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Chimo

The Newsjournal of the Canadian Association for
Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

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Canadian Association for Commonwealth
Literature and Language Studies

1996 Learneds, Brock University
Programme

All CACLALS sessions will be held in Room H313 unless otherwise indicated

Thursday, May 23

10:00 - 1:00 Registration: Outside Room H313

1:00 - 2:30 Special Session: "Professional
Performance"

Co-Chairs. Jennifer Kelly (Calgary)
& Laura Moss (Queen's)

Ashok Mathur (Calgary): Spaces, Races, Bodies: A

Performative

Interrogation

**Sarah Benton, Janet Hoops, Linda McNutt, Anthony
Oguntuase, Jesse Sagawa** (UNB): Always Bring aVegan

3:00 - 5:00

Session A

Chair: Victor Ramraj (Calgary)

a) J. Edward Chamberlin (Toronto): Dances With Daffodils: Wordsworth and the West Indies

Break

b) David Leahy (Concordia): Who Was/Is That Wo/man: Post! Colonial Homosexual Panic in Derek Walcott's *Pantomime*

c) Lisa Salem-Wiseman (York): Post-colonial Identities and the Disruption of the Mother-Daughter Bond in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*

6:30

Brock University's President's Reception

Friday, May 24

9:15 - 10:30

Session B:

Chair: Ranjini Mendis (Kwantlen)

a) John Ball (UNB): Acid in the Nation's Bloodstream:

Satire,

Violence, and the Body in *The Moor's Last Sigh*

b) Laura Moss (Queen's): *Moraes Fathered by Saleem:*

The Moor's

Last Sigh, Magic Realism, and *Midnight's Children*

c) Annick Hillger (Toronto): "And this is the world of

nomads in any

case": *The Odyssey* as Intertext in Michael Ondaatje's *The*

English

Patient

10:45 - 12:00

Session C:

Chair: Aruna Srivastava (Calgary)

a) John Scheckter (Long Island): Carving a Place for

Herself:

Bharati Mukherjee as an American Writer

b) Gabrielle Collu (Montréal): Unleashing Kali: Anger as

Resistance

in South Asian Women's Writing
c) **Karen E. Macfarlane** (McGill): No Ice In Lucknow: The

Mutiny

Subtext in Sara Jeannette Duncan's *The Simple Adventures of
a
Memsahib*

1:00 - 2:15

Joint Session with ACCUTE

Helen Tiffin (Queensland): Literature and the Logic of
Western Medicine (Room to be Announced)

2:30 - 3:45

Session D

Chair: John Ball (IJNB)

Special Session: Scholarly Publishing and the Postcolonial
Literatures

A Roundtable discussion with Diana Brydon (Guelph), Frank
Davey (Western), Victor Ramraj (Calgary), and Ann Wilson
(Guelph).

4:00 - 5:15

Session E

Chair: Craig Tapping (Malaspina)

a) **Sam Durrant** (Queen's): "The Ghost of a Chance": Absent
Bodies, Spectral Presences and the Possibility of History

b) **Lynda Hall** (Calgary): Writing Lesbian Bodies Across
Borders: Postcolonial Telling Experience of Gloria Anzaldua
and Chrystos

c) **Jill Didur** (York): The Ethics of the Critic:
Representations of Violence in Literary Criticism on
"Partition Narratives"

Saturday, May 25

9:15 - 10:30

Session F

Chair: David Leahy (Concordia)

a) Guy Beaugard (Alberta): "The Chinese Entrepreneur" in Canada: Stereotyping in an Age of Global Capitalism

b) Rick Lee (Alberta): Shades of Desire: Imagining/Imaging Black Male Bodies

c) Heather Smyth (Alberta): Mimics and Tourists: Counter-discourse and Neo-colonial Stereotypes of the Caribbean

10:45 - 12:30

Session G

Chair: Susan Spearey (Brock)

African

a) Rosemary Jolly (Queen's): Contemporary South

Literature and the Question of Literary Critical Ethics

b) Cherry Clayton (Guelph): Posting South African Letters

c) Matilda Gabrielpillai (UBC): Post-colonial Identity at the East-West Border: Reading

Singapore

Identity through the Michael Fay Caning Incident

2:30 - 3:45

Session H

Chair: Kelly Hewson (Mt. Royal)

Nations

a) Susan Gingell (Saskatchewan): Contemporary First

Female Intersubjectivity in *Voices in the Waterfall and Bear Bones and Feathers*

Bear Bones

Generic

b) Robert O. Fiander (UNB): Jesus and Nanabush: Ryga's

Martyrs versus Highway's Native Tricksters

Representation:

c) Craig Tapping (Malaspina): The Rites of Self-

Post-colonial Autobiography

4:00 - 6:00

Annual General Meeting

Abstracts of Papers

John Ball (UNB): Acid in the Nation's Bloodstream: Satire, Violence, and the Body in *The Moor's Last Sigh*.

In *Midnight's Children*, *Shame*, and *The Satanic Verses*, Salman Rushdie elaborates a politics and poetics of inclusivity. Throughout his work, principles of democratic openness, multiplicity, and "mongrel" hybridity are valorized over those of purity, hierarchy, and totalitarian absolutism. Like Bakhtin's Rabelais, Rushdie uses the grotesque body as a positive metaphor for the intermingling of realms and transgression of boundaries that he sees as characteristic of pluralist, secular India (and especially cosmopolitan Bombay). At the same time, the satire in Rushdie's novels consistently targets threats to inclusivity - demagoguery, fanaticism, intolerance, essentialism - and documents their grim, disabling violence on individual bodies and the body politic.

The Moor's Last Sigh reaffirms these values and extends the techniques by which the somatic and the satiric are yoked together. Thematically, stylistically, and structurally similar to *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie's new novel brings the political themes of its predecessor up to date. While Saleem Sinai's narrative ended when his body disintegrated - shortly after the 1975-77 Emergency that dealt it its final blows - the new novel's chief satiric target is the religious factionalism of the 1980s. For Rushdie, Ayodhya and the rise of the Ram-Rajya cult represent "corrosive acid poured into the nation's bloodstream (351); the new fundamentalism violates "the founding myth of the nation" (351) just as it reduces polytheistic Hinduism to a religion in which "only one chap matters" (338). The novel's main characters, the Catholic-Jew "Moor" and his mother Aurora, exemplify and espouse Rushdie's pluralistic vision in which "worlds collide, flow in and out of one another" (226); yet if both are at times victims of the new era's violence, both also become co-opted (bodily and mentally) as agents of the new intolerance with its violent exclusions.

Satire can be seen as a form of representational violence. Rushdie's work, with its fondness for literalized metaphors, uses the violations done to and by bodies alternately to signify the ill effects of a satirized condition (Saleem's sufferings from Emergency Rule) and to represent IN the text (through a character-agent) the devastations done by Rushdie as satirist THROUGH the text (Sufiya's

apocalyptic whirlwind at the end of *Shame*).

The paper will examine some of the ways in which the conflict between the inclusive and the exclusive, the multiplicitous and the single-minded that informs all of Rushdie's work is furthered in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. It will show how bodies (and bodily imagery) signify contested national space, and how the political satire that both critiques and performs violence appropriates the body to its purposes. It will read the novel as an extension of the political pessimism with which *Midnight's Children* ended, and argue that Rushdie's desired "victory of the noman-is-an-island, two's-company Many over the clean, mean, apartheid-ing Ones" (289) remains an elusive ideal in the India of his fictional imagination.

Work Cited

Rushdie, Salman. *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Toronto: Knopf, 1995.

Guy Beauregard (*Alberta*): "The Chinese Entrepreneur" in Canada: Stereotyping in an Age of Global Capitalism.

This presentation will examine the stereotype of "the Chinese entrepreneur" in Canada as it is articulated in popular books (such as Margaret Cannon's *China Tide*); daily newspapers (such as the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Vancouver Province*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Financial Post*); and news magazines (such as *Maclean's*, *BC Business*, and the *B. C. Report*). I will focus on contemporary Vancouver because of its large Chinese Canadian community and its recent economic and social changes. As a recent article in the *Economist* puts it, "recent immigration has made [Vancouver] the most Asian city in Canada in outlook, economic ties and population--18% of its people are of Chinese descent" (40). I will argue that a crucial part of the city's transformation has been a discursive shift in stereotypes of Chinese Canadians, a shift that has foregrounded the stereotype of "the Chinese entrepreneur."

My theoretical point of departure will be Homi Bhabha's classic discussion of the colonial stereotype in "The Other Question," in which he convincingly argues that "the point of intervention should shift from the *identification* of images as positive or negative, to an understanding of the *processes of subjectification* made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse" (71). I will therefore not attempt to identify the stereotype of "the Chinese entrepreneur" as a positive or negative image, but rather argue that it facilitates the construction of a national "Canadian" identity, and more specifically, that it "subjects" Canada and parts of Asia into what Robyn Wiegman calls a *representational economy* (as opposed to an economic system) of global capitalist expansion.

I will approach this "process of subjectification" (in which "Canada" becomes a subject in a particular representational economy) by quickly tracing three overlapping stages in the development of stereotypes of the Chinese in Canada. In the first stage, the Chinese are stereotyped as "immoral heathens" who must be excluded from Canada at all costs (the Chinese Immigration Act effectively barred Chinese from entering Canada from 1923 to 1947); in the second stage, perhaps coterminous with state-sanctioned multiculturalism, the Chinese are reduced to a fetishized and easily manageable version of "Chinese culture"; and finally, in the third stage, the Chinese are stereotyped as entrepreneurs with innate business sense, and simultaneously considered to be desired commodities (new immigration policies in 1978 and 1985 created the category of investor and entrepreneur immigrants partly in order to lure capital from Hong Kong) and objects of resentment (typically expressed in white Canadians' complaints about Chinese "excess" and their "unwillingness to assimilate").

In order to map these shifting clusters of stereotypes, I will build upon the nuanced scholarship of Kay Anderson, who makes the important point that "European hegemony has been renewed in *multiple* forms," not just in negative representations of racialized "Others" (26). Because Anderson's work traces racial discourse in Vancouver only up to 1980, it cannot address important recent shifts in stereotypes of Chinese Canadians. I will also draw upon the media analysis of Ma and Hildebrandt, who argue that newspaper coverage of Chinese Canadians has shifted from an interest in culture to a focus on business, a shift which they claim "may reflect the greatest image update for the Canadian-Chinese community throughout its history" (486).

And it is the implications of this profound "image update"-implications left unpacked by Ma and Hildebrandt-that my presentation will address: how through the stereotype of "the Chinese entrepreneur," Canada discursively becomes a secure space with a "high standard of living" and technological supremacy; China, Hong Kong and Taiwan become polluted, crowded spaces that provide exciting business opportunities but must nevertheless be left behind for Canada's security; and capitalist expansion and foreign investment become the means of "weathering recessions," "buoying economics," and "adding dynamism to the established business culture." "The Chinese entrepreneur," a stereotype in an age of global capitalism, ultimately scripts ways for us to imagine "Canada."

Works Cited

Anderson, Kay J. *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980*.

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1991.

"A Western Welcome for Asia." *Economist* 26 August 1995: 40.

Bhabha, Homi K. "The Other Question." *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture*. Ed. Russell Ferguson, et al. Cambridge, Mass.:

M.I.T.

Press, 1990. 71-88.

Ma, Jianming & Kai Hildebrandt. "Canadian Press Coverage of the Ethnic Chinese

Community: A Content Analysis of *The Toronto Star* and the Vancouver *Sun*,

1970-1990." *Canadian Journal of Communications* 18.4(1993): 479-496.

J. Edward Chamberlin (Toronto): *Dances With Daffodils: Wordsworth and the West Indies.*

Nobody in England much liked Wordsworth's Daffodil poem (as he occasionally called it) when it first appeared; and nearly two hundred years later, nobody much likes it. Certainly nobody with post-colonial credentials.

Or so it seems. And yet there are few poems in the English language as familiar. Most people who know any poetry at all can recite some of its lines; and there are a lot of poets who would love to write an unlikable poem like that.

Much attention has been given to the grotesque disjunction between the world of imperial English daffodils and that of colonial geographies, and to the distortions that Wordsworth's immensely popular poem produced in, say the West Indian readers. I want to take the other side, and talk about how this poem--and indeed many of his early poems, including those in the *Lyrical Ballads*--present a set of lessons about how to read and listen to post-colonial poetry.

Cherry Clayton (*Guelph*): *Posting South African Letters.*

This paper explores the relationship between post-colonial theory and South African literary culture, questioning the way in which South African culture has been posited as an exception to the implicit norms of some post-colonial theorizing. The centrality of "race politics" in South African history and culture has led to its positioning on the margins of "postcolonial cultures." This has had the effect of eliding the centrality of race to post-colonial theorizing in general, as well as an elision of the ways in which South Africa could be understood as providing a model of the interrelationship of colonialism, racial domination, surveillance and the use of force to maintain white hegemony. The discussion of racial politics and representation which has developed around South African literary culture also has implications for a feminist position: an over-emphasis on the performative aspects of literature seems to undercut the agenda of both feminism and the political struggle for democracy and racial

justice in South Africa. This paper investigates these questions, and the implications of the transition to democracy, while referencing recent fictions from writers like J.M. Coetzee and Lauretta Ngcobo.

Gabrielle Collu (*Montréal*): Unleashing Kali: Anger as Resistance in South Asian Women's Writing

"If women have an excess of power, a corresponding excess of sexuality, and the potential to swell into angry goddesses, men have a strong interest in restraining them" (*Gold in Kumar*, 1994, 30).

In much of Western literature, South Asian women are represented in two opposing stereotypical manners. They are portrayed either as passive, compliant, docile, subservient and submissive or as dangerous, lustful, and treacherous. Edward Said discusses this dichotomizing tendency in the context of his analysis of Orientalism, and I have analyzed some of its implications in the works of Rudyard Kipling, Sara Jeanette Duncan, and Ruth Praver Jhabvala.¹ Following Chandra Mohanty's call to look at how the Other represents itself ("Under Western Eyes"), I now turn to Indian literature and am faced with a wide range of representations of Indian women, not only as submissive and demure, but as strong and active, occasionally rebellious, even at times angry and defiant. In ancient Indian literary tradition, there is Sita, the devoted, worshipful to the point of death, wife of Rama, but there is also Durga, the warrior goddess, Kali, the goddess of destruction, and the courageous and defiant Draupadi, renowned wife of the five Pandava brothers, who, in Rashni Rustomji-Kerns' words, "is loud in her anger and forces a debate on the legality of her husband's right to use her as a wager in his game. She makes her outrage heard even in the divine realm" (*In Other Words*, xi).

In this paper, I will focus on the treatment of anger, more specifically on the representation of Indian women as angry. The aim of my paper, which will deal with female anger in three stories by Indian women, "Draupadi" by Mahawesta Devi, "Hand-Me-Downs" by Wajida Tabassum, and "Black Horse Square" by Ambai, is twofold. First, I would like to present alternative images of strong, powerful and active Indian women to counter the reductive effects of Western representation of South Asian women as submissive wives or dangerous whores. Secondly, I will argue that the use of anger by Indian women can be seen as an act of defiance in the face of various forms of oppression, and as a weapon in their daily battles for independence. In other words, I would like to consider anger as a form of "everyday resistance," in the sense that Scott (*Weapons of the Weak*) and Haynes and Prakash (*Contesting Power*) use the term, i.e. to mean "forms of struggle present in the behaviours and cultural practices of subordinated peoples at times other than those of overt revolt" (*Contesting*

Power, 2).

My paper will take into consideration the fact that there are different forms of anger, generational and communal ones such as class, gender, ethnic, religious, as well as more private and individualistic ones, which intersect and reinforce each other, and that these forms have different meanings, as well as various impacts. Moreover, anger can not always be interpreted as a positive force, as an act of resistance, defiance or as an effective blow against oppression. In short, there are various ways of using anger, not all of which are empowering for women, even when they are used by them. For instance, Sufiya Zinobia's anger in Salman Rushdie's novel *Shame* is unrestrained and irrational, as well as terribly destructive; and it appears unjustified and meaningless. Her portrayal recalls the myth of Kali as terrible, bloodthirsty, and mad; a myth that is often appropriated by Orientalist texts to represent India as a violent and barbaric nation. (For examples, see Duncan and Jhabvala.) I am more interested in creative and empowering ways for women to channel their anger against specific gender! caste/class/ethnic oppressor(s). For instance, Draupadi's anger in Devi's story of the same name is her liberation from the shame and humiliation of rape; Chamki's anger in Tabassum's text represents a momentary escape from the oppressive social boundaries of class; and Rosa Kandasani's anger in "Black Horse Square" is the impetus behind a powerful demonstration against the oppression of women.

Note

'See my dissertation entitled *Strategies of Eroticization in Colonial and Postcolonial Texts*. Université de Montréal. 1994.

Jill Didur (York): The Ethics of the Critic: Representations of Violence in Literary Criticism on "Partition Narratives."

Renewed interest in the events concerning the partition of India in 1947 has resulted in the publication of several anthologies of so-called "Partition narratives." In the introduction to *Stories about the Partition of India*, a three volume set, Alok Bhalla comments that "I have put together this anthology of stories about the Partition not in order to exorcise the past, but in hope of initiating an ethical inquiry into the history of my age and place." Up until recently, literary criticism of "Partition narratives" in English has been limited to a few scattered essays in various journals. More often than not, this criticism has tended to be nationalist in character, or in other words, it represents the violence that occurred as a "natural," primitive and spontaneous outburst by fanatical, and/or uneducated, irrational, religious and backward groups who were unable to appreciate the benefits of modernism and nationalism. Literature that has tended to support this reading has been celebrated as "documenting" this violence and anthologized in publications like Bhalla's and *Orphans of the Storm: Stories on*

the Partition of India (Soros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal eds.).

My paper considers how literary criticism constitutes narratives concerning India's Partition as "Partition stories" and how this has contributed to the production of hegemonic nationalist imaginaries in both India and Pakistan. To date, most criticism on so-called Partition texts has tended to rehearse a "universalizing" (and consequently, elite, patriarchal and nationalist) interpretation of the significance of the violence associated with Partition. What gets pushed to the margins of these interpretations are the struggles for a more polyphonic reading of the nation and the experience of those which questions the totalizing logic of bourgeois nationalism. With this in mind, my discussion poses the question: If the goal is not to exorcise the ghost of Partition from literary history, how would an 'ethical inquiry' into these events through literary criticism proceed?

Sam Durrant (*Queen's*): "The Ghost of a Chance": Absent Bodies, Spectral Presences and the Possibility of History.

Defining the postcolonial as that which is haunted by the colonial, I will argue, through a juxtaposition of thinking of Wilson Harris and Jacques Derrida, that it is only by coming to terms with this haunting presence of the past in (the attempt to define) the present that one begins to realise the possibility of emancipation, the possibility of a truly postcolonial future. In so doing, I will suggest *contra* much recent postcolonial criticism', that the postcolonial and the postmodern ought to be seen as complementary projects, as similar attempts to find a way out of the nightmare of history, a way of escaping what Marx referred to in "The Eighteenth Brumaire" as "the tradition of all the dead generations [which] weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living."

The first part of my paper will examine Harris' essay, "Interior of the Novel: European/Amerindian/African Relations," in which Harris argues that "material change" will only come about, paradoxically, through a recognition of the "immaterial," the "spectral host" that material progress failed to take into account, the "lost tribe[s]" that haunt the annals of colonial history. It is Harris' belief that a recognition of this "spectral burden" will render the determined and determining "legacies of history" "translatable, transmutable," that makes him so important as a postcolonial writer.

However, this belief also underlines his relevance as a postmodern writer. The second section of my paper will explore some of the parallels between the Harrisian project and the postmodern critique of Hegelian determinism, of history as an inevitable progression. Such a conception, argues Nietzsche, leads to an unqualified "admiration for 'the power of history' which in practise

transforms every moment into an unqualified admiration for success" ("On the Uses and Disadvantages of History For Life"). Instead, as Derrida suggests in *Spectres of Marx* (a work which marks Derrida's increasing concern with the *politics* of deconstruction), one must "learn to live with ghosts." Like Harris, Derrida argues that it is a question of historical responsibility, of the debt of recognition that one owes those who are not there: "It is necessary to speak of the ghost, indeed to the ghost and with it, from the moment that no politics, whether revolutionary or not, seems possible and thinkable or just that does not recognise in its principle the respect for those who are no longer or who are not yet there."

The final section explores this spectral *relation* (emphasised by Derrida in his italicisation of the prepositions in the passage quoted above) with reference to the first two novellas in *The Guyana Quartet*, revealing how "the ghost of a chance," a phrase which repeats itself at critical disjunctures in all four novellas, signifies not merely a fleeting half-chance, but the very opportunity marked out or opened up by the presence of the ghost itself. Only by recognising this spectral presence, only by establishing this relation with the absent body, are the characters able to realise the possibility of history.

Note

'See, for example, "The Politics of the Possible" by Kumkum Sangari (Cultural Critique 7, 1987, 157-86). See also, "Numinous Proportions': Wilson Harris' Alternative to All 'Posts'" (*Past the Last Post: Theorizing PostColonialism and Post-Modernism*, eds. Adam and Tiffin, U of Calgary Press, 1990, in which Hena Maes-Jelinek, taking her cue from Wilson Harris himself, distinguishes Harris' work from that of other "postmodern" fiction writers.

Robert O. Fiander (UNB): Jesus and Nanabush: Ryga's Generic Martyrs versus Highway's Native Tricksters.

Ryga's grim reaction against injustice to indigenous peoples involves the casting of his protagonist, Rita Joe, as a generic martyr figure whose "ecstasy" strangely resembles that of Christ, the prototypical Western martyr, and shows that the author of *Rita Joe* is working more under the influence of Western cultural limitations than under the influence of an understanding of native culture, mythology and personality. Thomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, however, because it exposes readers and theatre audiences to the "Trickster," an unpredictable and puckish mythological figure central to native culture, demonstrates a greater understanding of native issues than does *Rita Joe*. In *Dry Lips*, we see not only a scathing criticism of white culture, but also a merging of native thought patterns with those of white culture--producing a hybrid consciousness which is highly critical of mainstream society in Canada--a consciousness in which laughter is not inappropriate to issues of moral significance, and in which the Western mythological figure of Christ is supplanted by the protean figure of the Trickster.

On the one hand, Ryga's agitprop play represents his attempt to make as heavy an impact on his audience as possible--and as effective a way as any of communicating this agenda is the integration of scriptural themes of persecution into the play's texture. On the other hand, integral to Highway's avoidance of native stereotypes is his dramatic use of Nanabush. The humour of Highway's presentation of this mythological figure is an attempt to revitalize native culture through the dramatic representation of the spirit of Nanabush, and to subvert white stereotypes of native personalities, such as Ryga's Native-as-Sage! Native-as-angry-young-man dichotomy. My presentation will explore and illustrate how Highway's humorous and mordantly ironic use of the Nanabush figure is more effective than Ryga's use of Western religious nuance vis a vis drawing attention to the misunderstanding and mistreatment of native peoples in Canada.

Matilda Gabrielpillai (UBC): Post-colonial Identity at the East-West Border: Reading Singapore Identity through the Michael Fay Caning Incident.

Between March and June 1994, the United States of America and Singapore engaged in a media "war" over the caning of an American teenager for vandalism in Singapore. This conflict was interesting in what it revealed about the way Americans and Singaporeans perceived themselves. National identity is formed in a variety of discursive sites but it is at the borders of the nation -- where sovereignty and national identity are constructed or asserted in a process of "othering" or cultural differentiation -- that constructions of national identity are rendered most transparent, revealing their internal contradictions, their racist, sexist and classist agenda, and their historical baggage. An event such as the U.S.Singapore conflict over the caning of the American teenager Michael Fay is such a border site that offers scope for the investigation of discourses of national identity as fictions or ideologies marked by discontinuities. It also affords an opportunity to examine how the discursive parameters are currently being drawn up in the polarization of East-West cultural identity in a post-colonial, post-Cold War world, where East Asian economic (and hence, political) power is on the rise.

In the light of this, this paper will study how Singapore identity was constructed through a process of the racial and sexual "othering" of American national culture in Singapore press reports and political discourse from the period covering Fay's sentencing in March 1994 to June 1994 (when the controversy ended with the caning of Fay). Two books from Singapore, Asad Latiff's *The Flogging of Singapore: The Michael Fay Affair* and Gopal Baratham's *The Caning of Michael Fay: The Inside Story by a Singaporean*, will also be looked at to

indicate how this "othering" process inadvertently unmasked fractures in Singaporeans' sense of themselves.

This paper will also use the media discourse that arose out of the Michael Fay incident to discuss the figuration of threats to national sovereignty and cultural power in metaphors of inter-racial castration and male rape, and look at what this might mean in terms of the linkage of national identity to discourses of race, masculine identity and the exercise of male sexual power. In connection with this, this paper will consider how pictures of naked white men baring their buttocks to East Asian floggers (which appeared in both the American and Singaporean media) operated as a sexually-charged metaphor for East-West conflict.

Finally, this paper will show that Singapore's "othering" of the U.S. indicates that a post-colonial nation's identity continues to be discursively haunted in strange, ambivalent and unexpected ways by the ghosts of past colonialisms, especially in crisis moments when it feels its sovereignty under siege.

Susan Gingell (*Saskatchewan*): Contemporary First Nations Female
Intersubjectivity in *Voices in the Waterfall* and *Bear Bones and Feathers*.

In troubled awareness that mine would be a White viewpoint offered in an institutional space that remains largely closed to First Nations creators and carriers of knowledge, but in the belief that remaining silent would under current circumstances mean being complicit with inattention to literary work deserving of the wider recognition that critical examination can bring, I propose to investigate female intersubjectivity in Beth Cuthand's *Voices in the Waterfall* and Louise Halfe's *Bear Bones and Feathers*. Working within a politic that Julia Emberley in *Thresholds of Difference* has designated a "feminism of decolonization" I will endeavour in my account of textual constructions of First Nations intersubjectivity to balance the different emphases of feminist and decolonizing discourses as Emberley discerns them. Arguing from the specifics of the Cuthand and Halfe texts and drawing on the non-fictional writings of Patricia Monture, Janice Acoose and Paula Gunn Allen, my paper will be implicitly a theoretical argument that even subaltern articulations of post-colonial being-in-the-world like Trinh T. Minha's *Woman/Native/Other* and Asha Varadharajan's *Exotic Parodies: Subjectivity in Adorno, Said, and Spivak* in working within the paradigm of subjectivity maintain aspects of the Western feminist privileging of the individual and its culturally determined suspicions of defining woman as always already in relation. The modification to this theory that is arguably necessary for it to honour the particularities of First Nations writers would involve a shift to the concept of intersubjectivity, a concept that I am prompted to speculate may be more broadly useful in the postcolonial context by my having encountered it first in the writings of Afro-American feminist theorist bell hooks.

Patricia Monture's "I Know My Name: A First Nations Woman Speaks," Janice Acoose's *Iskwewak: Kah' Ki Yaw Ni Wakomakanak*, and Paula Gunn Allen's *The Sacred Hoop* all maintain that contemporary Indigenous women are engaged in a struggle to define themselves. The legal scholar Monture reports her elders' teaching "that it is essential that we always remember who we are: citizens of specific First Nations" and provides a legislative and judicial history of the Canadian settler culture's attempts to define who is and isn't Indian, as well as an account of the effects of systemic racism on First Nations communities, which I will use to contextualize the discussion of First Nations women's intersubjective relations within and outside Indigenous communities. Janice Acoose teaches us to balance awareness of the destructive forces acting within the field of First Nations intersubjective relations with a mindfulness of the ongoing positives, witnessing to the power and resourcefulness of the women in her family and Nation, and explaining that "they and *Iskwewak: Kah Ki Yaw Ni Wakomakanak* [all my relations], have been the spark that has ignited my spiritual flame." Gunn Allen's understanding is articulated from her position within American society, but it has transnational significance, especially in the context of cultures that with determined integrity refuse to accept the geopolitical boundaries that neither were historically created nor are necessarily contemporaneously recognized by people who conceive of themselves as inhabitants of Turtle Island. Gunn Allen maintains that the struggle for what she refers to as American Indian women is "to reconcile traditional tribal definitions of women with industrial and post-industrial non-Indian definitions," but because she also insists that an "American Indian woman is primarily defined by her tribal identity" and that "her destiny is necessarily that of her people," my paper will emphasize the intersubjectivity of the various female personae and characters with all their relations in First Nations communities.

I will examine how Cuthand's and Halfe's poems show racism, economic dispossession, illiteracy, battery, and sexual assault poisoning and crippling intersubjective relations inside and outside First Nations communities, but I will also focus on the way these poems present First Nations' women's tribal roles as healers, familial caregivers, and story-tellers as the basis of equally important power shaping contemporary female intersubjective relations. The poems support the contention that for significant numbers of First Nations people, intersubjective relations do not stop at the limits of uniquely human community. Rather they extend to a fully animated nature and the realm of the supernatural, as Louise Halfe suggests in her Afterword "Comfortable in My Bones."

Lynda Hall (*Calgary*): *Writing Lesbian Bodies Across Borders: Postcolonial Telling Experience of Gloria Anzaldua and Chrystos.*

My paper celebrates writings of Gloria Anzaldua and Chrystos which defy prescriptive and disciplining imperialist defining discourses on appropriate

language, sexualities, and gender performance. Gloria Anzaldua's articulations of the borderlands (psychological, sexual, geographic, spiritual, linguistic) "where people of different races occupy the same territory" (*Borderlands* preface) provoke my study. Anzaldua claims, "Chicanos need to acknowledge the political and artistic contributions of their queer" (85). Judith Butler's notion of the performativity of gender and her recognition of the "play, crossing, and destabilization of masculine and feminine identifications within homosexuality" theoretically focus my deliberations on the complex negotiations Anzaldua and Chrystos make, as Anzaldua writes, "I, like other queer people, am two in one body, both male and female" (19), and Chrystos consciously chooses to perform a "femme" stance. Queer theory, through transgressing, transcending, and variously problematizing fixed identity terms, such as lesbian or gay, and flauntingly parodying the "imitation role-stereotypes," avoids disparagement and negotiates the presence of various, often transgressive, identities.

In a postcolonial gesture, valorizing differences, Anzaldua suggests the positive potential of lesbian connections across cultures: "As a mestiza I have no country, my homeland cast me out; yet all countries are mine because I am every woman's sister or potential lover" (80). Writing as a site and source of community building interweaves with crucial questions regarding separatist values. Anzaldua writes, "Today we ask to be met halfway. This book is our invitation to you - from the new mestizas" (Preface).

In the context of Anzaldua's writings, I address Chrystos's *In Her I Am* and *Not Vanishing*, which erotically and powerfully insist upon presence and voice. Both Anzaldua and Chrystos highlight their desire for social transformation in their rhetoric of revolutionary struggle against existing normative power structures. Transgressively refusing to separate the personal and the political, these writers' courageous autobiographic writings confront significant cultural issues, such as racism, assimilation of "white" values, misogyny, homophobia within race and family, aging, violence, and alcoholism.

They address language and the effects of using the conqueror's language - the negative loss of identity/culture, but also the positive discoveries of new ways of being and expressing experience for the self and others to understand and make real, refusing oppressive silence and absence. Both writers interweave Spanish into their works, refusing the English language hegemony and acknowledging the importance of non-English readers.

I argue that their writing presents identity as an ongoing process, affirming the potential for change. Anzaldua notes, "Writing is my whole life, it is my obsession. For only through the body, through the pulling of flesh, can the human soul be transformed" (75). Self-discovery through writing, and the importance of voice to selfpresence, permeates their words as they defiantly refuse oppressive silences which dominant cultures prescribe. At an international conference, Chrystos said, "I do not have a 'self', as defined by

colonizer culture - I have a unique experience and view of life" ("Native Women" 1).

Anzaldua deconstructs categories of fixed identities through emphasizing her transgression of race and sexual borders by queering them. She exposes the limitations and oppressions inherent in fixed categories, writing, "Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from *them*. . . a borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition" (159).

In their writings, Anzaldua and Chrystos engage their bodies as the site and source of subjectivity and agency, and foreground the body as crucial in the subversive performance of gender roles. They refuse heterosexual, patriarchal colonization of the female body, evoking Adrienne Rich's comment on the "economic, religious, medical, and legal" powerful institutional forces which have "literally colonized the bodies of women" (*On Lies, Secrets, and Silence* 225). As Anzaldua and Chrystos name and claim their experiences as women of color and as lesbians, they articulate realities of those whose bodies have been profoundly affected by the material world and discursive limiting frameworks.

Annick Hillger (*Toronto*): "And this is the world of nomads in any case": *The Odyssey* as Intertext in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*.

Homer's *Odyssey* has been viewed by Canadian literary nationalists as the archetypal expression of the quest for personal and national identity. When read as an account of how man constructs his own subjectivity, the text does shed light upon the process of defining the "self": Odysseus is presented as the epic hero who tells his story as the narrative "I." With Odysseus eventually finding his way back home, the text even suggests the possibility of fulfilling the quest and arriving at a state of completion.

But as Horkheimer and Adorno indicate in their reading of *The Odyssey* in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the formation of the subject, exemplified in the Homeric myth, is of a problematical nature: selfhood is achieved only through the act of negating the "self" as nature. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, it is the suppression of the "self" at the moment of "self"-formation which constitutes the subject as one that is already split and incomplete. Following the dialectics of its formation, this subject eventually turns upon itself.

Set at the time of World War II, Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* describes that moment in the history of civilization where man most violently turns upon himself. Interestingly, Ondaatje's text feeds on the very myth which Horkheimer and Adorno take up to explain man's leap into barbarity. I suggest that it is by incorporating *The Odyssey* as intertext that Ondaatje achieves a

critique of Western civilization which is in line with Horkheimer's and Adorno's critique of the Enlightenment subject.

Ondaatje's novel can be read as the epic of the "Heroic Age of bomb disposal." The English patient figures as a modern Odysseus who displays the same "cunning" as the Homeric hero and who equally engages in war: "I was Odysseus, I understood the shifting and temporary vetoes of war." Other than the Homeric hero, though, Ondaatje's Odysseus does not find home. He travels the "Sand Sea" with his companions only to find that "gradually we became nationless. I came to hate nations. We are deformed by nation-states." With one of his companions having "died because of nations" he eventually defies the notions of personal and national identity: "Erase the family name! Erase nations. I was taught such things by the desert."

Just like Horkheimer's and Adorno's analysis of *The Odyssey*, Ondaatje's treatment of the myth in *The English Patient* points towards a critical awareness of the dangers inherent in every attempt to construct the "self." The text's erasure of the figure of Odysseus - "How did Odysseus die? A suicide, wasn't it?" - might therefore be taken as a warning to those who claim the figure for an all too naive construction of identity. Rather than attempting to locate the "self" within the boundaries of a territory that needs to be defended in order to claim autonomy, *The English Patient* simply acknowledges that "this is the world of nomads in any case."

Rosemary Jolly (*Queen's*): Contemporary South African Literature and the Question of Literary Critical Ethics.

This paper looks at the way in which contemporary South African literature challenges certain conventional modes of literary criticism, by looking at the question of form in conjunction with the question of ethics.

Traditional historiographies of South African literature tend to categorize South African literature in English along the lines created by apartheid: black literature is the literature of protest, or realism, to the extent that one critic ventures to claim the form in black literature is immaterial.' On the other hand, white South African literature becomes the province of sophistication. Alex la Guma may write surreal narrative, but this tends to be ignored: postmodernism and poststructuralism are the province of the white writer. ²

What needs to be investigated, I argue, is not why individual critics make these assumptions, but a prior question: why do academic modes of criticism produce, and even encourage, such dichotomies? I contend that postcolonial criticism -- and indeed, contemporary literary criticism in general -- demonstrates a continued if subconscious allegiance to a false opposition. We

tend to assume that objectivity is associated irredeemably with universalism, and reject it on those grounds, finding refuge in a renewed relativism. This position needs to be investigated further.

Firstly, what are the consequences of such relativism? Is this adherence to relativism not the primary reason why white South African literature is never viewed in relation to black South African literature, and why a condition of apartheid is reified in much literary criticism about South African literature and its role in deconstructing apartheid?

To state this problem more emphatically: the ethical implications of an adherence to relativism lead to paralysis when ethical issues, such as militant Zulu tribalism, are raised.'

Secondly, the very opposition of relativism and the notion of an objectivity that assumes Platonic disinterest as its goal, is flawed. For if we reject objectivity on the ground that it is impossible to be disinterested, how can we assume that relativism -- an approach which demands that we offer unquestioning respect to an interested party -- gets us out of the conundrum? Can a facile concept of noninterference not be as imperialist in its quiescence as the more obvious forms of imperialism post-colonial criticism recognizes as such?

I argue that what we have been assuming as our model is, in fact, a limited notion of objectivity; one which we have assumed to be the only notion of objectivity available to us, and one which is impractical in operation. What literary criticism, specifically here postcolonial criticism, requires is an exposition of the implicit concepts upon which it tends to rest and a reformulation of alternative philosophical concepts of objectivity in literary critical terms.

An investigation of philosophical concepts of objectivity may seem somewhat removed from the question of South African literature. However, it is my contention that literatures produced under such extreme conditions of injustice have the unique capacity to prompt us to reconsider literary criticism as an ethical practice. Postcolonial criticism, in particular, has always claimed an ethical status for itself. Yet can it achieve its ethical goals without confronting, explicitly, its underlying assumption of the binary described above? This paper will conclude with some specific examples, drawn from the South African context, of how such a deconstruction and reformulation of the value systems motivated by concepts of objectivity can be manifested in literary critical terms which enable, rather than avoid, ethical questions.

Notes

'See Martin Trump, "Part of the Struggle: Black Writing and the South African Liberation Movement" in Trump, Martin (ed.) *Rendering Things Visible. Essays on South African Literary Culture*.

²To name a few examples, we have Lazarus on modernism and white South African writing; Hutcheon on the postmodern, naming Brink and Coetzee, together with Rushdie, Fowles, Morrison and Reed as such (53); and Grabe, also on the postmodernism of Coetzee.

³For an introduction to the question of objectivity, relativism and its relation to ethical issues in the postcolonial field, see Satya Mohanty.

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David Leahy (*Concordia*): Who Was/Is That Wo/Man: Post/Colonial Homosexual Panic in Derek Walcott's *Pantomime*.

Patricia Ismond has remarked how Derek Walcott's post *Mountain* musicals and plays foreground the "role-playing, improvisation, disguise" and "the art of acting itself . . . as integral parts of Walcott's subject-matter." She then goes on to perceptively analyse how the various reversals of master/servant roles in *Pantomime*, as the two characters co-create a "panto" of *Robinson Crusoe*, lead to the un-masking of a number of restrictive codes and values of their anti/colonial *scripts*. Or as Graham Huggan has said of Walcott in relation to the same play: "Walcott's notion [is] of a defiantly creative rather than an Un- or reproductive mimicry."

One of the "defiantly creative" ways in which Walcott mimics and subverts post/colonial relations in *Pantomime* is in the playful, sometimes campy, engendering of Henry Trewe and Jackson Phillip as different kinds of wo/men. Consequently, in the course of the play, the initial homosexually panicked tensions and quips between Trewe and Phillip - which are consistently related to their anxieties and conflicts about superordination and subordination, dependence and independence (both individually and socio-politically) - are climactically played out in Jackson's adoption of the female role of Trewe's estranged wife and Trewe's catharsis about his troubled gender history as a psychically castrated man/colonial.

While *Pantomime* is enough of a comedy to maintain its "lightness," its semiosis of homosexual panic - the fear of being, associating with, or being identified as homosexual/s - including its transformative transvestite "panto" reading of and resolution to post/colonial relations, makes for gendered cultural work which is transgressive at the same time that it re/members some of the normative gender codes which it would subvert in the name of anti/colonial mimicry.

Rick Lee (*Alberta*): *Shades of Desire: Imagining/Imaging Black Male Bodies*.

This presentation will investigate the complex networks of circulation, resistance, and negotiation informing stereotypical representations of black male identities. Situating this investigation within a specifically gay male cultural context, I will compare two similar, yet different, translations of visual texts--gay male pornography and art photography. With the use of slides, I will argue that the recent "Basic Black" issue of *Advocate Men* (November 1995), a popular monthly porn publication, resonates in multiple ways to the works of the late Robert Mapplethorpe. In particular, I will compare two specific layouts in *Advocate Men* with Mapplethorpe's photos in the collections *Black Males* (1983) and *The Black Book* (1986), and the S/M photos from Mapplethorpe's 1978 *Censored* exhibition.

This presentation relies on Kobena Mercer's argument of "racial fetishism" in *Welcome to the Jungle*, where he points out that black men "are implicated in the same landscape of stereotypes which is dominated and organized around the needs, demands and desires of white males" (133). What Mercer finds particularly interesting in the works of Mapplethorpe are the ways which "stereotypical conventions of racial representation in pornography are appropriated and abstracted into the discourse of art photography" (134). My interest is to investigate the *reappropriations* and *re-abstractions* of Mapplethorpe's art photography *back into* the discourse of gay male pornography, as in the case of the "Basic Black" issue of *Advocate Men*.

My interrogation of the problematics raised by the resonance between these

visual texts, however, does not presuppose an attempt to locate these images as either positive or negative. As Homi Bhabha reminds us, "the point of intervention should shift from the *identification* of images as positive or negative, to an understanding of the *processes of subjectification* made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse" (71; emphasis original). To approach this "process of subjectification," I discuss the slippages made available in gay male pornography, a textual site which offers the potential rehearsals of sexual and, possibly, colonial fantasies.

This interstitial space of complex and, often contradictory, fantasies offers a useful entry for theorizing alternative readings of black male bodies. Using Mercer's argument that Mapplethorpe's images of black male nudes register "an emotional disturbance that troubles the viewer's sense of secure identity" (192), I will demonstrate how the "Basic Black" centrefold and the "Master" photo-layout in *Advocate Men* similarly enact a threat of destabilizing visual registration. These alternative readings offer new ways of *imagining and imaging* black male bodies, complicating Frantz Fanon's earlier observation that, in colonial discourse, "One is no longer aware of the Negro, but only of a penis; the Negro is eclipsed. He is a penis" (120; emphasis original).

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Karen E. Macfarlane (McGill): No Ice In Lucknow: The Mutiny Subtext in Sara Jeannette Duncan's *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib*.

Sara Jeannette Duncan's *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib* (1893) is a "simple book" (Tausky 184) of domestic manners in turn of the century Calcutta. It is also a complex examination of the interconnected scripts of Gender, Imperialist theory and practice, and Colonial histories and ideology at a pivotal moment in the history of Britain's Imperial Project. My discussion of this novel examines the ways in which *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib* is not simple at all, but a sophisticated articulation of the complexities of colonial positionings. I examine the ways in which Duncan's position as a Canadian, and therefore already outside of the Imperial centre, informs her representation of Anglo-Indian society.

The result, I argue, is a complex, multi-layered text that is informed as much by

contemporary historical constructions/ fictions of India as it is by popular British Imperialist ideology.

Elaine Showalter has called the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 "the most traumatic Anglo-Indian memory of Imperialism" (93). Its appearance in a significant amount of popular fiction toward the end of the nineteenth century suggests that for many writers this moment of colonial insurrection created a gap in the ostensibly seamless ideological fabric of British Imperial Rule that was informed by turn of the century cultural insecurity (Showalter 4). In *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib*, images of the "little Brownes" overwhelmed and hemmed in by Indian people, animals and plants--besieged in their home--participates in a larger engagement with the British Imperial presence in India that is informed by the texts that defined the Mutiny for English readers.

Duncan's two explicit references to the Mutiny in her novel (203, 265-6) foregrounds the precarious nature of England's colonial enterprise. Representations of the Mutiny in the latter part of the century were infused with images of imperilled English women (Sharpe 26). In a novel which focuses on the domestic "perils" of an English woman--on the process of her transition of an English bride to Anglo-Indian memsahib--allusions to this moment of Imperial crisis serve to foreground the precarious basis of Anglo-Indian social structure. Juxtaposing the immutability of the "type" of the memsahib with the traumatic events in Lucknow draws attention to a similar rigidity in the systems of British rule in the colonies. As in the discourse of the Mutiny, in which the relative danger and safety of English women was the barometer through which the stability of the Empire could be read, Duncan positions English women in her text as indicators of the status of the Imperial Project.

My discussion, then, draws the popular mythology of the Mutiny together with theories of turn of the century popular Imperialism and Duncan's own "pink toryism" (Dean 16) to examine the ways in which the Mutiny subtext illuminates Duncan's concerns with the distance between Anglo-Indian subjects and the centre of Imperial rule. Articulated through a focus on Anglo-Indian women's precarious positioning, *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib* is a complex evocation of a number of interconnected discourses. Duncan's novel positions India as a paradigmatic space of colonial rule through which her critique of British colonial intervention is explored.'

Note

'Significantly, this positioning is alluded to in a number of later Canadian women's novels. In *The Diviners* (1974), Laurence's Brooke Skelton is Anglo-Indian, as is Annie's mother, ma, in Marlatt's *Ana Historic* (1988). Janette Turner Hospital uses India as this sort of paradigmatic space in *The Ivory Swing* (1983).

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Laura Moss (*Queen's*): Moraes Fathered by Saleem: *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Magic Realism, and *Midnight's Children*.

My title is a play on Patricia Merivale's convincing work on Salman Rushdie's use of *The Tin Drum* as intertext for *Midnight's Children*. In this paper I would like to argue that in *The Moor's Last Sigh* Rushdie uses his own work *Midnight's Children* as intertext. Rushdie's most recent publication is replete with implicit and explicit repetitions of the earlier work. This repetition ranges from the development of characters from *Midnight's Children*, most notably Aadam Sinai/BraganzalZogoiby, to the use of strikingly similar narrative techniques, most notably his use of magic realism. As Victor Ramraj says in his review of the recent novel in *CHIMO*: "Here *once again* is the eccentric storyteller of *Midnight's Children* . . . who delights in storytelling; here are another 1001 tales and yarns and anecdotes, another scintillating gallery of historical and fictional individuals, *more* lively observations on issues of history, politics, literature, art, philosophy, *more* daring images and metaphors" (24) (*italics mine*). Should we just consider this to be Rushdie's signature style? Or is Rushdie's extensive repetition motivated by parodic intent, lack of imagination, or metaphorical signification. In *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* Rushdie writes "no story comes from nowhere; new stories are born from old - it is the combinations that make them new" (86) (cited in Merivale). *The Moor's Last Sigh* certainly seems to be born from *Midnight's Children*. I want to focus on the implications of this birth in terms of the genre of magic realism.

If *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has become the ur-text of magic realism in general, or the '*fons et origio* of magic realism for the present generation" as Patricia Merivale has suggested, *Midnight's Children* has become the quintessential postcolonial example of magic realism in English. In his review of *The Moor's Last Sigh* Ramraj claims that "the magic realism in *Midnight's*

Children can be read in the main for its own sake; in this novel the form takes on stronger allegorical or metaphorical significance" (28). I want to explore such possible significance. Is magic realism in this case just a matter of form or does the genre transcend form and have other implications?

I will first consider whether Rushdie uses his own work parodically or intentionally as prototype. I want to then use a discussion of Rushdie's texts as a launching point to explore theoretical questions about postcolonial works of magic realism.

Lisa Salem-Wiseman (York): Post-colonial Identities and the Disruption of the Mother-Daughter Bond in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*.

My past was my mother . . . Oh, it was a laugh, for I had spent so much time saying that I did not want to be like my mother that I missed the whole story: I was not like my mother - I was my mother.

-Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*

The mother-daughter relationship is a central theme in many of the works of Jean Rhys and Jamaica Kincaid. Both Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and Kincaid's *Lucy* (1990) feature a protagonist who experiences a fracture in the relationship between her self and her mother. However, given the political context of the post-colonial site, the relationship between mother and daughter points beyond itself to other structures which shape the identity of the protagonist. In both Rhys' and Kincaid's texts, the daughter-protagonist's ambivalent feelings toward her emotionally and physically absent mother mirrors the ambivalence which characterizes her relationship toward her situation as a post-colonial subject. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the dissolution of an already dysfunctional motherdaughter relationship registers the breakdown of the colonial system, which undergoes a similar transformation from emotional to physical absence. Similarly, in *Lucy*, the irreparable disruption of the mother-daughter bond caused by a politically informed delimitation of maternal expectations initiates not only an emotional break, but also a permanent physical departure from the colonial site. The conflict is resolved in very different ways in these two texts. Rhys' heroine, Antoinette Cosway, steps into the shoes of the mother, becoming the Creole "madwoman in the attic" in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, while Kincaid's Lucy develops strategies for resistance of colonial expectations, and negotiates a post-colonial identity separate from her mother.

Wide Sargasso Sea is Jean Rhys' attempt to give a voice and a story to Bertha Mason, the first wife of Rochester in Bronte's *Jane Eyre*.² Rhys begins her story after the emancipation of the slaves in Jamaica. Antoinette's mother Annette is a young widow who feels herself "marooned" (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, 17) in the West Indies, where she, as a member of the now-bankrupt West Indian aristocracy, is

despised by both the whites who sought the abolition of slavery, and the black ex-slaves. As Tia, the young black servant girl, tells Antoinette:

Plenty white people in Jamaica. Real white people, they got gold money. They didn't look at us, nobody see them come near us. Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger (21).

Coulibri Estate, on which they live, stands as a last bastion of colonialism. Described as an Eden "gone to bush" (17), Coulibri signifies the fall of the old order, leaving Antoinette, her mother and brother, and her English stepfather "marooned" with a few black servants, in the midst of an increasingly hostile community of ex-slaves.

Antoinette is aware of her mother's connection to the fallen system, and after the destruction of the estate she is not surprised to learn that Annette has been taken away, but calmly accepts that "She was part of Coulibri, that had gone, so she had gone, I was certain of it" (40).

In her autobiography *Smile Please* (1979), Jean Rhys recalls an early memory involving the question - "who made you?" - posed by the Catholic catechism:

my chief memory of the catechism was a little girl who persisted obstinately in saying, 'My mother!' 'No, dear, that's not the answer. Now think - who made you?' 'My mother,' the stolid girl replied. At last the nun, exasperated, banished her from the class (*Smile Please*, 64).

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John Scheckter (*Long Island*): Carving a Place for Herself: Bharati Mukherjee as an American Writer.

The land was ours before we were the land's.

-- Robert Frost

Bharati Mukherjee has asked to be considered an American writer since at least the mid-1970's. To claim such a territory, however, is far different from learning to live there--or, rather, Mukherjee's repeated claim of redefinition signals less an accomplished, settled orientation than an announcement of the intended and developing scope of her future endeavor. As her work has progressed, she has increasingly downplayed the material or objective factors of American life that are most useful in drawing analogies or correspondences on the basis of national categorizations; as promised, she has moved beyond the migration rhetoric of enforced differentiation and celebrated difference that characterizes initial movements of postcolonial encounter.

In this paper, I want to examine the ways in which Mukherjee's more recent work, emphatically *The Holder of the World* (1993), abandons strangeness and migration, birthright and affiliation, as topics in themselves, foregrounding instead the fluid, kinetic notation of convergent motives and acts which optimistically offer multiple layerings of meaning under varying narrational circumstances. Focusing her shifting, edgy view of personal definition upon events in the seventeenth century that have become core indicators of American tradition, Mukherjee advances a most valuable postcolonial function: the reformulation of the territory she has lately entered, not merely in its current self-images but in the interpretation of its historical developments and possibilities. Her work in fact seizes the metropolitan high ground delimited by such earlier surveyors as Eliot and Leavis and more recently cordoned by such reactionary defenders as Bloom and Bennett.

With *The Holder of the World*, this military language is not out of place: as many critics have noted, Mukherjee's kinetic American redefinition often accommodates, and sometimes celebrates, a strong thread of violence. For example, Peter Nazareth, another postcolonial novelist who came to America, notes aptly that for Mukherjee "sainthood and violence lie very close together." In this sense, *The Holder of the World* interrogates American and postcolonial concerns of long standing, correlating the historical efforts of Europe to colonize North America and India simultaneously, and demonstrating that the urge to find spiritual (or at least larger) meanings outlasts the collapse of established channels. In particular, I want to look at this aspect of Mukherjee's work in light of recent examinations of the American frontier, emphasizing that Mukherjee's growth as a novelist offers interesting possibilities for ongoing discussions of the redefining experience in personal, national, and transnational terms.

Heather Smyth (*Alberta*): *Mimics and Tourists: Counter-discourse and Neo-colonial Stereotypes of the Caribbean*.

My paper takes as its point of departure the question, "How are stereotypes supported in colonial discourse, and how can they be resisted?" I will locate a particular example of Caribbean stereotypes in tourist literature on Jamaica, and

suggest that Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* offers a useful reading against tourist stereotypes, as well as an exploration of possible, and possibly problematic, sites for counter-discourse.

I will focus on contemporary tourist guides and brochures about Jamaica as a particularly explicit, perhaps crude, example of the reproduction and representation of colonial stereotypes for the purposes of economic, cultural, and administrative control of a colonial "Other." I will suggest that the images in Jamaican tourist literature can be distilled into at least two conflictual premises. The literature and pictures suggest that the tourist wishes to see something new and different, perhaps exotic or even dangerous. Yet the literature also tends to gesture towards the tourist's power over the Caribbean, and often erases the Caribbean people from the landscape, replacing them with the central and authoritative figure of the tourist. Tourist literature as a form of colonizing discourse reveals a fundamental ambivalence in its enunciation.

To structure this reading, I will refer to theories worked out by Homi Bhabha in his essays on the ambivalence of colonial discourse and colonial stereotypes, noting the efficacy of his analysis of "mimicry" as both a by-product of colonization and a potential means of destabilizing colonial discourse. Bhabha usefully suggests that stereotypes are not mis-representations of a real identity, and that the most productive means of dealing with stereotypes are not to identify images as positive or negative, but to understand how stereotypical discourse works. Colonial discourse is ambivalent because it seeks to fix the colonial figure as a knowable Other that is "almost the same but not quite" (Bhabha 126). In the effort of colonial discourse to "normalize" the colonial subject, the slippage between identity and difference is made visible and the authority of colonial discourse is disrupted by an internal contradiction. Bhabha maintains that this rupture occasioned by mimicry yields a potential site for anti-colonial resistance.

I will investigate the utility of mimicry as a tool of resistance by focusing on a particular scene in Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven*. In this scene, the protagonist, Clare Savage, and her friend Harry/Harriet, Jamaicans by birth, are approached by a white tourist, presumably to be "native informants." In reaction, the two characters mimic colonial stereotypes on several levels: they perform as two members of African royalty, who are themselves tourists, speaking upper-crust King's English, and playing out exaggerated stereotypes of black sexuality and savagery. Cliff's treatment of mimicry raises questions that are crucial for postcolonial studies, insofar as postcolonial critics and writers seek workable strategies for anti-colonial resistance. How do we make the transition between a formalist conceptualization of colonial and anticolonial discourse, such as the one offered by Bhabha, and strategies for social and historical agency? What distinctions should be made between forms of mimicry based on differences of race, gender, class, and sexuality? And how can we distinguish colonial mimicry from anticolonial mimicry?

Works Cited

Bhabha, Homi. "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October* 28 (Spring 1984): 125-33.

Craig Tapping (Malaspina): The Rites of Self Representation: post-colonial autobiography.

The subject is autobiography, and the paper focuses on those moments of self-apprehension and epiphany when a writer declares a vocation, a connection and an identity between writing/art and the possibilities of the self. This will include analysis of the construction of the self as agent and object of history, and the construction of the category "writer" within the discursive systems of local culture, global history, race and gender.

The autobiographies I'm most interested in and will therefore consider in this paper are: Sara Suleri, *Meatless Days*; Derek Walcott, *Another L Wole Soyinka, AKE/ESAI*; and Eavan Boland, *Object Lessons*. Each marks a specific geography and historic nexus within the domain of post-colonial studies.

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1996 Executive Reports **Treasurer's Report**

JULY 1- DECEMBER 31, 1995

Balance Transferred from Calgary (October, 1995): **\$4,067.46**

INCOME

Membership fees	215.00
Reftind from UQAM Learneds (September 1995)	247.80
CFH Support Joint Sessions (October 1995)	500.00
Interest	25.01
TOTAL INCOME	987.81
BALANCE	\$5,055.27

EXPENDITURES

Chimo 31 (Fall 1995)

Printing	558.20
Postage	353.38
	911.58

Other

Stationery	291.28
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,202.86
<i>BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 1995</i>	<i>\$3,852.41</i>

The figures provided in the above statement agree with the recorded transactions with the Bank of **Montreal** in every respect.

GARY BOIRE, SECRETARY-TREASURER
Wilfrid Laurier University

CACLALS

THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE STUDIES

CACLALS TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE VII: WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY, 1997/98

Please let us have your suggestions for the theme of the Seventh CACLALS Conference to be held in 1997/98 at Wilfrid Laurier University. Themes that have been suggested so far include everything under the sun.

Send additional suggestions, proposals, for papers or seminars to Gary Boire, Secretary-Treasurer, CACLALS, Department of English, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Avenue West, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3C5.

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Conferences, Announcements, & Calls for Papers

Summer Institute

The Summer Institute for Teachers of Literature sponsored by the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English (USA) is being held from June 2 - 5, 1996. The Institute is being held at the Ocean Creek Resort and Conference Center, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. This year's topic is Teaching African American, Caribbean, and African Literature: Theory and Classroom Practices. The Seminar Leaders are Houston A. Baker Jr., University of Pennsylvania; Carol Boyce Davies, State University of New York at Binghamton, and Bernth Lindfors, University

of Texas. The Program Chair is James L. Hill, Albany State College, Georgia. For more information, contact the 1996 NCTE Summer Institute, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096, USA.

The Africa/Shakespeare Committee - Johannesburg

The Shakespeare - Post-coloniality Conference will be held at the University of the Witwatersrand, June 30-July 4, 1996.

The original impetus for this conference emerged from a group of cultural materialist, gay, feminist and newhistoricist Shakespeare scholars who expressed interest in the shape and direction of cultural developments in the new South Africa. Rather than holding a narrowly-based Shakespeare conference at which metropolitan scholars would speak to other metropolitan scholars, the conference organizers are attempting to structure the event as an intellectual exchange between continents and disciplines. The conference will begin by exploring Shakespeare in relation to issues of post-coloniality. How do issues of post-colonialism/anti-colonialism/multi-culturalism intersect with the Shakespeare text? How does one approach issues of 'race,' resistance, 'nation,' travel, empire, sexuality and gender in this context? Is the issue of a 'post-colonial' Shakespeare the same in different geographical locations? We envisage these concerns opening up into a consideration of Shakespeare within the broader framework of English Literary Studies, Education, Performance; their academic and social legacies and questions of local and global knowledges. We hope that these papers will pave the way for a **critical** engagement with certain tenets of post will focus on performance.

Speakers include: David Attwell (*Natal*), Francis Barker (Essex), Barbara Bowen (*City of New York*), Dipesh Chakrabarty (*Chicago*), Leon de Kock (*Unisa*), Jonathan Dollimore (Sussex), John Drakakis (*Stirling*), Kim Hall (*Georgetown*), Terence Hawkes (*Wales*), Margo Hendricks (*Santa Cruz*), Isabel Hofmeyr (*Wits*), David Johnson (*Natal*), Windsor Leroke (*Wits*), Arthur Little (UCLA Los Angeles), Ania Loomba (*Nehru*), Robert Maclaren (*Zimbabwe*), Martin Orkin (*Wits*), Gauri Viswanathan (*Columbia*), Denis Salter (McGill), David Schalkwyk (*UCT*), Alan Sinfield (*Sussex*), Jyotsna Singh (*Southern Methodist*), Kelwyn Sole (*UCT*), Nicholas Visser (*UCT*).

Please send any enquires to Martin Orldn, Conference Coordinator, Africa/Shakespeare Committee, University of the Witwatersrand, Private Bag 3, P0 Wits 2050 South Africa. E-mail:

071MROmuse.arts.wits.ac.za

News of Members

John Ball (UNB) will be assuming the editorship of *Studies in Canadian Literature* on July 1, 1996. Congratulations! Postcolonial approaches to the Canadian literatures are especially welcome.

Amin Malak (Grant MacEwan College) gave a paper entitled "Arab Feminist Discourse and the Fiction of Ahdaf Soueif" at the "Culture and Colonialism" conference held at the University College in Galway, Ireland, in June 1995. Moreover, he has been invited as a guest speaker at a conference on "English and Islam: Creative Encounters" organized by the International Islamic University in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for December 20-22, 1996; he has been asked to speak on "Muslim Voices in the New Literatures in English."

CACLALS

THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE STUDIES

Send us your news for inclusion in the next *chimo*!

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The Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (CACLALS) is the only association in Canada that concentrates on the burgeoning field of Commonwealth literature (or, in its recent manifestations, International English literature, Anglophone literature, New Literature in English, World Literature Written in English, and Postcolonial literature).

CACLALS brings together critics, scholars, teachers, students, and writers who share a common interest in the Commonwealth and Postcolonial literatures and the versions of the English language they employ. And it provides members with an international context for studying Canadian literature, introducing a deeper understanding of other cultures and of Canada's multicultural tradition.

The association organizes each year a three-day conference at the Learned Societies. Members, including graduate students, share their research in sessions that feature papers, panel discussions, readings, and workshops. It regularly sponsors joint sessions with other societies such as ACCUTE and ACQL in areas of common interest. At the annual conference, members and guests have opportunities to meet each other informally. The wine-and-cheese reception and the informal dinner (that often features Commonwealth fare) are both lively occasions.

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