonial condition. Similarly Butler's *Gender Trouble* claims for deviant sexuality an almost constant troubling of biological notions of difference, not just a manifestation of homosexual genes. There is a sense in which both fields of theory move against themselves. Christopher Lane suggests queer theory just applies terms such as "homosexual panic" to the aporia that poststructuralists find everywhere. All such theorists discover a fissure which makes simple semantics impossible and it just depends on the ideology of the theorist what label is placed on that fissure. But both postcolonial studies and gay and lesbian studies began as expressions of academics who felt sexually or ethnically marginalized by the academy. Their popularity reflects the desire of young graduate students to pursue what they feel is their deviant radicalism. But the features of self which drive them to postcolonial and queer theory lead to a form of de-selfing, a movement back to the vagaries of subject position so beloved of poststructuralists in general. Some have argued that such disintegration is liberating but one would need a very stable core to live such an unstable life long term. Also, it is difficult to see such a philosophy supporting any ongoing political community.

This is one reason why many—such as Mohanty—have responded negatively to the predominantly literary nature of these two fields. Article after article asserts a return to empiricism and a rejection of the "nothing outside of text" tendencies. But these

polemicists also often fail to recognize the larger importance of the literary production itself. They see the material as at best the ethnography of an Edmund White novel. On the other hand, the body of postcolonial theory and queer theory often seem somewhat embarrassed by their histories; they begin with a sense of the intrinsic importance of what even in the case of queer theory might be called "the indigenous literature." A large part of the effort of Walsh and Meyer was to draw attention to the value of texts that displayed the subjectivity of the human context of the fields.

This article is meant, at least at one level, to be a taking stock of the situation at the present time, so I should reflect on a recent conference in Montreal, with the rather polemical title, "Sex on the Edge." While it did not claim to be a gay, lesbian, or queer conference, nor a literary one, it had many elements of all of these categories. But the key to a great many of the papers and the discussion was the American group, "Sex Panic," founded by one of the keynote speakers from the conference, Michael Warner. In a not untypical move, the latter, a professor of English, had nothing to say about literature but rather spoke out against regulations, such as ordinances against public sex, as part of a general panic about sex, the tip of the homophobic iceberg. The other papers at the conference tended to emphasize attacks on the fundamentalist right, rather than explorations of the homosexual identity. But one paper flew in the face of this tendency: in "The 'Diseased' Homo: Queer Theory and the Re-inscription of Homophobia," Andrew Lesk claimed that queer theory, in its destabilizing of identity, was removing from the homosexual any assertion of a valid self, and thus unintentionally supported the tendency of homophobia to deny the homosexual's status as more than someone who engages in deviant sexual activity. While his emphasis was different from mine here, he was also wondering about the rise of queer theory and the loss of the homosexual subject.

Recently, there has been a serious crossover between queer theory and the postcolonial but it has primarily, perhaps surprisingly, begun from the former rather than the latter. An excellent example is Fuss's *Identification Papers*. While Frantz

Fanon's work was always based on his interest in psychoanalysis, most of the reaction to it has emphasized its Marxism and revolutionary intent. As Fuss's title suggests, she considers it in line with her previous work on identity, which arose primarily through her consideration of sexual orientation. The result is intelligent and even fascinating but it also makes racial identity just as unstable as sexual identity. And it also allows a very limited concern for national context. The various aspects of the colonized position tend to be subsumed under the category of race, and the category of Other.⁸

Much of recent cultural studies scholarship is obsessed with what has been called the Body. This leads to an almost natural concern for gender, and from there for racial and sexual categories. However, this also moves towards some of the problems noted in the context of Foucault's critique of the universal man. In the attempt to be specific about the individual bodies, to get beyond the universal white male heterosexual, the effect can be to erase all collectivities. The worst result of this in the present discussion is what might be called the end of ethnicity as a social category. The universal homosexual is one feature of queer theory, in which the social configuration of homosexuality becomes a very minor element in contrast with a universal sexual orientation which not surprisingly looks very American.

The racial body has become quite similar. bell hooks's critique of *Paris is Burning* was seen by many as homophobic but at least in attitude it now looks more prescient. It is not that the black queens were derided as inferior, as hooks claimed, but rather that they were seen, perhaps less by the filmmaker Jennie Livingstone than by the audiences, as but a minor variant of universal homosexuality. The context of their experiences, of their performances, was at best a veneer. Thus, in Butler's *Bodies That Matter*, African-American experience is likened rather easily to "queer" ones. Even if the racial category is kept separate, it is only as part of a universalizing blackness. Any non-white culture in the world can now be queered into a variant of the African-American. The body is racialized but this racial body does not have a specific ethnicity. It is transnational and thus, by default, American, and perfectly suits the non-ethnic postcoloniality of the American academy.

This becomes intriguing in the case of the British film, *The Crying Game*, directed by Neil Jordan. The reaction to this narrative is more than a bit surprising given how incessantly ethnic it is, from the IRA plot through the very specifically black British characters of Dil and Jody. But most critiques are interested in transgender or queer questions and race, particularly in relation to "blacks." The impossibility of understanding Dil or Jody as African-Americans (in spite of the fact that the latter was played by an African-American actor) seems to be completely forgotten. This should make it less than surprising that texts that represent the specific contexts of homosexual experience in what is usually constituted as postcolonial countries are almost never considered in this light.

Two obvious Canadian examples are Dionne Brand's *No Language Is Neutral* and Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy*. Arguably, they provide what should be the nexus of both the queer and postcolonial. *Funny Boy* portrays a very specific cultural context. The novel begins with a stage which is generic to the universal homosexual, the cross-dressing boy, although this time he is wearing a sari rather than a skirt. As he grows up, however, the central thread melds his discovery of sexual orientation with the confusion of the ethnic conflict of Sri Lanka. As Arjie, a Tamil boy, falls in love with a Sinhalese boy, the question of what constitutes gay identity is played out in a specifically postcolonial way.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon suggests that "the Negrophobic man is a repressed homosexual" (156). In Fanon's terms, however, homosexuality is a specifically white problem. He suggests that the only men from Martinique who are homosexual are those in France who earn their living servicing Europeans and they are not examples of, as he puts it, "neurotic homosexuality" (177). This is the traditional view of homosexuality that is still the claim of much of the postcolonial world. It is one of the reasons, for example, why countries such as Zaire and Uganda have claimed that AIDS in those countries could be a result of⁹ only either heterosexual transmission or homosexual tourism.

In Sri Lanka, the majority of people see homosexuality as "the boys on the beach," that is, young men who service the North

American and European tourists in Colombo.¹⁰ But Selvadurai not only does not concentrate on these liminal figures, he does not mention them. For Arjie, colonialism is a part of life, from the British-style school system to the tension created by the presence of his mother's Burgher boyfriend. But it is not the key to his sexuality. Like the "normal" homosexual, he must find a way to deal with the intersection between the values of family and society and the needs of his sexual orientation. This is not an excursion into the brown world but an exploration and explanation from within the brown world.

If one can speak of a "non-racial" queer world, in other words, white American, the problem is less obvious but it remains. Just as anti-colonial critique is an easier proposition for postcolonial studies, so is anti-homophobic critique for queer studies. But this must change if either field is to satisfy the needs of the group which should be its base. In the words of the wonderfully named John Cage, a character in that overwhelmingly American study of gender, *Ally McBeal* (a US television series): "This troubles me." With the consolidations of these fields have come stars, even hagiographies, albeit suitably ironic ones, as in Halperin's book, *Saint Foucault*. And yet their service to the cultures outside the academy sometimes seems lessened rather than improved. The divisions between the academics and what is often called "the community" is certainly much greater than in the early days. But perhaps this is just similar to the process—the growing pains—from women's studies to feminist theory. But we seem to have reached a place where my title "queerly postcolonial" is all too appropriate—adverbs and adjectives but no nouns.

NOTES

- 1 See, for instance, Bilan; Samson.
- 2 I presume I need not consider here the odd misogynist who claims that male homosexuality results from feminists rejecting males or from feminism feminizing males.
- 3 See, for instance, Gandhi; Mishra and Hodge; and Slemmon.
- 4 This term has been used by such critics as Ken Goodwin, John Matthews, and Anna Rutherford.

- ⁵ In conversations with me, Arun Mukherjee and some of my students have made this criticism. Helen Tiffin herself told me of certain hesitations she had about including abridgements.
- ⁶ In the electronic journal, *Australian Humanities Review* (<<http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/>>). Dennis Altman comments "On Global Queering:" "There is a history to be written of the way in which 'queer studies' emerged in the American academy in the early 1990s, the bastard child of the gay and lesbian movement and postmodern literary theory, which, like other unwed mothers, has been very loathe to acknowledge the father." Regardless of the sexism of his analogy, Altman has a valid argument in queer theory's avoidance of the subject in action, with the exception, which he notes, of AIDS activism.
- ⁷ There is the controversial exception of the rapidly expanding scholarly interest in "whiteness," such as Richard Dyer's *White*.
- ⁸ Once again, however, I must engage in what journalists call "full disclosure" as my recent article, "Saint Fanon and Homosexual Territory," to be published in another Routledge book with the tentative title, *Critical Fanon*, is arguably guilty of the same, although with perhaps a few more feints in the direction of Fanon's history.
- ⁹ This observation, of course, is ubiquitous in the popular press, mentioned by every major news organization.
- ¹⁰ This is my observation from conversations I had in Sri Lanka.

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