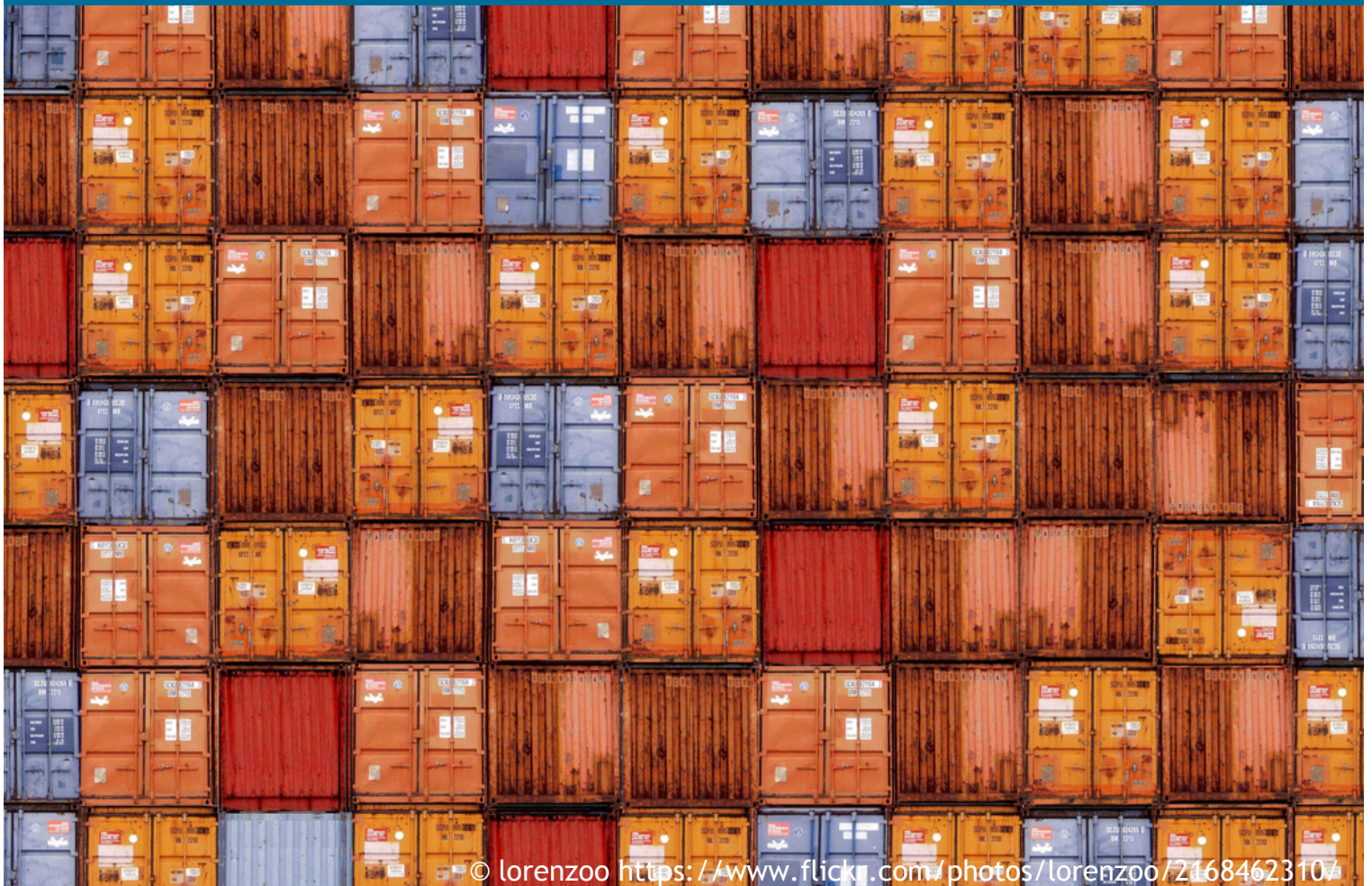


#20

Globalisation



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A special convention issue of the
Postcolonial Studies Association
newsletter



November 2017

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Editors' Introduction

Isabelle Hesse and Edward Powell

We are delighted to welcome you to our first newsletter as incoming editors, which is a special issue dedicated to the 2017 Postcolonial Studies Association convention, which took place at the School of Advanced Study at Senate House, University of London, from 18th to 20th September 2017. The conference theme was globalisation, a concept that is becoming increasingly prominent in postcolonial and wider contemporary literary studies, having already been an influential paradigm in broader discussions of global economics over the last century. This year's keynotes, along with the variety of papers and panels addressing this topic from different angles, provided space for rich and at times heated discussions at the convention, some of which have been captured in the contributions to this newsletter.

Whether you were able to attend the convention or not, this newsletter should have something for everyone. We start with a

contribution by **Esha Sil**, one of the conference organisers, before moving on to **Anshuman Mondal**, who in his capacity as chair of the PSA, reflects on this year's convention. This will be followed by extracts from **Sharae Deckard's** keynote 'The "New" Scramble for Resources: Extractivism, World-Culture and the Neoliberal World-Ecology' and **Anna Bernard's** keynote 'Human Rights or Revolution: Towards a Cultural History of Palestine Solidarity.' **Sarah Newport** discusses the convention as a whole while **Rachel Fox** shares her thoughts on the Day 1 panel 'Mapping Globalisation and the World Literary Marketplace' and **Emma Parker** focuses on the Day 1 panel 'Postcolonial Comics: Graphic Narrative as Globalising Form.' These reflections are followed by a contribution from **Claire Chambers and Rachael Gilmour**, the editors of *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, who share advice on publishing for graduate students and ECRs, particularly with

REF2020 in mind. **Lucienne Loh and Janet Wilson**, the editors of the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* then discuss the history of the PSA/JPW postgraduate essay prize, which is followed by an interview with **Mary Jean Chan**, this year's essay prize winner. We finish this issue of the newsletter with two book reviews: **Sophia Brown** discusses Anna Bernard's *Rhetorics of Belonging: Nation, Narration and Israel/Palestine*; and **Isabelle Hesse** shares her thoughts on the Warwick Research Collective's *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature*. The issue concludes with a series of **call for papers** and a **call for contributions** to our next issue, which will focus on postcolonial speculative fiction.

The editors would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue of the newsletter, as well as the conference organisers whose hard work and tireless effort has made this year's convention such a raging success.

Happy reading!

Organisers' Reflections

Esha Sil, Freie Universität Berlin

The special theme of the 2017 PSA convention, held at the School of Advanced Study, Senate House, University of London, from 18th to 20th September, was Globalization. The relationship between postcolonialism and globalisation emerged as a significant topic of discussion among the members of the convention committee, and we all agreed that this is an area worthy of critical scrutiny, particularly in the light of the current international climate: the complex socio-political ramifications of the Brexit verdict, Trump's electoral victory, or the European refugee crisis, which have come to be regarded as the reactionary 'whitelash' against globalisation. It is in this capacity that the 2017 convention advanced an investigation into the crucial role of postcolonial studies in shaping newer understandings of economic, political and cultural globalisation.

While the transregional history of globalisation can be traced back to antiquity, its discursive entanglement with the temporal realm of the 'postcolonial' has been the subject of much analysis and debate in recent times. Contemporary intellectual

engagements with the subject of globalisation have devoted considerable attention to the spatial paradigms of the 'global' and 'local' as they negotiate multiple, and often conflicting, world-views of nationalism, modernity and capitalism. Harnessing the philosophical scope of the postcolonial field, the convention's aim was to examine the nexus between a 'neoliberal' grand-narrative and 'neocolonial racism' as a mainstream ideological position in both the North and the South. To that end, we focused on some key research questions: How are the ongoing developments in the global North perceived by peoples and communities in the global South? How is the North/South binary interrogated by the liminal story spaces of illegal immigrants, temporary workers, refugees, and asylum seekers? How might we postulate an alternative global economy? In what ways could informal citizenship practices collaborate with radical discourses of ecofeminism, or the transnational agency of a globalised digital resistance, to pose a concerted challenge to the reductive hierarchies of neocolonial racism? In what ways might

postcolonial analyses of cultural production account for globalisation within the current economic and political conjuncture?

Bringing together over 100 speakers from across the world, including the UK, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Poland, Lithuania, Switzerland, Hungary, Finland, Australia, the United States, Canada, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Singapore, and Hong Kong, the 2017 convention provided a fruitful opportunity to explore the crucial implications of these questions, in relation to the globalisation theme. The aforementioned issues also preoccupied our three keynote speakers: Dr Sharae Deckard (University College Dublin) in her lecture, entitled, 'The Second Scramble for Resources: Neoliberal Extractivism and World Literature,' Professor Rosi Braidotti (Utrecht University) in her keynote address, 'Posthuman, All Too Human,' and Dr Anna Bernard (Kings College London) in her talk, 'Human Rights or Revolution: Towards a Cultural History of Palestine Solidarity.'

We were fortunate enough as well, to offer a special screening of the 2016 documentary feature,

Organisers' Reflections (continued)

Welcome to the Smiling Coast!

Living in the Gambian Ghetto.

Directed by Bas Ackermann, and produced by Emiel Martens, the film provides a rare insight into the lives of 15 youngsters moving within the informal sector of the Gambian tourism industry. In addition to the documentary screening and keynote events, the convention programme comprised a range of interdisciplinary panels and individual papers, which delved into the complex cultural paradigms of a globalised postcolonial modernity from a variety of thematic and methodological perspectives. From Brexit legacies, ecological disasters, indigenous subjectivities, and stories of Muslim sexuality to South Asian diasporas, Afropolitan world spaces, digital futures, and global capitalist spectres, the papers and panels at the 2017 convention, daringly re-evaluated the relational dynamic of postcolonial and globalisation studies, to explore their far-reaching impact on the humanities and social sciences.

The convention committee would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Journal of Postcolonial Writing (JPW), the School of Advanced Study (SAS), the

Centre for Postcolonial Studies at the SAS, as well as Palgrave Macmillan and Moving Worlds, for their valuable support and generosity, and to the editors of the Journal of Commonwealth Literature (JCL) - Dr Claire Chambers (University of York) and Dr Rachael Gilmour (Queen Mary, University of London) - for conducting an excellent workshop on early career publishing. Finally, it's our pleasure to extend a special vote of thanks to all delegates and attendees for completing the feedback forms, which were a really helpful indicator of how positively the conference was received, and which also provided some very constructive suggestions for the next convention in 2019. Delegates were notably impressed with the variety of papers presented at the convention, and the depth of their engagement with the conceptual premises of globalisation and postcolonialism. We were moreover delighted to see the remarkable praise and appreciation, offered by delegates in their responses to the keynotes delivered by Professor Braidotti, Dr Deckard, and Dr Bernard, and we wish to thank them again for their highly insightful and through-provoking lectures. Last but not least, delegate feedback emphasised the social and convivial atmosphere of the convention; thus, the whole PSA team looks forward to the 2019 convention at

the University of Manchester, which would provide us another great occasion to gather together an eclectic array of academics, researchers, students, and anyone else with an interest in the field of postcolonial studies.

2017 PSA Convention

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Dr Helen Cousins (Newman University, Birmingham)

Dr Esha Sil, Convention Committee Member and Email Bulletin Coordinator

Marie Coffey, PGR Representative

Academic committee:

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Dr Helen Cousins (Newman University, Birmingham)

Dr Esha Sil, Convention Committee Member and Email Bulletin Coordinator

Marie Coffey, PGR Representative

Dr Alberto Fernandez-Carbajal (University of Roehampton), Vice-Chair

Dr Anne-Marie Pouchet (University of the West Indies), Membership Secretary

Dr Lucinda Newns (Queen Mary, University of London), Website Officer

David Firth (University of Manchester), Executive Secretary
Dr Hannah Kershaw (University of York), Interdisciplinarity Officer

PSA Chair's Convention Report

Anshuman A. Mondal, The University of East Anglia

The second biennial PSA Convention took place over three days in September in London, and with over 125 delegates and 45 panels, it showcased the range of postcolonial scholarship currently being undertaken across disciplines, with many of the papers demonstrating the kind of interdisciplinarity that has long been a hallmark of the field. Its success consolidated the achievement of the first convention in Leicester in 2015, and it is establishing itself as a landmark event in the field. In helping to foster and develop new and exciting research in postcolonial studies, and facilitating the kinds of international networks that enable such research, it helps meet one of the PSA's key objectives.

Another key objective is the building up of a scholarly community that spans the globe, and the convention is an opportunity for our members to meet each other, to listen to each other, and to socialize with one another. These human connections, across countries and continents, are vital in sustaining the intellectual energies and resources of the field, and this is just as well because the development of the global situation

since the first convention took place demands an urgent critical response, one that postcolonialism, broadly defined, is well-equipped to provide. Questions of globality, inequality, and injustice have been part of the fabric of the field since its inception, and latterly postcolonial studies is increasingly engaging with ecological catastrophe, mass forced displacements of populations, economic realignments and retrenchments, endemic and systematic violence, and virulent circulations - through digital media - of racisms, misogyny, sexual exclusion and subordination, and class demonization.

All of this made the keynote topic at the convention, globalization, a particularly apposite and timely choice. Landmark events and crises within the developed, core economies - the European refugee crisis; Brexit; the election of President Trump - are, of course, not isolatable from wider global shifts and displacements, or from the global economic crisis that has affected peoples in the under-developed and structurally dependent economies hardest, and postcolonial studies can and does make its contribution to debates about globalization and its discontents by bringing to the table these perspectives from the margins of the global economy.



Convention 2017

All three of our keynotes took up this challenge with passion and sharp intellectual acumen. Sharae Deckard's keynote on 'neoliberal extractivism' - which she calls the 'second scramble for resources' - got the convention off to a flying start. On the second evening, the distinguished feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti offered a show-stopper of a lecture for the convention's main event, the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* keynote address, which was delivered in the atmospheric Chancellor's Hall at Senate House.

The final keynote was given by Anna Bernard on the morning of the final day, which, by discussing the question of Palestine solidarity in the context of a strategic choice between human rights approaches and more radical forms of political intervention, brought some of postcolonialism's earlier concern with national liberation struggles into productive dialogue with the keynote theme of globalization. On behalf of the PSA, I would like to extend my sincere and heartfelt

One of the most important developments at this year's convention was the provision of financial assistance

thanks to all of our keynotes for offering such nourishing and provocative food for thought.

One of the most important developments at this year's convention was the provision of financial assistance in the form of a travel bursary, which enabled four delegates to present their papers when they would otherwise not have been able to do so. It was open to postgraduate students, non-salaried early career researchers, and salaried faculty from Band C countries. Competition for funding was, as usual, strong and the standard of applications was correspondingly high, so many deserving applications were not, alas, able to be funded.

Given the success of the scheme, it is something that I am sure will become a permanent part of the convention going forward, and I would like to thank the PSA Executive for authorising and supporting it with a substantial financial commitment.

Another welcome addition to the convention was the provision of a workshop on publishing in academic journals for postgraduates and early career scholars, run by the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* editors, Claire Chambers and Rachael Gilmour. I would like to thank them for their contribution and look forward to similar

PSA Chair's Convention Report (continued)

initiatives in 2019.

I would like to finish by thanking those who helped in one form or another with the organization of the convention, in particular my two colleagues on the PSA Convention Committee, Esha Sil and Helen Cousins. We were also ably and enthusiastically assisted at key points by Alberto Fernandez-Carbajal, David Firth, Anne-Marie Pouchet, Edward Powell and Hannah Kershaw, and the advice of the wider PSA Exec was often appreciated. The Committee wishes to thank, in particular, Jo Bradley and her team at the School of Advanced Study, who hosted and administered the convention with such efficiency and good grace. Janet Wilson and editorial team at the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* once again sponsored the wine reception and it was pleasing that we could award the *JPW Postgraduate Essay Prize* to the winners for both 2016 and 2017 in person. Most of all I would like to thank all the delegates who made the convention such a great success, and I look forward to welcoming them back - along with new faces - in 2019.

Next issue PSA Newsletter (#21) Decolonising Speculative Fiction

Writers from the Global South have been writing speculative fiction (SF) for decades, but their work has only recently caught the attention of critics, cultural gatekeepers, and audiences in the Global North. As Nigerian-American writer Nnedi Okorafor remarks with reference to African SF, this lack of attention is due to a widespread and all-too-familiar assumption that 'African SF' simply didn't exist. Over the last decade, the lack of academic attention to postcolonial, non-Eurowestern, Indigenous, and (semi-)peripheral SF has been partially redressed, and this body of writing has gained audiences in the Global North through landmark anthologies like Nalo Hopkinson and Uppinder Mehan's *So Long Been Dreaming* (2002), Grace Dillon's *Walking the Clouds* (2012), and Ivor Hartmann's *AfroSF* (2013; 2015). Moreover, Okorafor's recent announcement that George R.R. Martin will produce a television adaptation of her 2010 novel *Who Fears Death* for H.B.O. suggests that (semi-)peripheral SF is about to go mainstream. Still, adverse reactions to diverse casting in recent instalments of popular SF

franchises like *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* demonstrate the continuing - and often aggressively upheld - association of SF with whiteness and male cis-heteronormativity. The next issue of the PSA Newsletter will consider the prospect of decolonising SF - along with science, technology, utopia, and future-thinking generally - in light of the growing prominence of (semi-)peripheral SF.

We encourage original contributions from a range of disciplines that explore both literary and visual methods of cultural production. Contributions might address, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- How does postcolonial SF engage with the colonial past differently compared with other genres?
- How do (semi-)peripheral writers of SF address their marginality within the genre?
- How do (semi-)peripheral visions of the future differ to visions from the core(s)?
- How do postcolonial visions of utopia differ from Eurowestern ones?

- To what extent is this new interest in non-Eurowestern SF another example of what Graham Huggan has termed 'the postcolonial exotic'?
- How might (semi-)peripheral SF contribute towards resisting and overcoming the inequalities and injustices of today?

Articles should be between 700 and 1,200 words, and should be fully referenced. Contributors should feel free to contact the editors (edjohnpowell@gmail.com and isabelle.hesse@sydney.edu.au) as soon as possible with any inquiries or proposals.

We also welcome reports on recent events or conferences as well as reviews of books related to speculative fiction. If you're interested in reviewing a book, please get in touch with the editors.

The deadline for final submissions is 15th March. Please submit your contribution via email to the editors (edjohnpowell@gmail.com and isabelle.hesse@sydney.edu.au).



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