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form is all there is, essentially, to literature.

Gaik Cheng Khoo

Notes

1 Which is why I think the book is written much earlier than its publication date of 2000. Either that or the author has not bothered to read the criticisms of EWB together with many other postcolonial theoretical essays for which he shows such contempt. Unfortunately, ignorance has not deterred him from savage criticism either.

Works Cited

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Narogin, Mudrooroo. *Master of the Ghost Dreaming*. Sydney, Australia: Angus & Robertson, 1993.

Robert J.C. Young *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. pp. xi, 498. $24.95 pb.

Over the past ten years, critical scholarship in literary and cultural theory has tendentially moved to question and complicate the radical claims that have been made on behalf of postcolonial studies. Critics ranging from Aijaz Ahmad and Arif Dirlik to Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri and Peter Hallward have emphasised how postcolonial studies has focused too much on the politics of culture, the experience of migrancy and the hybridization of identities. As a consequence of this focus (so the argument runs), little attention is paid to the relationship between the critical vocabulary of postcolonial criticism and the rhetoric of global economic restructuring. This lack of critical self-consciousness has led to a situation where the vocabulary of postcolonial theory is seen as symptomatic rather than critical of the transition from the political and cultural liberation of former European colonies to contemporary global economic dependency. As Hardt and Negri put it in *Empire*: "[m]any of the concepts dear to postmodernists and postcolonialists find a perfect correspondence in the current ideology of corporate capital and the world market. The ideology of the world market has always been the anti-foundational and anti-essentialist discourse par excellence" (150).

In response to such attempts to contain and delimit the intellectual achievements of postcolonial studies, Robert Young offers an ambitious and

rigorous historical survey of anti-colonial and postcolonial thought from the late eighteenth century to the present. While Young acknowledges that the "[p]olitical liberation [of former European colonies] did not bring economic liberation—and without economic liberation, there can be no political liberation" (5), he also emphasises that anti-colonial thought has always been concerned with the pursuit of liberation. Against the charge of "culturalism" that has been levelled against postcolonial studies, Young posits a genealogy of postcolonial critique that extends back to the European liberal enlightenment thinkers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and includes debates within the congresses of the Communist International in the early twentieth century, as well as among anti-colonial intellectuals and political leaders from Che Guevara and Mao to Nkrumah and Gandhi. To counter the charges of Arif Dirlik and Aijaz Ahmad that postcolonial theory is a western invention or a purely academic discourse which effaces its complicity with the contemporary world economic system, Young emphasises that postcolonial theory has "developed dialogically in a syncretic formation of western and tricontinental thought, particularly anti-colonial emancipatory politics" (64).

Part one offers a broad and nuanced account of the shifting definitions and distinctions between colonialism and imperialism. Beginning with a discussion of the Moors and the Roman Empire, Young proceeds to compare the practice and justification of colonialism in Spain, Britain and France, before examining the transition to neo-colonialism, dependency and the structural adjustment and privatisation of developing economies in the Caribbean, Africa, South Asia and Latin America by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in the late twentieth century. While such a historical account of imperialism is invaluable, Young also cautions against the economic determinism inherent in dependency theory. To alleviate this difficulty, chapter four reasserts the importance of postcolonial critique by situating it in relation to Marxist critiques of imperialism and anti-colonial struggles.

Part two traces a genealogy of anti-colonial thought in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe. After a discussion of the Spanish Catholic Bishop Las Casas, and his critique of the Spanish invasion of the Americas, Young identifies an ambivalence in the anti-colonial positioning of European political thinkers such as Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. In Young's argument, European liberal political thinkers of the nineteenth century tended to be reformist in their attitude towards colonialism; but not against it *per se* (80). In both France and Britain, Young observes how nineteenth-century liberal political thinkers were calling for the universal extension of the rights of man. At times Young appears sceptical about

the social and political efficacy of this extension of European human rights discourse. Indeed his subsequent claim in chapter seven (titled "Nineteenth-Century Liberalism") that the discourse of the civilising mission was a distortion of human rights discourse (89) is particularly damning. Towards the end of the book, however, Young reaffirms some belief in the redemptive power of universal human rights.

One of the main theoretical and political threads running through Young's book is the Marxist critique of imperialism. After a brief summary of J.A. Hobson's influential 1902 study of imperialism, Young proceeds to argue that it was Marxist thought that provided one of the most sustained critiques of imperialism and political blueprints for anti-colonial struggle in the twentieth century. Young is careful to distinguish between Marx's view of colonialism and the Marxist critique of colonialism that subsequently developed out of his thought. Mindful of Marx's Eurocentrism, Young emphasises that Marx himself was closer to nineteenth-century British liberal thinkers in his now notorious account of the Asiatic mode of production and his belief that colonialism was a necessary historical stage in the teleology of international socialism. Yet at the same time, Young convincingly argues that the Eurocentric moments in Marx do not detract from the widespread historical influence that Marx's thought had on subsequent generations of anti-colonial intellectuals and political activists. More specifically, he contends that it was Lenin's contribution to the debate on nationalism and colonialism at the Second and Third Congresses of International Communism, as well as his strategic support for national liberation struggles, that provided a common political language for many subsequent anti-colonial resistance movements. At the same time, Lenin's theoretical vision of an alliance between the European proletariat and the colonial peasantry was ultimately compromised by the lack of common interests between the second world and the third world, as well as by Stalin's subsequent reversal of Lenin's internationalist policies in favour of a Soviet-style nationalism.

Despite this collapse of the communist international, Young emphasises that international socialism continued to influence anti-colonial liberation movements. In part four, Young proceeds to demonstrate how different anti-colonial liberation movements offered a transculturation of Marxism within different nationalist and internationalist frameworks. Focusing on a broad range of historical examples from China and Latin America, to Africa, Ireland and India, Young assesses the strategies employed by different anti-colonial intellectuals to mobilise political support at local, national and international levels. Starting with a discussion of Mao's mobilisation of the Chinese peasantry and Nasser's nationalisation of land ownership in Egypt, Young

proceeds to examine how Latin American intellectuals such as Marietagu and Che Guevara adapted concepts from western Marxism to develop a common language that reflected the interests of the dispossessed.

By contrast, Young's discussion of Pan-Africanist thinkers including George Padmore, CLR James, Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Sénghor, Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon emphasises how the origins of the Pan-Africanist movement anticipated the Marxist critique of imperialism, and in the case of Padmore and James was quite critical of European Marxism because of its racism. What is more, Young emphasises why there was a perceived need among some Pan-Africanist intellectuals for violence in national liberation struggles. Such an argument is developed further in chapter twenty-one, where Young compares the theories of violence postulated by Frantz Fanon in the context of the Algerian liberation struggle and James Connolly in the context of the Irish nationalist struggle.

Young's historical account of India's national independence in part four emphasises the failure of Indian Marxism to achieve mass support, as well as the failure of national independence to bring about a social revolution in the Indian class system. Focusing instead on the public figure of Mahatma Gandhi, Young characterises Gandhi's romantic anti-capitalism, gender politics and use of modern print technologies as a hybridised political strategy. This strategy not only won Gandhi popular political support among the Indian peasantry in the years leading up to independence; as Young claims, it has also indirectly influenced contemporary postcolonial thinkers such as Ashis Nandy and Homi Bhabha. In Young's account, the neglect of Gandhi's spiritualist political philosophy in contemporary postcolonial theory "demonstrates postcolonialism's uniformity in its commitment to materialist thinking" (337).

In "Formations of Postcolonial Theory," Young proceeds to trace the influence of Antonio Gramsci's account of the subaltern classes in southern Italy on the Subaltern Studies historians in India. For Young, the term "subaltern" offers a more broad and flexible term than "class" for tricontinental thinking, which can accommodate the interests of other political groups including women and the rural peasantry. What is more, Young contends that the term "subaltern" is particularly useful in the context of postcolonial India, where political independence was achieved without a corresponding social revolution (358).

This discussion of the Subaltern Studies historians, as well as the subsequent chapter on "Women, Gender and Anti-Colonialism," is illuminating, but it also reveals much about the limitations of Young's own approach to the history of anti-colonial liberation movements. In contrast to the meth-

odologies of feminist postcolonial theorists and Subaltern Studies historians, which generally attempt to trace the agency and struggles of disempowered, "non-hegemonic" groups, Young tends to privilege the hegemonic strategies of various political leaders. In this respect, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* arguably repeats the founding exclusions of dominant historiography in many postcolonial nation states. What is more, Young's concluding chapters on the theoretical work of Edward Said, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida are marked by an unacknowledged shift in emphasis and register. Young's arguments that Said's account of colonial discourse is based on a misreading of Michel Foucault's notion of discourse, and that a more faithful Foucauldian approach to colonialism would adopt a historico-empirical analysis of colonialism as a discursive formation are certainly thought-provoking. Yet the rather conversational chapter on/with the Algerian biographical subtext of Jacques Derrida's thought seems somewhat incommensurate with the historical weight of Young's earlier arguments.

Nevertheless, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* is a groundbreaking and exhaustive historical resource with an excellent works cited list, which will be indispensable for future generations of students and scholars working in postcolonial studies. Furthermore, Young's historical mapping of a tricontinental transculturation of proletarian internationalism offers an important historical re-assessment of anti-colonial resistance struggles that will be instructive to contemporary post-Marxist thinkers who are committed to finding a new "common language of singularities" (Hardt 57).

Stephen Morton

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Margaret Atwood. *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. Pp. xxvii, 219. $29.95.

Drawing from Margaret Atwood's presentations for the Empson Lecture series in the spring of 2000 at Cambridge, *Negotiating with the Dead* engages with the unique relationships writers maintain with themselves, their readership, and the world-at-large. Despite Atwood's claim that she necessarily had to "[remove] some of the cornier jokes" (xxv) from her lecture copy, perhaps the most engaging aspect of this text is that her prose retains much of the spontaneity and humour that are so characteristic of her quality as a speaker.