Introduction[1]

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Part I: The Project of Comparative (Post)Colonialisms

It is widely acknowledged that the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, now in its twenty-fifth anniversary year, inaugurated the field of postcolonial studies, which has since become the most dynamic and expanding sector in Anglo-American English departments.[2] The institutional custodian of what has been considered as the cultural instrument of imperial dominance (from Macaulay's project of English education in India to Ngugi wa Thiong'o's abolition of the English Department at the University of Nairobi and Gauri Viswanathan's uncovering of the colonial roots of the English literature curriculum in Britain itself),[3] English studies is almost inconceivable today without postcolonialism: not only has it become impossible to discuss Victorian and modernist writers like Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, and others without reference to empire, but writers like Shakespeare, Chaucer, and earlier medieval authors are also being reread from postcolonial perspectives.[4] The revolutionary curricular and institutional change spearheaded in the late 1960s by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, whose contribution to this collection throws an unsuspected light on the politics of English in independent Kenya, appears now to have been a bold but ultimately futile act of resistance to the cultural imperialism of English, an imperialism that has reestablished itself all the more firmly—some might argue—by devouring its others in the name of postcolonialism.[5]

This perception has been reinforced by the fact that after *Orientalism*, the most prominent theoreticians of postcolonialism have been Anglophone academics from former British colonies, teaching in English departments and writing about predominantly English-language texts, and whose theoretical formulations rarely acknowledge the historical and linguistic specificity of their frame of reference. One of the striking ironies of postcolonial studies, for instance, is that colonial discourse analysis began with several theorists who studied colonialism in the Arab world: Albert Memmi (in Tunisia), Frantz Fanon (in Algeria), Said (in the Levant). However, the work of those critics led to the development, in the 1980s and 1990s, of a sophisticated theoretical apparatus that rarely takes Arabic literary and cultural production into account. Rather, the latter has remained largely the province of Middle East studies departments, rooted as they are in the kind of scholarship critiqued in Said's *Orientalism*. Theorists have since then paid considerable attention to South Asian, African, and Caribbean literatures, debated the postcolonial status of Irish and Scottish literatures, redefined settler colonialism in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as postcolonial, while some have argued that mainstream U.S. literature "is paradigmatic for post-colonial literatures everywhere."[6] Brian Edwards' contribution to this collection proposes a more nuanced postcolonial approach to American studies, and Liam Connell's article intervenes in the debates surrounding Scottish literature. What those widely dispersed "emergent" or "new" literatures have in common is that they are written in English and often designated in ways that either reinscribe colonial relations in terms of neocolonial cultural dependency ("Commonwealth," "New Literatures in English"), or rewrite histories of conquest as narratives of national liberation. This Anglocentric focus of postcolonial studies has, ironically, preserved the primacy of English and established both British colonialism and British literature as a frame of reference, even in areas where the canon has indeed expanded, so that, for instance, only Anglophone African, Caribbean, and Indian writers are studied and taught in English departments, while their compatriots who write in other languages tend to be neglected. Precious little is said about vibrant oral literatures in, for instance, Gikuyu, Hausa, or Wolof, or great literate traditions in Arabic, Bengali, Hindi, or Urdu—all of which have obviously been impacted by European colonialism. As a result, Anglophone postcolonial literature is a highly selective field (imagine a syllabus on postcolonial studies that does not include Chinua Achebe or Salman Rushdie, most often read in reference to writers like Joseph Conrad). Hence the argument that Anglophone postcolonialism has become a mimic canon that functions effectively to reinforce neocolonial hegemony.

Francophone literatures of the Caribbean, West and North Africa, and the eastern Mediterranean have been made to play a similar role to that of Anglophone lit-

eratures. Francophone literatures have made small incursions into French departments, where they occupy a marginal space and tend to be read through the theoretical prisms of postcolonial theory (refracted now through Edouard Glissant and Abdelkébir Khatibi rather than Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak), but with no reference to non-Francophone literatures from those same countries. Symptomatic of this cooptation is, for example, the interesting fact that Arabic literature of French expression by Maghrebian and Levantine writers is occasionally incorporated in Francophone studies, housed as it is on the margin of the French curriculum (and is therefore part of "postcolonialism"), with no reference to Arabic language literature from the same countries. Madeleine Dobie's contribution to this collection elaborates on the situation of French in the Maghreb. By the same token, Arabic language texts are taught in Arabic or Middle East studies departments, often with little attention to colonial history, and rarely using the conceptual tools developed by postcolonial theory.[7] As for Arabic writing in English, Dutch, German, and Hebrew, it appears nowhere on the radar screen of the respective language departments. Patterns of intensified immigration since WWII have multiplied similar cases of African and Asian writing in European languages, at the same time that the institutional organization of literary studies continues to divide and conquer the world conceptually.

The dilemmas of postcolonial studies that suggested the topic of this first "literary issue" of *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* are summed up below. Though not by any means an exhaustive list of questions about the definition, scope, procedures, and institutional setting of what is by now a complex and variegated field, these are at least some issues that comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to postcolonial studies can help clarify. The articles selected in this special issue, discussed at length in Part II of this introduction, address some of these concerns and raise other questions as well.

First, postcolonial studies professes to make the balance of global power relations central to its inquiry, yet seems to inscribe neocolonial hegemony by privileging the languages (and consequently the canons) of the major colonial powers—Britain, and to a lesser degree, France. Even substantial colonial and postcolonial writings in other European languages such as Dutch, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish, are no less excluded from postcolonial debates than texts written in the languages of the colonies: Arabic, Bengali, Hindi, and Urdu, not to mention the oral literatures of Africa, Native Americans, and Australia's Aborigines, which pose a serious challenge to postcolonial theories based on poststructuralist notions of textuality. Carl Niekerk's and Ignacio Tofiño-Quesada's contributions to this collection examine aspects of Dutch and Spanish colonialism, respectively. All of this calls for comparative approaches to postcolonial studies, since the discipline of comparative literature defines itself by resisting the monolingualism of the national literature paradigm, as well as for more productive engagements with area studies, the social sciences, and minority studies. Such engagements would allow postcolonial studies to move beyond monolingualism and narrow textualism by reclaiming its broad discursive and methodological grounding in those fields. Many of those fields, particularly anthropology, comparative literature, history, Middle East studies (the immediate object of Said's critique), and political science have undergone major transformations over the past twenty-five years, under the impact of multiculturalism and cultural and postcolonial studies. As regards literature, the specific focus of this collection, the interface of postcolonial studies and comparative literature as a discipline has begun to unsettle and transform the latter. By contrast, postcolonial studies began with Said's comparative approach to the critique of Orientalism, but has since then become increasingly monolingualized and monologized. Thus, while postcolonial studies has offered its own models of comparison, such as the paradigm of "writing back,"[8] such models are indifferent to comparative literature's *sine qua non* principle of multilingualism, which is seen here as an antidote to the Anglocentrism of postcolonial studies.

Second, the radical project of postcolonial studies has been diffused through two paradigms of literary study, each housed within a distinct institutional structure: one is the national literature department as the custodian of the national literary canon, a paradigm that privileges "high literary traditions," "major authors," and period studies approaches to enshrined "masterpieces" in the case of the "major" Western traditions; the other paradigm comprises the predominantly social science focus of area studies, in which literature plays a reflectionist role as proto-anthropology, proto-history, or proto-sociology, in the case of "developing countries" and "lesser taught languages." In conjunction with women's studies and minority studies, postcolonial theory has, without a doubt, done much to unsettle both models: Western national canons have been expanded and their assumptions questioned, and the imperialist premises and practices of area studies have been challenged. A whole library of scholarship in almost every field testifies to this achievement, as do the innumerable ways in which curricula and professional associations have changed across the humanities and social sciences. Nevertheless, the institutional structures of national literature and area studies departments have survived, and they have to a large extent succeeded in compartmentalizing the burgeoning work of postcolonial studies.

The increasingly Anglocentric focus of postcolonial studies since its inception is due in part to this institutional influence, especially as postcolonial studies thrived in English departments. This situation calls not only for comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to postcolonial studies, but also specifically for analyses of the ways in which institutional structures reify the radical potential of postcolonial studies.

Third, the "postcolonial" is itself a far from stable category; indeed, the studies which call the category of the "postcolonial," and even the term itself, into question are so numerous and varied in their assumptions and foci that they have themselves become an integral part of postcolonial studies. One cannot, for example discuss Said without reference to Aijaz Ahmed's critique of *Orientalism*, Spivak without Benita Parry, or Bhabha without Abdul JanMohamed.[9] However, some clarification of what is meant here by "(post)colonialisms" is necessary. The parenthetical enclosure of the "post" in "(post)colonialisms" is intended to emphasize the disjunctive temporality of the term, and the plural form of it is less amenable to the homogenization which certain theorizations of the field have effected. Just as colonialism took different forms in different parts of the world and under different conditions, it also followed different temporalities, as colonized states achieved independence at different times or in fact have continued to be colonized both geographically and/or through various forms of neocolonialism. In other words, to think of "(post)colonialisms" is to take seriously the limitations astutely exposed by Ann McClintock and Ella Shohat, among others, in regard to the linear, temporal, and homogenizing logic of the "post" in "postcolonial," and which contribute to rendering the category less reflective of postcolonial realities than an emanation of postmodernism.[10] At the same time, "(post)colonialisms" preserves the priority accorded to the trauma of colonial history which is covered over in the hegemonic concepts of "Commonwealth" and "Francophonie," erased in phrases like "emergent literatures," "new literatures in English," and "Anglophone world literature," and by-passed in the politico-economic focus both of the Three Worlds Theory and contemporary theories of globalization.[11] And unlike paradigms of literary study that privilege a national canon or an ethnic or racial minority, postcolonial studies focuses on a singular global historical phenomenon, the development and spread of European colonialism under the auspices of the worldwide expansion of capitalism. Given the historical scope of the field, it is clear that the term "postcolonial," with its implicit postulation of the linear logic of progress, its privileging of formal independence as a historical turning point to the neglect of patterns of continuing dominance, and the uniformity which the singular form of the word projects on imperialized societies, is inaccurate. But it is no more inaccurate than other categories of literary history like "Middle Ages," "Renaissance," "Enlightenment," "Romanticism," and so on. Its value ultimately is not so much a function of its descriptive accuracy as its convenient designation of a field of inquiry. In that sense, "(post)colonialisms" is not intended as yet another trendy term with a fancy spelling, but as a reminder that the category is inherently multiple, disjunctive, and heterogeneous (despite institutional and theoretical homogenization, streamlining, and monolingualization), and that therefore it is best understood from comparative perspectives—that "postcolonialism" should be understood and practiced as "comparative (post)colonialisms."

Fourth, the dialogic interface of comparative literature and postcolonial studies would allow us to negotiate, from comparative perspectives, some of the yet unresolved tensions in the field, such as the question of its scope. Postcolonialism has been stretched so thin both historically and geographically as to reach a crisis of identity: should it concern itself with all empires throughout history—from Alexander the Great to the present—and with all forms of empires, from the British and French to the Ottoman, Byzantine, Abbasid, and Roman? Distinctions between settler colonies like Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States, South Africa, and Israel on the one hand (and there are of course significant differences among them as settler colonies), and say, Palestine, Algeria, Nigeria, Indonesia, or Ireland, on the other hand (also with vast discrepancies as well as continuities among them as societies colonized from the outside), were erased by some theorists of the field. Lital Levy explores the complexities of the Palestine/Israel situation in her contribution to this collection. More recently, some critics have attempted to define "post-Soviet" literatures as postcolonial by stressing parallel hegemonic tactics of European colonial empires and the Soviet Union. Powerful arguments now define the Soviet Union as a colonial empire and the literatures of the former Soviet states as postcolonial.[12] Adrian Otoiu's contribution to this collection takes up this issue in relation to Romanian literature. The problem of the theoretical scope of the field is further complicated in view of the considerable institutional success of postcolonial studies, which has tempted scholars in many fields to appropriate its tools, especially where questions of hegemony are concerned. While comparative approaches to postcolonial and post-Soviet studies would be valuable, there is an unstated risk in much of the discussion, namely that of erasing the fundamental link between modern Western European colonial empires and the rise of global capitalism, a link that defined economic exploitation in the colonial age and has continued to define the neocolonial order through the Cold War and after. Redefining the Second

World as postcolonial in the post-Cold War period entails the suppression of the history of antagonism between capitalism and communism upon which colonial and Soviet hegemonies are based, respectively, and conflates problematically what used to be called the Second and Third Worlds. And while comparative studies of different kinds of imperial orders would be valuable, comparatism should not be based on eliding the distinctions between capitalist and communist empires—or between either and, say, theocratic ones. Such theoretical slippage results from inadequate attention to the material history that gave rise to distinct and competing economic orders, and to their attendant, antagonistic ideologies, as well as to perceived institutional rewards for jumping on the bandwagon of a lucrative field. The remarkable institutional success of postcolonial studies threatens ultimately to liquidate the field's relevance if the postcolonial is allowed, whether under the guise of comparatism or as a result of postcolonial theory's universalist pretensions, to designate everything, and therefore nothing. Comparatism should not become a license for conflation.

Fifth, the fact that some strands of postcolonial theory are partly responsible for such homogenizing conflation calls for an examination of the function of postcolonial theory (as part of the triad of "postcolonial studies," the wide umbrella covering work in several disciplines; "(post)colonial literatures," the branch of postcolonial studies which is the primary focus of literary studies; and "postcolonial theory," which purports to define "the postcolonial" using conceptual tools derived from any combination of Marxism, psychoanalysis, feminism, and poststructuralism). One advantage that postcolonial studies as a field enjoys in comparison to categories like "Commonwealth," "New Literatures in English," or "Anglophone world literature" is its affiliation with a specialized set of theoretical propositions that not only recognize the limitations of Western knowledge, but make of those limitations an object of analysis. Without underestimating this distinctive merit, one can argue that it does not follow that postcolonial theory as a critical and pedagogical prism enables the production of non-Eurocentric knowledge of postcolonial literatures, any more than the older paradigms; that indeed, in its very attempt to challenge Western epistemology, postcolonial theory sometimes homogenizes Asia and Africa in more subtle ways than the older paradigms or colonial discourse itself.[13] Without a doubt, postcolonial theory has been able to provide conceptual and ethical frameworks for Western readers in which to interpret European colonial literature and certain kinds of postcolonial texts that address colonial history along a number of specific trajectories charted by poststructuralist and postmodernist theory. Postcolonial theory unveils the limitations, as well as the persistence, of hegemonic discourses, and is therefore a healthy reminder of the existence of other worlds outside of Western modes of thought and representation. But this is also where postcolonial theory can be the most mystifying, for the moment it pretends to stand for or to subsume those other worlds, it begins to reenact the Eurocentric limitations of its founding theories: Marxism, poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, and feminism. By the same token, the vast majority of Asian and African literary works that thematize the impact of European colonialism simply do not fit within the paradigms of resistance privileged in postcolonial theory. In concentrating on texts written in English and French at the expense of enormously varied literatures in other, especially non-European, languages, postcolonial theory has privileged "writing back," diaspora, migration, border-crossings, in-betweenness, and hybridity as the defining features of a so-called "postcolonial condition." Surely these phenomena are not limited to the history of European colonialism; migration, border crossing, and hybridization are as old as humanity itself. In that sense, their definitional value within postcolonial theory has been greatly exaggerated and never rigorously or sufficiently examined, since anybody and everybody anytime anywhere are products of these processes, which define all human communities. While such issues are important in the colonial context, without a doubt they are also important in all other cultural and historical contexts, even though Western cultural theory has relied on essentialist assumptions about identity. The West's discovery of hybridity as a result of the deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence—a great achievement in itself—has oddly enough led postcolonial critics located in the West to claim hybridity as the defining feature of a discursively privileged postcolonial sublime. And as everyone—from North America to Western and Eastern Europe—clamors to prove their hybridity, now perceived as a passport to institutional privilege—everybody becomes postcolonial. The Eurocentrism of postcolonial theory, its projection of postmodern Western obsessions onto the rest of the world, and its definition of the rest of the world in terms of postmodern epiphany, may be overcome by opening the field not only to comparative literature, but also to interdisciplinary methodologies that rigorously interrogate the limits of postcolonial theory from the multiple perspectives of African, Asian, and Native American philosophies, histories, worldviews, cultural memories, social realities, economics, and politics. This would safeguard against postcolonial theory's current reinscription of the model according to which the West furnishes universal theoretical paradigms while the rest of the world yields the objects of analysis. Unmasking the hubris of this theoretical imperialism requires the historicization and delimitation of postcolonial theory's

universalist claims from comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives.

The theoretical impulse for the project of this collection has been to attempt to salvage the radicalism of postcolonial studies from some of the blunting effects of institutional and disciplinary stratification, namely hegemonic monolingualism and conceptual homogenization of imperialized cultures. These two effects have resulted in part from the mixed blessing of postcolonial studies having found a rather hospitable institutional home in English departments, which served for a long time after the inception of English studies in the nineteenth century to reinforce British cultural imperialism both in the colonies and eventually in Britain itself. In this institutional setting, postcolonial studies has functioned ambivalently both to expose and undermine the cultural imperialism of English, at the same time that it began itself to become increasingly Anglicized and monolingualized—that is, to reinforce the hegemony it ostensibly aims at undermining—and to construct a uniform image of the so-called "postcolonial world" and the "postcolonial condition," whose curricular correlatives are the prevalent paradigms of "Anglophone postcolonial" and "'Anglophone world literatur*e*,' in the singular." The emergence of postcolonial theory from within this institutional setting, and in relative isolation from or indifference to the immense historical and linguistic variety of colonial experiences and their literary expression, paradoxically contributed to this monolingualization and homogenization of postcolonial studies, even while serving to provide conceptual tools with which to "dismantle the father's house."

Comparative literature's principle of multilingualism and methodological prioritization of cultural and linguistic contexts are seen here as the logical corrective to the homogenizing monolingualism of postcolonial studies under the auspices of English studies. Yet as the 1993 Bernheimer report on the status of the discipline acknowledges, comparative literature itself has deep Eurocentric roots, both intellectually and institutionally, as well as a historically uneasy relationship with extra-literary forms of cultural expression, or what has become the domain of cultural studies.[14] Indeed, the report calls for new paradigms of comparative literature that would reflect the contributions of postcolonial and cultural studies, calls that have been debated vigorously.[15] As Emily Apter argues, "many of the territorial skirmishes emerging within [comparative literature] today have to do with the way in which postcolonial theory has, in a sense, usurped the disciplinary space that European literature and criticism had reserved for themselves." Nevertheless, she continues, "postcolonialism is in many respects truer to the foundational disposition of comparative literature than are other more traditional tendencies and approaches (including biography, influence study, national literary history, formalism, rhetorical analysis). With its interrogation of cultural subjectivity and attention to the tenuous bonds between identity and national language, postcolonialism quite naturally inherits the mantle of comparative literature's historical legacy."[16] This is true only when "postcolonialism" is understood and practiced as "comparative (post)colonialisms," and the argument illustrates the mutually transformative potential of the dialogic interface of postcolonial studies and comparative literature. While this is not the place to engage in the wide-ranging debates about the future of comparative literature, a few remarks concerning the impact of postcolonial studies on comparative literature are particularly relevant to the project of this special issue.

Comparative literature's methodological emphasis on the points of contact between nations was an outgrowth of nationalism as the ideological brainchild of the European Enlightenment. This ideology fostered assumptions about the equivalence of language and culture as determinants of discrete national traditions, and provided the rationale for national literary canons that later on came to be studied in separate language departments. This model falters outside the orbit of "major" European nation-states (England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Russia), whose literatures have been the traditional fare of comparative literature departments. Modern Arabic, for instance, is a supra-national literature produced by writers from twenty-two nations, yet is most often regarded by its writers, readers, and scholars as a single tradition. Conversely, India, a single nation with sixteen official languages, has national literatures in dozens of languages. More complicated is the case of Africa, where for historical, sociological, and linguistic reasons, it makes less sense to speak of national literary traditions than of regional geographical groupings such as West, East, North, or Southern African literatures; or of ethnic or language-based traditions such as Wolof or Gikuyu literatures, which are sub-national; or categorically of oral literature.

Comparative literature seeks to bridge nations and cultures by emphasizing the study of multiple languages, yet the discipline has been historically Aristotelian in its approach to comparing literatures in different languages, each of which represents a distinct national and cultural tradition: one language, one nation, one literature. With the rapid proliferation of literary canons within English (for example, African, Caribbean, South Asian, African-American, Native American, Asian-American, Arab-American, Australian.), and the emergence also of Arabic, African, and Asian writing in Dutch, French, German, Hebrew, and a host of other languages, it is impossible not to conceive of alternative paradigms to the ones that the discipline has historically privileged—such as studies of influence, period studies (within European

literatures), and national literary history. New paradigms may include work across languages but within the same literary and cultural tradition—for instance comparisons of Arabic or African literature in different languages, as well as comparisons of different literatures written in a single language, for example comparative studies of Anglophone Nigerian, Indian, Arabic, and African-American literatures. Ipshita Chanda's contribution here exemplifies this approach. This last scenario should by no means de-emphasize the importance of multilingualism, but such studies in which the rigorous practices of comparatism are brought to bear on different literatures within the same language are important as a corrective to the homogenization that currently pertains under the rubric of "Anglophone postcolonial" or "Anglophone world" literature, categories that purport to name a single tradition. Such new models of comparative literature are the logical outcome of the recent trajectories of postcoloniality, migration, and globalization, as well as developments in literary and critical theory. For while the very idea of "comparison" presupposes that there are distinct things to be compared, analyses of race, class, gender, nationalism, and subjectivity have demonstrated that what used to be considered as the unified subjects of self, nation, culture, and civilization are inherently split, hybrid, ambivalent, and contradictory, that their Aristotelian self-identity is always an ideological construct—albeit no less effective to the exercise of material power under the auspices of nationalist, fundamentalist, imperialist, and/or neo-Orientalist notions of identity (such as Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis), as the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the U.S. responses to them continue to demonstrate.

And yet the challenge facing postcolonial studies today is how to hold on to the findings of contemporary literary and critical theory while resisting the vulgar sort of deconstruction that—lacking comparative literature's careful attention to the construction of its object of study within its cultural and linguistic contexts—would dissolve historical and cultural coordinates of identity into a sort of undifferentiated negative ontology that functions effectively to homogenize the world on the level of discourse, and to trivialize or mask the exercise of material power. The bankruptcy of that tendency was already visible by the mid-nineties, and has become indisputable today. The intellectual relevance of postcolonial studies in the near future will depend on how the field takes stock of this situation.

Part II: Some Comparative (Post)Colonial Crossroads

Comparative reading of the various local circumstances analyzed by contributors to this special issue of *CSSAAME* opens up a number of productive sites of inquiry and testifies to the value of approaching postcolonial studies from a comparative perspective. The second part of our introduction, therefore, (rather than summarizing individual essays) aims to explore several frequently-crossed intersections in them. These thematic junctions, which materialize and rearticulate from local perspectives a number of the theoretical issues raised above, are the congested gathering points of questions concerning language, non-identity, property, and temporality.

Consistently, the essays in this volume call attention to both the sociopolitical force and the complexity of language distinctions. While they all recognize the degree to which language choice, competency, and employment are instruments of power, they also demonstrate just how varied such effects can be: that English in Scotland, Nigeria, or India; Tamazight in North Africa; Hebrew in Israel; or Romanian in Eastern Europe all carry different historical baggage, bear distinct and sometimes consequential social nuances. Madeleine Dobie, for example, in her essay "Francophone Studies and the Linguistic Diversity of the Maghreb," points to the way that multilingual subjects in North Africa may choose language based on a finely-tuned series of cultural and affective calculations: French or English for its associations (however problematic) with modernity or human rights; Arabic for its associations with Islamic and Arab identity; a Berber dialect for its associations with the domestic, regional resistance, or local roots. Adrian Otoiu, in "An Exercise in Fictional Liminality: The Postcolonial, the Postcommunist and Romania's Threshold Generation" shows how the Romanian language in differing provinces of the same region became perceived alternately as a colonial language of repression, an indigenous language restored to its appropriate status, and a threatened native vernacular.

Language use has often enough been an instrument of domination inflected through class, nationality or ethnicity; in (post)colonial contexts, it has often been racialized, charged with being the bearer of culture, the mark of one's "nativeness" or "Europeanness." An accent or mismanaged idiom could, and in many contexts still does, entail significant social and material effects. Put otherwise, if language is the house of being, as Heidegger suggests, it affords some very diverse kinds of accommodations. Who, after all, is supposed to accommodate whom? Abdellatif Laâbi's recognition of the non-reciprocity of languages, invoked by Dobie, reminds us that certain languages (primarily non-European ones) are regularly asked to bear the costs of accommodation, and that speakers of European languages are likely to find themselves much more at home in those accommodations. As Laâbi points out, if the underlying principle of Francophonie is the

promotion of cultural diversity, this obligation should extend to metropolitan France as well, where the teaching of Arabic, for example, is minimal and even affectively discouraged by the myriad effects of racism, by immigrants' desires for their own and their children's assimilation, by the clear advantages of being unequivocally *français(e) de souche*. Dobie suggestively extends Spivak's ever-fruitful question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" to include the inquiry: and if so, in what language(s)? In what language will s/he be heard, responded to, accommodated?

As Ipshita Chanda notes in her essay, "The Tortoise and the Leopard, or the Postcolonial Muse," in many contexts, adopting a national or global language may be a matter of survival, of finding a job, or gaining access to vital services. It has become particularly urgent to reflect on this fact in relation to English as a "global language:" consenting to the global status of English sets up some very straightforward equations about who has greater or lesser access to the "global." While facility in English clearly carries social and material advantages that ought to be considered in institutional and curricular decisions, an unreflective endorsement of the global status of English may also function as a mechanism of exclusion, replicate global inequities, or contribute to the cultural and economic hegemony of the Anglophone world.[17] In short, language facility can be both empowering and oppressive; the difficulty is that sometimes it is both at the same time. Indeed, the power operations of language do not break down into a simple bifurcation of a dominating colonial language and a dominated colonized one, as postcolonial theory has sometimes imagined. Chanda's essay demonstrates that a single language may have very different effects in different contexts, as does English, for example, in India (with its long history of script culture) as compared to Nigeria (with its embeddedness in oral culture). Comparative methods, she argues, need to be extended in terms of this recognition, and postcolonial studies would benefit from comparative analyses of individual colonial languages in their differing sites of deployment.

A further problem signaled by a number of this volume's essays is that while academic institutions, and the postcolonial analyses practiced in them, are largely oriented around distinct national language categories, this organization bears little relation to actual language practice across the globe. As Liam Connell points out in "Modes of Marginality: Scottish Literature and the Uses of Postcolonial Theory," many locales, and even some nations, are not distinguished by language. And as both Dobie and Otoiu observe, many nations are crossed by multiple languages. These facts bear several significant consequences. As Connell shows, it may entail institutional marginalization or a conflation of (for example) "literature in English" with "English literature," and hence inattention to local specificities. In his essay "Preposterous Encounters: Interrupting American Studies with the (Post)Colonial or, *Casablanca* in the American Century," Brian Edwards analyzes another pressing example. While U.S. literature is both undistinguished by a national language and crafted in multiple languages, it has often been disciplined in ways that emphasize its connections with England rather than with the Americas, Africa, or Asia, that ignore work in other languages, and, as Edwards argues, in ways that institutionally discourage comparative, multilingual, multi-sited work. The discipline of "American studies," which tends to turn inward in search of context, has thus contributed, he argues, to the construction of American exceptionalism.

There exists a significant discrepancy, moreover, between the kinds of fluency exercised by multilingual subjects and the kinds of fluency demanded, and structurally reproduced, in the academy. In part a legacy of the West's investment in language as a carrier of (national) culture, the institutional regulation of language use stands in rather stark contrast to the kinds of languages called for in modern experience which, as Chanda examines in the contexts of India and Nigeria, include "link languages" and pidgins, as well as alternative conceptions of competence and comprehension. This recognition should certainly lead us to consider how such languages, particularly characteristic of postcolonial societies, are institutionally disciplined and with what effects. How do academic programming, the disciplinary organization of departments, or the content of specific curricula participate in the maintenance of colonial (or "first" and "third" world) distinctions? When we teach language—or about language—what are we teaching students to express? What are we teaching them to hear or accommodate? What class or racial distinctions are we reproducing? To what degree do language programs which fetishize grammatical and phonetic mastery institutionalize the logic that a) it's better not to mess with another language than to speak it with an accent or make an error; and b) it's preferable (and more marketable) to speak one second language flawlessly than to work in several with the possibility of error? To what extent does guarding against *faux amis* keep us from having any *ami(e)s* at all?

The problem, indeed, is even denser than this. When we consider the equivalence that hermeneutics has long maintained between error and foreignness, the degree to which error has been regulated as pathology (as what must be contained, restrained, regularized, punished, or eliminated); that error (from Latin *erre*) signifies not only fault but wandering and thereby associates itself with people (as much as ideas) that move, travel, immigrate; that absence of mastery, trial and error, are often the quotidian experience of immigrants, transnational peoples, and residents of multilingual societies; and that

regulating epistemological and linguistic foreignness has been a key strategy for disciplining foreigners; we find ourselves in a position to ask to what extent our institutional ordering of language is about keeping the barbarian—which in this case may be the multilingual postcolonial subject—at the gates.[18] Perhaps it is worth recalling that the notion of syntax derives from the military; a *taxis* is an arrangement of soldiers; *suntassein* designates not only the act of arranging and organizing, but commanding, assigning, imposing punishment, assessing for taxation. If language is, by its very nature, an order, it is also and irreducibly a regulative system through which power is produced and directed.

This is not an argument for lowering standards in language curricula, but a recognition that academic linguistic discipline is at odds with much of the multilingual world in which "errors" are routine, and in which, by an alternative standard, many taxi drivers or shopkeepers in postcolonial societies are more linguistically adept than those who hold advanced degrees from Western language and literature departments. This is a dilemma in which comparative literature might well intervene. Insofar as it allows for the possibility of working in multiple languages (even those not fully mastered), and insofar as it privileges multilingual ability over "native fluency," comparative literature might be a site where institutional linguistic segregation, its defilement anxieties, and social effects might begin to be dismantled. Acknowledging this discrepancy between language in the academy and in the world might also function as a corrective to existing comparative literature programs, which have a tendency to draw already proficient multilingual students, and to intimidate or discourage those not yet fluent in a second or third language. Perhaps multilingual ability needs to be construed as a goal, rather than a precondition, of comparative literature programs and programming should make greater allowance for the process of language acquisition.

And error, by the way, has its uses—a fact not lost on this issue's contributors, who explore the strategic uses of, for example, impropriety, interruption, mistranslation, irresolution, and absurdity. Wandering outside the borders of decorum, certainty, metaphysical logic, significance, and civility: what might one see from such savage territory? What tactical advantages might such digressions offer? These essays suggest, in various ways, that such outlands might be precisely the sites from which (neo)colonial domination can be most powerfully challenged; that impropriety might function as the service entrance through which an alterity enters the knowledge that empires produce about themselves. In the colonial context, being reasonable and avoiding errors have largely been a matter of running the colony more efficiently. As Carl Niekerk reminds us in his essay, "Rethinking a Problematic Constellation: Postcolonialism and its Germanic Contexts (Pramoedya Ananta Toer/Multatuli," even exercises in self-critique have often been ways of refining and legitimating colonial practice. Indeed when we take into account the fact that a central maintenance technique of colonial regimes has been relegating to meaninglessness and impropriety the thought, beliefs, and knowledge systems of native peoples, the need not only to heed "errors," but to develop critically errant practices, becomes pressingly evident—if indeed, we want to hear the subaltern speak.

Edwards proposes one such practice—a strategy of critical interruption, an enabling indiscipline that interrupts dominant accounts of canonical texts, makes way for archives of suppressed intertexts and contexts, takes seriously intratextual interruptions, and disrupts syllabi designed around national literatures with texts from elsewhere. In broader terms, he argues that such a practice implies that American studies could profit from greater interruption by postcolonial studies, by paying attention to how America and its cultural products are understood elsewhere. Similarly, American studies might productively interrupt postcolonial studies by examining colonialism, independence movements, and postcolonial nations in a global context that includes American foreign politics, the cold war, and neocolonial economic relations. Such interruptions and the uneasiness they entail, may indeed be necessary for opposing the critical "common sense" of the moment. Otoiu examines the necessity of such hermeneutic improprieties in the context of Ceaucescu's Romania, where one had to learn, in effect, to read erroneously, to interpret official discourse as signifying the inverse of what it said. Artists in this milieu, where circumventing censorship was paramount, developed textual practices that obscure as much as express meaning and that require suspension of "normal" reading practices. Characterized by liminal circumstances, borderline personalities, unresolved dilemmas, and contradictory indications, this literature inhabits those undisciplined spaces that totalitarian regimes and colonial reason are anxious to clean up—restore to metaphysical and social order—and that the politically and aesthetically creative transform into oppositional opportunities.

In "License to Write: Encounters with Censorship," Ngugi wa Thiong'o offers an example of the opportunities that can be produced by absurdity: here of the Kenyan censorship board, for which subversive texts (by, for example, Marx, Lenin, Castro, and Mao) were deemed innocuous if published by a Western press. Such reasoning, precisely because it is unreasonable, proves itself highly useful. As does another impropriety—mistranslation—here analyzed by Lital Levy in "Exchanging Words: Thematizations of Translation in Arabic Writing from Israel." While

translation has often functioned as an instrument of colonial domination—as a way of distinguishing self from other, producing the colonial subject and adjudicating value and truth—Levy analyzes a revealing scene of (mis)translation in which shared roots (both linguistic and historical), rather than clearly discriminating self from other, are the source of both confusion and an errant truth. By not performing the prescribed translation Sa'id, the main character of Emile Habiby's novel, *The Pessoptimist*, twists his interlocutors' meaning into something else—into a significance that not only ostensibly bears the author's message, but functions as a mordant critique of Israeli national discourse.

Translation is, to be sure, a language issue significant to numerous (post)colonial contexts. But in this case, to hear Habiby's double-edged meanings, in which Hebrew and Arabic routinely interrupt each other, requires a mode of reading that is tantamount to sustained translation. Thus, contrary to conventional notions of translation as a process applied externally to a completed source text, translation in this case, as Levy contends, is something that takes place within an original. To borrow from de Man's elaboration of Benjamin, it adduces in the original "a mobility, an instability, which at first one did not notice." Translations "disarticulate [and] undo the original, they reveal that the original was always already disarticulated."[19] From this perspective, translation becomes a reading strategy, or fluidity of mind; it is conceived less in terms of equivalence than of negotiation, wandering (*erre*), or play. In this it resembles the hybrid and errant linguistic practices of many modern speakers which may glide without apparent disjunction back and forth between French and Arabic (in North Africa or Paris) or Spanish and English (in the Americas)—speaking habits in which languages are indistinguishably entangled and it is often the entanglement itself which produces meaning. Equally significant in the scenes of translation Levy examines is the recognition that language does not always comply with meaning or intent, that one regularly finds one's own language(s) allegorical, foreign, in need of translation, and that wordplays are also powerplays.

And that is why, at least in part, the literary becomes an issue. As Ngugi's narrative shows, both the British colonial government and the independent Kenyan state, however inadvertently, have testified to the subversive and influential nature of literature, the former by banning artistic products perceived to support independence, the latter by raiding the author's library, imprisoning him, and denying him access to books and writing materials. In this climate of censorship, producing conformity to state ideology, as well as colonial and national subjects that are useful, obedient, and well-regulated, is accomplished by eliminating deviant ideas and unregulated knowledge, which largely means suppressing writing. Literary texts are clearly perceived to introduce unnecessary risk into the processes of governability. And this risk, as the Romanian writers discussed by Otoiu also recognized, is a space of possibility. Indeed both Ngugi's and Otoiu's essays remind us that literary texts do have political impact, that we should not be too quick to dismiss the literary as socially irrelevant, not be so adamant about the distinction between the material and the discursive that we overlook their complicity.

But language questions also exceed literature. While language and literature played an undeniable role in processes of colonization, colonization cannot and should not, as Connell argues, be reduced to a matter of textuality. As he demonstrates in the case of Scotland, a materialist and historicized analysis renders a quite different picture of Scotland than that portrayed by literary critics anxious for Scottish literature to be included in the postcolonial canon. Dobie makes a related point in the case of North Africa, where language choice has dominated the concerns of literary intellectuals at the expense of other pressing issues like high illiteracy rates or the political suppression of Berber languages. Literary texts, as much as social discourse, are embedded in a much larger context that, as this volume's contributors repeatedly emphasize, calls for transdisciplinary analysis. Understanding the postcolonial necessitates simultaneous investigation of discursive, materialist, historical, political, and cultural factors, as well as their bearings on each other. Again, this might be a place where the already transdisciplinary emphases of comparative literature programs, a number of which have recently expanded into literature and cultural studies departments, might play a key role in postcolonial studies. As the Bernheimer report emphasized a decade ago, the "comparative" in comparative literature should include:

> comparisons between artistic productions usually studied by different disciplines; between various cultural constructions of those disciplines; between Western cultural traditions, both high and popular, and those of non-Western cultures; between the pre- and post-contact cultural productions of colonized peoples; between gender constructions defined as feminine and those defined as masculine, or between sexual orientations defined as straight and those defined as gay; between racial and ethnic modes of signifying; between hermeneutic articulations of meaning and materialist analyses of its modes of production and circulation; and much more.[20]

In addition to the complexity of (post)colonial languages, this collection of essays also evinces numerous instances of a strange non-identity haunting (post)colonial circumstances. While postcolonial critics have long recognized (and either positively or negatively

valued) the doubled nature of colonized subjectivity—in terms of *méconaissance*, double consciousness, split subjectivity, hybridity, or *métissage*—this volume focuses less on this now well-established version of non-identity than on the double construction of colonial powers and on the diverse and specific forms such doubleness may take: political strategy, terminological confusion, interested misrecognition, lamentable quandary. Ignacio Tofiño-Quesada, for example, in "Spanish Orientalism: Uses of the Past in Spain's Colonization in Africa," demonstrates how Spain adeptly exploited a double identity in its arguments for colonization in Africa, both parading its Islamic past to claim an "inherent African vocation" and suppressing it to emphasize the Catholic(izing) mission of its colonial projects. Connell shows something quite different in the case of Scotland, which has been construed as both an integral part of England and an English colony. If less calculated, the terminological confusion subtending Scotland's dual identity is no less ideologically interested than the double-dealings of Spain. Interpreting Scotland as an English colony, Connell argues, endows Scottish texts with the "postcolonial aura" (and thus a certain institutional capital) at the same time that it absolves Scots of their own participation in empire and blurs the distinction between colonization and imperialism.[21]

According to Edwards, the double identity of the U.S.—its misrecognition of its own global image—is largely repressed and often invisible in American studies, which has paid scant attention to how "American-ness" is understood and recoded elsewhere. More specifically, its lack of engagement with postcolonial studies has effaced the role of the U.S. in processes of decolonization, the neocolonial economic relations it has established with putatively "postcolonial" nations, and the forms of domination obscured by its promises of liberation. While the split identity of the U.S. remains largely unacknowledged, the ambiguity, in-betweenness, or liminality that have often been used to describe the Balkans are not only well-recognized, but nearly always lamented. Otoiu signals the way this doubleness has been pathologized, seen as an abnormality or stigma, as an imitation of, or transition to, Western cultural imperatives. Here, double-identity is not perceived as empowering, but as lack or indeterminacy, as the indignity of being "not yet" or "not quite" European. The Western media's clutching onto the unequivocal events of 1989 are a symptom, he suggests, of this uneasiness with ambiguity.

Two further modalities of double construction emerge from these essays. One is *displacement*, a term which is oriented toward two locations—a proper place and an alien, figural, or erroneous one, and a term whose demographic and psychoanalytic nuances follow it everywhere. Otoiu examines the displacement of meaning in Romanian fiction and society, the double coding and encrypted references that insist that real meaning is elsewhere. In a communist-controlled era, allegory and parable were compulsory, as was a kind of training in double-codedness, an ability to signify and translate what couldn't be said. Exiles in signification rather than in space, such double constructions function, Otoiu contends, as correctives to those strands of postcolonial theory that have assumed literature to be a transparent representation of society. Niekerk analyzes another mode of displacement, that of colonial blame, arguing that while critical attitudes towards competing colonial powers may bear certain truths, they were also often a legitimation technique for one's own colonial policies, a method for localizing and containing critique, for displacing it from colonialism in general to the unenlightened policies of another colonial power or the abuses of a corrupt official. A way of exculpating oneself by reproaching the other, such critiques functioned to justify the *critical* nation as the more progressive and benevolent colonizer. If the former of these two versions of displacement (Otoiu's analysis of meaning) is a lesson that understanding necessarily entails reading elsewhere, the latter (Niekerk's analysis of blame) insists that it begins at home. Put otherwise, elsewhere may be more familiar than one realized and home unrecognizably foreign.

A second form of doubleness addressed in this collection is *appropriation*, a process of making one's own, a renting of a dominant order's cultural property or a piggybacking on its power. As both Michel de Certeau and Ross Chambers theorize such appropriation, it is of a different order from the "making one's own" of colonization, precisely because it is a tactic of the nonpropertied, of those for whom a property's use is considered improper or inappropriate.[22] While arguably bearing certain similarities to Bhabha's notion of mimicry, appropriation is not just an acting, but a taking and using, particularly for purposes other than that for which an object was intended.[23] Ngugi's innovative use of toilet paper (for composing *Devil on the Cross*) is an excellent case in point. Niekerk elaborates another intriguing example of such appropriation: contemporary Indonesian author Pramoedya Ananta Toer's creative reuse of a novel by Multatuli, a Dutch colonial official. As Niekerk shows, Toer rehabilitates Mutatuli's text and characters to explore the role of the progressive intellectual in processes of transculturation, to reinterpret Multatuli's relevance to Indonesian independence, to critique both colonial and native forms of power and knowledge, and to trace the etiology of globalization. Multatuli's novel becomes both his own and another's, the text it has always been and something else entirely.

Edwards's essay considers the multiple reappropriations undergone by Casablanca—as name, city, film,

icon, *obscur objet du désir*. If Hollywood took Casablanca from Morocco and remade it in its own image (the film, shot entirely in California, bears little resemblance to the Moroccan city), going so far as to try to copyright the name, Moroccan film director ‘Abd al-Qader Laqt‘a, repatriating Casablanca (the city) and reappropriating *Casablanca* (the film), inventively siphons off the immense cultural capital of the Hollywood production, reorienting the American plot for his own purposes. His film, entitled *Love in Casablanca*, visually cites both Casablanca (the city) and *Casablanca* (the film), to produce an imaginative misreading of the latter, one in which America is stuck in a suffocating morality, moribund traditions, and oppressive censorship, and in which Morocco, by contrast, is vibrant, liberal, and modern. The cultural appropriations described by both Niekerk and Edwards are, hence, constructions of a non-identity that work with, through, and against the colonizer's property.

But the very notion of "property" should give us pause; it is hardly a self-evident principle. Indeed struggles over property rights, implicit or explicit—and over the very meaning of property—appear persistently in the essays that follow: struggles over territory, resources, and power to be sure, but also over language, thought, and history. To own property means more than merely to possess or use it, it is to have a legitimate right to such possession and use, and the provenance of such legitimation constitutes a large part of such contentions. Both Dobie's and Chanda's essays demonstrate the degree to which processes of (de)colonization have been a struggle over the ownership of language: over who has the right or responsibility to use a given language, to whom it "belongs," who determines its proper use, who "owns" the context that controls its meaning. In some cases, colonial and national subjects may find themselves completely dispossessed of the right to a given language—as Dobie notes in Algeria and Ngugi in Kenya, Spain, Hawaii, and the Americas. In these instances, using a language where it does not belong is criminalized; violaters may pay with imprisonment, even death. Ngugi examines a related form of regulation—of the legitimate possession of *thought*. His analysis of censorship shows the multiple ways that thought, as well as the means of its production and exchange, can be confiscated: from the physical destruction of a theater, library, or writing materials, to withdrawal of funding for education, to simple intimidation and discouragement. Who has access to books, the media in which to express and exchange ideas, and the freedom to do so not only regulates the economy of intellectual property but suggests that Ngugi's youthful belief in a need for a "license to write" is often metaphorically, even when not literally, true. For Niekerk, the question is over who owns a particular *species* of thought—that is, rationality. Does it belong to the West? Was the deed drawn up in the Enlightenment and handed down through generations of Europeans? Is it proper in some places and improper in others?

Tofiño-Quesada describes an intriguing struggle over possession of the past: at the same time that Europe was reclaiming Spain's Muslim past and taking possession of a conveniently located mecca of Orientalism, an ultra-Catholic Spain was laying claim to the same past for Christendom, narrating a history temporarily and illicitly purloined by Islam. The incident of Santa Cruz de Mar Pequeña, to which Tofiño-Quesada refers, is, further, a cogent example of the way in which geographic and symbolic territory become inseparably fused: it is not uncommon for struggles over meaning to materialize into battles over space. This fusion of the geographic and the ideological is also legible in the Israeli policy of changing place names from Arabic to Hebrew (noted by Levy), and the astonishing 1942 advertisement (cited by Edwards): "The Army's Got Casablanca—and *So Have Warner Bros!*" Beneath both these cases of geo-ideological (con)fusion, it should not be overlooked, lie bloody conflicts over land and material resources.

The complexity of this relation between the symbolic and material is evinced in two strangely contradictory scenes of (dis)possession in the essays that follow. These scenarios (one analyzed by Levy, the other by Chanda) disclose how this relation not only manages national territories, but also regulates personal belongings, legitimating possessions through, for example, citizenship, local codes of belonging, or social and economic standing. Levy interprets a scene from Samir Naqqash's *I, They and the Split* in which the narrator's family, Iraqi Jews, having succumbed to pressure to emigrate to Israel, appear before the denaturalization board. At the very moment that their identity and nationality are being confiscated, the official doing so inadvertently addresses them as compatriots. The striking contradiction of this moment calls attention to how symbolic possession (here of membership in the "imagined community") may occlude the reality of material dispossession (of home, personal property, and citizenship rights). Chanda analyses a different set of contradictions between the symbolic and material. Reflecting on the circumstances of a character from Arundati Roy's novel, *The God of Small Things*, she notes the way in which the colonizer's discourse offers Velutha ideological redress for his untouchable status with Western notions of individuality and human rights at the same time that the material practices of colonization deprive him of the possibility of realizing those goals. While one hand generously dispenses a liberal ideology, the other tightly grips the resources that would allow its promises to materialize.

Critical in postcolonial realities, property struggles are also increasingly widespread in the institutionalized

practice of postcolonial studies. The confrontation of the national organization of language and literature departments with an increasingly transnational body of cultural productions has given rise to numerous such struggles. Connell, for example, investigates the formation of Scottish literature as an object of study, which implicitly claims ownership over texts and demands conceptual repatriation of writing from the empire of English literature. Dobie notes that North African texts are less often assigned in conjunction with sub-Saharan African studies than with the Middle East or French. And Edwards, posing the "preposterous" question why they aren't on American studies syllabi, asks us to consider the larger issue of how the "proper place" of texts is determined. What, for example, makes a text "American"? Should national ownership of texts be assigned on the basis of language? the citizenship of an author? the place where s/he writes? the subject of the text? For whom is it proper to write about "American-ness"? Beyond and between the confines of such national categories, moreover, is a growing body of "homeless texts" written in more than one place, by exiles, migrants, multilingual or transnational authors.[24] Whose cultural property are they? Such border skirmishes are not without consequences; they have considerable impact on the formation of (trans)national identities and the distribution of institutional, and (more distally) of global, resources.

Furthermore, as a number of contributors to this volume make clear, postcolonial theory itself has, in multiple disciplines, become a significant form of institutional capital: drawing on postcolonial discourse increases the value of one's scholarship. It makes it more visible within the institutional economy of ideas, more attractive to curricular investments, and more marketable to publishers. Here, another proprietary conflict has predictably broken out over what regions and disciplines have the right to draw on postcolonial theory. On the one hand, critiques of the applicability of postcolonial theory to the dizzying array of contexts to which it has been "applied" have been crucial in combating the fallacy of a "one size fits all" postcolonialism and challenging the terminology of postcolonial theory that has, in its abstraction, often obscured distinct material and historical circumstances. These are issues that are central to Connell's critique of the way in which postcolonial theory has been deployed in relation to Scottish literature. Such discussions have also illuminated the very different colonial policies of the competing European powers, the diversity of policy implementation in various regions, and the theaters—cultural, political, military, religious, economic—in which colonial domination has been played out. On the other hand, such quarrels have sometimes devolved into a kind of policing operation of the borders of histories and disciplines, a surveillance of proper use, that, one suspects, has largely to do with control of cultural capital and that at times begins to resemble the segregation obsessions of colonial logic. Both Edwards and Otoiu make arguments for how recent research on (post)colonial histories and logics may provide—rather than a reductive or monolithic paradigm—a rich repository of contextual knowledge, theoretical tools, and modes of inquiry that teach us much about elsewhere.

We noted above the proprietary claims that nations, colonial as well as postcolonial, make on the past. Edwards turns our attention to the significance of a proprietary claim on the present: Henry Luce's 1941 proclamation of "the American Century." If exceptionally presumptuous, Luce's edict is by no means alone in claiming possession of time through naming it. Levy notes the differing names given to the 1948 war, for example, which Israelis call the "war of independence" and Palestinians name "the calamity." If such nominations are gestures of possession (even when they are recognitions of dispossession), they are also acts of interpretation and bringing them into dialogue (as opposed to merely adjudicating between them) may prove to be a fertile hermeneutic resource. Edwards considers the following example: insofar as the postcolonial is a temporal category, it coincides with the period elsewhere known as "the cold war"; bringing these temporal paradigms into conversation reveals aspects of both of them that otherwise remain obscured. Otoiu mounts a similar argument for the "postcolonial" and the "postcommunist."

It is perhaps little wonder that "timeframes" should become such contested commodities for, as this collection of articles demonstrates, temporality and the ways it is packaged play a significant role in (post)colonial histories and power relations. Modernity, particularly as reified against tradition, underdevelopment, or the "Third World" is one temporal category that has been a central participant both in colonization and in determining available options for decolonization. The conflation of the culture of European modernity (of industrialized, urban, secular society) with the temporal concept of modernity (the present)—a conception underwritten by theorists such as Hegel, Marx, and Weber—establishes a temporalized global geography graded in terms of "development." The teleological conception of modernity as inevitable trajectory, moreover, which functioned as a major ideological constituent of colonialism, can be located in only slightly revised form in much of postcolonial development discourse and the language of globalization: if all societies are naturally moving toward modernity, the argument runs, some are clearly moving more sluggishly than others and advanced, developed, civilized societies bear the duty to lead the benighted and backwards into the light

of the present. The contributors to this volume approach these temporal inequities from several distinct perspectives: Edwards, borrowing Michael Hanchard's terms, examines how temporal registers are racialized. Chanda investigates how fictional characters carry the signs of "modernity" and "tradition," as well as how generational differences between postcolonial writers may entail differing conceptions of such temporal designations. Connell shows how the equation of "underdevelopment" with the (post)colonial can work in reverse: subtending claims for Scotland as a colony, he contends, are changes in the British economy that, in the late 1970s and 1980s, had a disproportionate effect on Scotland, leaving the region "behind" in developmental terms.

In a suggestive scene examined by Levy, Sa'id, the aforementioned character in *The Pessoptimist*, mistranslates time, mistaking German "acht" for Hebrew "e(k)hat." Such a temporal confusion, of course, puts one out of step with the rest of the world, off schedule, too early or late; it is a confusion that messes up the order of things, an error that upsets a fundamental organizational and disciplinary principle of society. But perhaps that is precisely the point; perhaps temporal error—refusing to "get in step" with a hegemonic modernity—is a tactic for challenging (neo)colonial order. This is a suggestion that Edwards develops under the sign of the "pre-post-erous," a term that literally means "in the wrong order." If being out of order is routinely pathologized—*preposterous* also comes to mean contrary to nature, common sense, and reason—it may also afford a moment in which colonial renditions of the natural and reasonable (everywhere inflected by conceptions of temporality) can be effectively disputed.

Language, non-identity, property, temporality: these emerge as several productive sites of inquiry when postcolonial studies is considered comparatively. But we have only scratched the surface of these themes and there are also many others that need to be explored; these elaborations we leave to this volume's contributors and to those who, we hope, will continue this discussion in the future.

NOTES

[1]Part I of this introduction is the work of Waïl S. Hassan; Part II is by Rebecca Saunders.

[2]Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

[3]See Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Indian Education: Minute of the 2nd of February 1835," in *Macaulay: Prose and Poetry,* ed. G. M. Young (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1952), 719-30; Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya, 1986); Gauri Viswanathan, *The Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

[4]See, for example, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ed. *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), and Thomas Cartelli's *Repositioning Shakespeare: National Formations, Postcolonial Appropriations* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

[5]This is the logic of Aijaz Ahmed's critique of postcolonial studies. See his *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992) and "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality," *Race and Class* 36:3 (1995): 1-20.

[6]Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), p.2.

[7]Hassan has raised these issues in "Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature: Horizons of Application," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 33:1 (2002): 45-64. Some passages from this article have been reproduced here.

[8]See Ashcroft et. al.

[9]Aijaz Ahmed, "*Orientalism* and After," in *In Theory,* 159-219. Benita Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse," in *Oxford Literary Review* 9.1-2 (1987): 27-58. Abdul R. JanMohamed, "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature," in *"Race," Writing, and Difference,* ed. Henry Louis Gates (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986): 78-106. See also Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third world Capitalism in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), E. San Juan, *Beyond Postcolonial Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), Anouar Majid, *Unveiling Traditions: Postcolonial Islam in a Polycentric World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), and Rukmini Bhaya Nair, *Lying on the Postcolonial Couch: The Idea of Indifference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

[10]Anne McClintock, "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-Colonial,'" in *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 84-98. Ella Shohat, "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial,'" in *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 99-113.

[11]Interestingly, like the Three Worlds theory, the term "postcolonial" also originated in the field of political theory, as Aijaz Ahmad points out in "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality," p. 1. On the category of "Third World Literature," see Ahmad's *In Theory*, 43-71 and 90-122. Bart Moore-Gilbert provides an excellent account of the emergence of the categories of "Commonwealth Literature" and "Postcolonial Literature" in *Postcolonial Theory* (London: Verso, 1997), 5-33.

[12]See, for instance, David Chioni Moore's "Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique," *PMLA* 116:1 (January 2001): 111-28.

[13]See Hassan, "Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature: Horizons of Application," 47-56.

[14]Reprinted in Charles Bernheimer, ed., *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995): 39-48.

[15]The range of reactions to the report, from alarmed to welcoming, is represented by the critical responses to it included in Bernheimer, ed., *Comparative Literature.*

[16]Emily Apter, "Comparative Exile: Competing Margins in the History of Comparative Literature," in Bernheimer, *Comparative Literature*, 86.

[17]See Ronald Judy's pertinent comments on English language instruction in Tunisia and the World Bank's surrepti-

tious involvement therein. "Some Notes on the Status of Global English in Tunisia," *boundary 2,* 26:2 (1999): 3-29.

[18]These theoretical associations are analyzed in Rebecca Saunders, ed., *The Concept of the Foreign: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2002).

[19]Paul de Man, "Conclusions: Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator,'" *The Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 84. De Man, significantly, describes this movement of disintegration and fragmentation of the original as "a wandering, an *errance*, a kind of permanent exile if you wish, but it is not really an exile, for there is no homeland, nothing from which one has been exiled" (92). Benjamin's essay on translation, "The Task of the Translator," can be found in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 69-82.

[20]Bernheimer, ed., *Comparative Literature,* 42.

[21]The term (and a measure of the irony) is borrowed from Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura*, chap. 3.

[22]See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) and Ross Chambers, *Room for Maneuver: Reading (the) Oppositional (in) Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[23]See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), chap. 4.

[24]This useful term is borrowed from Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi's book, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).