Chapter 30

Postcolonial Geographies

James R. Ryan

Introduction

. . . He sees that more children have raised their hands to ask questions.

"Yes, Joseph."

"You have told us about black history. You have been telling us about our heroes and our glorious victories. But most seem to end in defeat. Now I want to ask my question . . . If what you say is true, why then was it possible for a handful of Europeans to conquer a continent and to lord it over us for four hundred years? How was it possible, unless it is because they have bigger brains, and that we are the children of Ham, as they say in the Christian Bible?"

He suddenly starts fuming with anger. He knows that a teacher should not erupt into anger but he feels his defeat in that question. Maybe the journey has been long and they have wandered over too many continents and over too large a canvas of time.

"Look, Joseph. You have been reading eeh, American children's encyclopedia and the Bible. They used the Bible to steal the souls and minds of ever-grinning Africans, caps folded at the back, saying prayers of gratitude for small crumbs labelled aid, loans, famine relief while big companies are busy collecting gold and silver and diamonds, and while we fight among ourselves saying I am a Kuke, I am a Luo, I am a Luhyia, I am a Somali . . . and . . . and . . . There are times, Joseph, when victory is defeat and defeat is victory." (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood*, 1977: 238)

This short passage is taken from Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's 1977 novel *Petals of Blood*. The story is set in Ilmorog, a new town on the edge of the Trans-Africa Highway in Kenya. In this scene Mr. Karega, a teacher and trade unionist, dreams about an incident in his classroom. Mr. Karega is one of four inhabitants of the town who become prime suspects following the murder of the local directors of the foreign-owned Theng'eta Brewery. The novel tells the story of these four characters, setting their uneasy relationships and personal histories within the setting of postindependence Kenya. In this postcolonial territory, as in the classroom scene dreamt by Karega, Kenya's history of colonial domination has evolved into new postindependence struggles against the combined forces of foreign capitalism and the interests of a new, propertied African elite. In *Petals of Blood*, as in many of his other novels, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o paints a vivid sense of Kenya's social and political landscape

following its independence from British colonial rule in 1963. His novels are often powerful critiques both of British colonial mentalities as well as the ways in which colonial attitudes persist within economic, cultural, and social processes of postcolonial nationhood. His fifth novel, *Devil on the Cross* (1980), written while detained without trial by the Kenyan authorities, was dedicated "To all Kenyans struggling against the neocolonial stage of imperialism." This combination of literary imagination with a resolute political grounding in anticolonial struggle has ensured that Ngũgĩ's reputation extends well beyond his native Kenya. His work is widely read and admired in the West, where it is often categorized under the headings of "commonwealth" or "postcolonial" literature. I refer to Ngũgĩ here since he is one of a number of writers whose work deals with the territory of postcolonialism, not as some abstract theoretical concept but as the very landscape upon which the lives of individuals and societies are shaped. His work provides a useful starting point for an engagement with the theme of "postcolonial geographies" since it prompts the question: what does it mean to describe something as "postcolonial"?

Before I embark on an attempt to mark out some useful parameters of the "postcolonial" it is worth noting that the relationship between postcolonialism and cultural geography is a highly significant one. This may seem like an obvious point to make, given that this chapter is part of a section on "Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies" in a companion to cultural geography. However, the interest in postcolonialism marks one of the more striking ways in which cultural geographers (and indeed human geographers more generally) have been concerned to respond to major intellectual and theoretical currents within the social sciences and humanities in the last two or three decades. A curious parallel also exists in the nature of criticisms leveled at both cultural geography and postcolonialism. Each have had to withstand criticism that they promote studies that focus on the immaterial, the textual, and the symbolic, at the expense of the substantive, material processes of history and geography (Nash 2002: 220). Notwithstanding such charges, the terms "postcolonial" and "postcolonialism," as well as related concepts like "hybridity," now have a currency within human geography that they did not have 20 years ago.

Cultural geographers in particular have taken a profound interest in postcolonialism, both as a substantive research agenda and as a set of theoretical approaches, as is evidenced from recent guides to cultural geography (Crang 1998; Mitchell 2000; Shurmer-Smith & Hannam 1994; Shurmer-Smith 2002). Postcolonialism has prompted a huge variety of work in cultural geography, from explorations of different "imaginative geographies" to the accounts of the cultural dimensions of European colonialism; from the spatial strategies of colonial rule to the cultural spaces of anticolonial and postcolonial resistance, past and present. However, proliferation of postcolonial cultural geography has not always led to clarification. Indeed, the vast array of "postcolonialisms" being deployed within geographical texts has often resulted in little overall sense of what "postcolonial geographies" might actually be. It is only more recently that geographers, particularly those working within cultural, historical, political, and development geography, have begun to think more deeply about the aims and scope of "postcolonial geographies" (Blunt & Wills 2000; Graham & Nash 2000; Sidaway 2000; Yeoh 2000, 2001). In this way we might begin to reassess the kinds of distinctive contributions that geographers can make to this broad field.

What then are "postcolonial geographies"? Any attempt to answer this question is faced immediately with a whole range of complex questions concerning the scope and definition of the term "postcolonial." Try conducting a search under the subject headings "postcolonial" or "postcolonialism" in any major library catalogue, or – if you are feeling brave – on the internet, and you will be faced with a bewilderingly vast amount of material. This expanse of information, which seems to be increasing all the time, consists of a wide range of work in a number of different academic disciplines, including literature, anthropology, history, international relations, cultural studies, and geography. It also includes work – not all of it "textual" by any means – of artists, writers, and filmmakers. Given this range of users it is unsurprising to discover that what is meant by "postcolonialism" is both dynamic and diverse. Its appropriate meanings are often the subject of intense debate: is it a movement, an era, or a condition? Should there be a hyphen between "post" and "colonialism"? Or is it, like that other "post"-marked word postmodernism, too frequently and vaguely used to hold any effective meaning (Ashcroft et al. 1995: 2; see also Rattansi 1997)? Should we stop using the term altogether and seek an alternative? Robert Young, for example, favors using instead the term "tricontinentalism," a more precise geographical and cultural encapsulation of Latin America, Africa, and Asia that developed after the first conference of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America at Havana in 1966, which represented a key moment in anti-imperial struggle and the beginnings of postcolonial theory (Young 2001: 5).

Charting a course through this debate is not always easy. It is perhaps helpful to identify two main applications of the term postcolonialism, both of which circulate around the meanings of the prefix "post." In the first, and earlier, application postcolonialism describes the historical condition of people, states and societies *after* colonialism. In this context, "postcolonial" is applied to those states that experienced European decolonization, particularly in Africa and Asia, in the second half of the twentieth century (Alavi 1972).

A second way of thinking about postcolonialism is as a movement or set of theories, ideas, and practices committed to anticolonial struggle, to moving *beyond* colonialism. The foundations for such a movement of the term are to be found in the writings of novelists and critics engaged in anticolonial struggles, such as Franz Fanon and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and the varied articulations of "tricontinentalism" (Young 2001). The currency of this notion of postcolonialism was most firmly established through the development of postcolonial criticism and postcolonial theory. The varied work of Edward Said (1978, 1993), Homi Bhabha (1990, 1994), and Gayatri Spivak (1987), to take three well-known figures as examples, is thus part of broader development of a body of knowledge that takes as its object the language and practice of colonialism as well as the formation of colonial subjectivities. It is not my intention to review this literature here; there are now several useful guides to the varied field of postcolonial studies that accomplish this task (see, for example, Williams & Chrisman 1993; Ashcroft et al. 1989, 1995; Pieterse & Parekh 1995; Hall 2000; Young 2001). I merely wish to note that it is this second sense of postcolonialism that is most widely recognized within contemporary Anglo-American geography. Derek Gregory thus defines postcolonialism as:

> A critical politico-intellectual formation that is centrally concerned with the impact of colonialism and its contestation on the cultures of both colonizing and colonized peoples in the past, and the reproduction and transformation of colonial relations, representations and practices in the present. (Gregory 2000: 612)

Such a notion of postcolonialism does not assume that colonialism has ended; rather it suggests that postcolonialism is an attitude of critical contestation of colonialism and its legacies (see also Blunt & Wills 2000: 167–8; Radcliffe 1997: 1331; Robinson 1999; Best 1999).

I have described two main applications of the term postcolonialism. Both sets of meanings have their limitations. A temporal meaning of "postcolonialism," as meaning "after" colonialism, for example, seems to suggest that colonialism simply ends with the independence of a former colony. However, as many have observed, forms of "neocolonial" or "neo-imperial" domination persist long after the flags of the Western colonial powers were lowered in their respective colonial territories. Indeed, the world today consists of "multiple colonialisms": "quasi-colonialism," "internal colonialism," and "neocolonialism" as well as the imperialisms of "breakaway colonial settler societies" (represented most dramatically in the twentieth century by the USA) and new ideologies of imperialism (Furedi cited in Sidaway 2000: 603). Given this geopolitical situation one might well ask if a complete end of colonialism and imperialism is ever possible in a world where economic, political, and cultural ties continue to sustain and structure global inequalities? As Sidaway (2000) notes, in a world of such complexity and rapid global political change, it is therefore essential that we reassess the political meanings of "postcolonialism" as it applies to the condition of different political entities. While there is debate about the relative importance of "old" and "new" applications of the term "postcolonial," those interested in "postcolonial geographies" would do well to maintain a critical perspective on different meanings, juxtaposing them with a view to debate and reconceptualization (Sidaway 2000; Lionnet 2000).

Many commentators have warned against the tendency to use the term postcolonial to describe a single or universal condition (McClintock 1995; Loomba 1998: 6). This warning also applies to the related terms colonialism and imperialism, which carry different, and specific, meanings. While colonialism refers generally to the establishment and formal colonization of territory by an alien, occupying force, imperialism is used to describe the broader exercise of political, economic, military, and/or cultural domination. For example, Argentina in the nineteenth century was clearly a recipient of British imperialism (largely through economic and cultural forces) but not British colonialism, since it was never formally colonized. Similarly, it is possible to distinguish different kinds of colonialism depending upon, for example, the type and degree of permanent settlement in the colonial territory. Such distinctions therefore also need to be made between postcolonialism in different spatial settings of, for example, settler and nonsettler colonies (see Mishra & Hodge 1994). In short, postcolonial geographies are as varied and specific as the forms of colonialism and imperialism that produced them.

At their most basic then, postcolonial geographies encompass studies that draw on postcolonial perspectives in order to challenge forms of colonial and imperial domination, in the past and in the present and across a diverse set of spatial loca-

tions. As a distinct dimension of contemporary academic geography, postcolonial geographies have been credited with an ambitious range of aims (Blunt & Wills 2000: 167–207). Jonathan Crush has identified the following varied agenda:

> the unveiling of geographical complicity in colonial dominion over space; the character of geographical representation in colonial discourse; the de-linking of local geographical enterprise from metropolitan theory and its totalizing systems of representation; and the recovery of those hidden spaces occupied, and invested with their own meaning, by the colonial underclass. (Crush 1994: 336)

Building on and consolidating those aims identified by Crush, we might identify at least three broad themes within postcolonial geographies. Firstly, the different ways in which forms of geographical knowledge have shaped – and been shaped by – colonial power relations in different locations. Secondly, the spatiality of colonial power and its effects and expressions, past and present. Thirdly, the ways that colonial practices are encountered and resisted by different groups within the everyday worlds and spaces of colonized peoples. The remainder of this chapter takes a brief look at each of these three themes in turn in order to show the distinctive and diverse contributions geographers can make to this field.

Geography, Knowledge, and Colonialism

One major strand of postcolonial work in geography has focused on the relationship between geographical knowledge and colonial power (Driver 1992). The development of this theme has been strongly influenced by critical explorations of colonial discourse that have thrown into sharp relief the ways in which knowledge and power are together implicated in the operation of colonialism. Edward Said's 1978 book *Orientalism* marked a major initiative in this direction. In this book Said showed how the idea of the "Orient" was constructed in the Western imagination – as the "other" of the West. Said's critical analysis of texts, particularly those of the Western novel, exposed the ways in which Western cultural forms often accepted and legitimated the structures of colonialism. Said's work and the debates surrounding it across a range of disciplines have had a lasting impact within geography. Many geographers were particularly taken with his concept of "imaginative geography" and with his account of how categories such as "the East" and "the West," supposedly fixed blocks of geographical reality, are constructed through language and cultural imagery, and are shaped by grids of power (Gregory 1995a; Driver 1992).

Insights from postcolonial work on the relationship between forms of knowledge and the operations of colonial power have had a strong impact on work in the history of geography, fostering work that exposes the ways in which the discipline developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries went hand in hand with Western colonialism and imperialism (Bell et al. 1995; Driver 1992; Godlewska & Smith 1994). With its practices of exploration, cartography, and resource inventory, and its spatial languages of discovery and colonial conquest, geography was of considerable imperial significance. Indeed, one historian of the subject has described geography in the nineteenth century as the "discipline of imperialism *par excellence*"

(Livingstone 1992: 160). Further studies have been undertaken on how geographical institutions, ideas, and practices were bound up with nineteenth-century cultures of exploration and empire (Driver 2001; Barnett 1998). Others have charted how practices of cartography were instrumental in the fashioning of imperial space (Edney 1997; Clayton 2000b). Yet other studies have considered how geography teaching in British institutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was used as vehicle for promoting imperial citizenship (Ploszajska 2000; Maddrell 1996).

While some of these accounts focus on the history of geography as a professional academic discipline, many are concerned with examining the relationship between empire and geographical knowledge more broadly defined. Here postcolonial geographical work considers the construction of "imaginative geographies" of empire through various cultural representations, from travel writing to photography (Gregory 1995b; Ryan 1997).

Of course, the boundaries between the academic discipline of geography and wider geographical discourse are neither fixed nor impermeable and there is a great deal of work to be done to chart the construction and movements of boundaries between different kinds of knowledge and their relations with colonial power. In particular, cultural geographers need to address how such categories are shaped in and through particular spaces of knowledge, from the colonial encounters on the margins of empire to the cultural arenas of knowledge production in the metropolitan centers of colonial calculation.

These questions of knowledge and power are also not exclusively historical issues. Indeed, they are an essential part of the project of decolonizing the discipline of geography, which is itself part of a larger postcolonial project of decolonization (Pieterse & Parekh 1995). Such a project is not simply a question of writing critical histories of the discipline of geography that expose its historical relationship to empire. It also involves rethinking the epistemological and institutional boundaries of the discipline, recasting what is encompassed by the Western geographical tradition as an "irredeemably hybrid product" that absorbed and appropriated many different forms of geographical knowledge from other times and places (Sidaway 1997: 76). Several commentators have noted how western geography continues to operate in an ethnocentric fashion where the interests and knowledge of the developed, privileged "West" are taken as the ultimate standard for geographical truth (Gregory 1994; Blaut 1993; McEwan 1998). Indeed, postcolonial perspectives challenge us not only to look beyond "the West," but to consider the ways in which geographical categories such as "the West" and "Western" are themselves formulated and constructed (Sidaway 2000).

Such categories are not easily put aside. Several critics have noted, for example, that the shift from "colonial" to "postcolonial" as a marker continues to label places solely in terms of their status as colony or ex-colony; in this way geography and history continue be seen from the perspective of Western colonial powers (McClintock 1995). Those engaged with "postcolonial geographies" certainly need to be sensitive to critiques of the eurocentric and totalizing tendencies of Western knowledge. As Sidaway (2000) puts it: "at their best and most radical, postcolonial geographies will not only be alert to the continued fact of imperialism, but also thoroughly uncontainable in terms of disturbing established assumptions, frames and methods" (pp. 606–7). While we need to be cautious of believing that it is

possible to step entirely outside inherited categories of knowledge and language, one important task for those engaged in producing postcolonial geographies is to question the taken-for-granted narratives and frameworks of geographical knowledge.

Charting (Post)Colonial Spaces and Identities

A second major theme of postcolonial geographies, one that is closely allied to explorations of the relationship between geographical knowledge and colonial power, is a concern with the spatial operations of colonial power and with the expression of colonial and postcolonial identities. This theme includes, for example, expressions of colonial and postcolonial identities in the landscape, notably through practices of urban planning, architecture, and related cultural forms.

A number of studies within and beyond geography have considered how racial discourse and racial discrimination, so central to ideologies of colonialism, had distinctive spatial dimensions and effects in specific geographical and historical settings, from those of colonial Swaziland and the Eastern Cape Colony (Crush 1996; Lester 1998) to those of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland (Gibbons 2000). Racial discourses were invariably produced through a range of practices and related texts, including those of medicine, science, and acclimatization (Livingstone 1999). Contemporary theories of race and tropical disease were used in Sierra Leone, for example, to legitimate evolving colonial policies of racial segregation (Frenkel & Western 1988). Nineteenth-century colonial practices in "tropical" environments were similarly filtered through a range of discourses, including geography, medicine, and "race" (Driver & Yeoh 2000; Duncan 2001; Arnold 2000).

Many studies have emphasized the complex ways in which categories of "race," gender, sexuality, and class were interwoven and were forged across global colonial spaces (Blunt & Rose 1994; McClintock 1995; McClintock et al. 1997; Maddrell 1998). Ideas of domesticity in British India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example, were profoundly shaped by strongly gendered and spatially articulated meanings of "home" forged in both India and England (Blunt 1999).

Interest in the spatial networks of colonial power is evident in the growing interest in "imperial" and "postcolonial" cities (Driver & Gilbert 1999; Jacobs 1996; Yeoh 2001). Students of urban history and imperial historians have long been interested in the form of colonial cities. That is to say, how the evolution of colonial cities, from Delhi to Durban, was shaped by the forces of European colonialism. Anthony King, for example, has argued for the need to understand the evolution of such cities in the context of the global economy and the cultural dimensions of European imperialism (King 1990). More recently, a range of scholars have shown an interest in how the form, representation and use of European cities, notably capital cities such as London, Paris, and Brussels, have been shaped by colonial and postcolonial practices, politics, and performance. Just as we need to understand the cultural geography of a city such as Cairo by reference to the imperial networks that linked it to London and Paris, so we can only understand the changing geography of London with reference to its position at the hub of the British empire (Driver & Gilbert 1999).

Recent work has also sought to challenge the relative lack of attention given to suburbia as a site of modernity (Silverstone 1997) and to show how the evolution of suburbia is inextricably bound up with the cultural geography of empire (King 1990). Performances of imperial sentiment were often staged in suburban settings (Ryan 1999). The suburban vernacular architectural form of the bungalow has its origin in complex colonial cultures and networks (King 1984), and the physical development and ethnic make up of suburbs around major capital cities such as London have been shaped by large-scale global and imperial processes (see also Driver & Gilbert 1998).

Such work complements accounts of the cultural geography of modern (post-colonial) cities in its attention to the ways in which urban identities are imagined and performed. As Jacobs has observed: "In contemporary cities people connected by imperial histories are thrust together in assemblages barely predicted, and often guarded against, during the inaugural phases of colonialism. Often enough this is a meeting not simply augmented by imperialism but still regulated by its constructs of difference and privilege" (Jacobs 1996: 4). As Jacobs' accounts of postcolonial cultural geographies in Britain and Australia show, postcolonial perspectives are essential in understanding the intertwined geographies of "center" and "periphery," as well as how such constructs of difference and privilege continue to be applied and resisted within different spatial settings (Jackson & Jacobs 1996).

Postcolonial Geographies of Encounters and Resistance

A third major, but relatively underdeveloped, strand of work within postcolonial geography takes as its central concern those spaces of colonial encounter and resistance. As a movement, postcolonialism has long been concerned with the struggles of ordinary people against the forces of imperial and colonial power. Indeed, post-colonial theory and criticism emerged from anticolonial movements all over the world in which political practice and radical ideas were mobilized together against colonial domination (Young 2001). However, those least advantaged and most exploited groups in society – invariably the poor, women, children – have been often left out of studies of colonial history, anticolonial struggle, or political independence. One group of South Asian scholars – the Subaltern Studies collective – has pioneered work that sets out to recover the hidden voices and actions of "subaltern" groups through alternative readings of official or elite records, as well as oral history and songs (see, for example, Guha & Spivak 1988). Such work rejects the elitist models of both imperial history and nationalist history, focusing instead upon the experience of people whose lives and agency are ignored in such accounts. Some commentators have questioned the attempt to represent the lives of the marginalized, arguing that it is not possible to recover fully the hidden spaces and silenced voices of Indian subaltern women, because any act of dissent is also always entangled within the dominant discourses that it might be resisting (Spivak 1988). Instead, Spivak points to the necessity of exploring and decolonizing dominant discourses, notably of gender (Spivak 1987, 1988).

It has long been recognized that colonialism involves contact, conflict, and compromise between different groups within spatial settings; the "contact zone" where "disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asym-

metrical relations of domination and subordination" (Pratt cited in Yeoh 2000: 162). However, many geographical accounts of colonialism and imperialism have concentrated on the processes and practices of domination, as understood and represented by the colonial powers, paying relatively little attention to perspectives of the colonized and processes of conflict, negotiation, and resistance. Brenda Yeoh has argued recently for "geographical accounts of the colonized world which move away from depicting it as a passive, flattened out world, stamped upon by more powerful others and fashioned solely in the image of colonialism" (Yeoh 2000: 162). Yeoh argues that geographers need to pay much closer attention to the everyday worlds of colonized people, to "re-filter colonial discourse through 'other' lenses" and to "reconceptualise the 'contact zone' in terms of contest and complicity, conflict and collusion, and to tackle the unwritten history of resistance" (Yeoh 2000: 149). One significant model for such an approach is Yeoh's own work on the colonial city of Singapore in which she explores the overlapping domains of the colonial project and the colonized world within the specific physical setting of a major colonial city (Yeoh 1996). Yeoh draws upon a range of historical sources to trace various kinds of resistance within late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Singapore, from attempts by indigenous people to evade official strategies of disease control to the "Verandah Riots" of 1888, disturbances generated largely by Chinese reactions against restrictions on their use of urban space. In this way she charts the colonial city as a space of multiple conflict and negotiation; a space in which interconnected practices of resistance were entangled in complex patterns with discourses and practices of domination.

Recent accounts of the formation of imperial cities have also emphasized the heterogeneity of the imperial city and its role as a venue for alternative articulations of empire. Jonathan Schneer has shown, for example, how London provided the setting for the evolution of anti-imperial politics, particularly through the Pan-African conference of 1900, as well as through Indian and Irish nationalist movements (Schneer 1999). Moreover, urban spaces constructed to symbolize imperial power, such as Trafalgar Square in London, were appropriated as sites of protest and resistance (Mace 1976).

Another potentially fruitful avenue for cultural geographers is through the engagement with postcolonial countercultural praxis, notably in the work of community programs, artists, and filmmakers. Catherine Nash, for example, has explored the emergence of new cartographies of postcolonial and gender identities as represented in the landscape art of contemporary Irish women artists (Nash 1994). Jane Jacobs has also explored alternative postcolonial maps in her account of an Aboriginal art trail at J. C. Slaughter Falls near Brisbane in Australia. Both these studies show how specific projects of individual or community art can promote new kinds of cartographic renditions of space that creatively reappropriate colonial maps, subverting their conventional contours of power.

The innovative work of artists and filmmakers operating at the edges of the academy has often been underappreciated by academics. Paul Stotter has studied the films made in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s by the ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch, and shows how his work offered an incisive and sophisticated critique of the ethnographic encounter and French colonialism in Africa (Stoller 1994). One of Rouch's late films, *Petit à Petit* (1969), for example, portrays the experience of two

West African entrepreneurs, Damoré and Lam, visiting Paris, the heart of the French empire, to observe the habits of the French "tribe" in order to scrutinize them with a view to opening a luxury hotel in Niamey, Niger. With humor and dexterity, the characters turn the tables on Europeans – here it is Parisians, not Africans, who are being scrutinized and visualized. In one scene Damoré poses as a doctoral student and, wielding anthropometric callipers, sets about making bodily measurements of willing Parisians – in the Place Trocadero. In this and other work Rouch skillfully transformed the observers into the observed and exposed the complicity of the academy with colonial power and racism. By exploring such countercultural productions, from film to cartoons, cultural geographers can further broaden their critique of colonial knowledge as well as amplify the contested nature of colonial and postcolonial culture.

Conclusion: Locating Postcolonial Geographies

As I noted at the start of this essay, some commentators have been concerned that the term postcolonialism has been used so frequently, and often with little focus, that it might lose any effective meaning (Ashcroft et al. 1995: 2). Might "postcolonial geographies" be simply another variant on an already overextended theme, destined to produce more heat than light? Could "postcolonial geographies" be just marking an attempt by geographers to colonize academic territories of postcolonial studies and postcolonial theory (Barnett 1997)? These scenarios might materialize if geographers simply appropriate and rehearse existing or outdated ideas; if we apply "postcolonialism" in an uncritical, undifferentiated way, or if we fail to scrutinize and "decolonize" our own procedures and practices in producing knowledge. Geographers in general and cultural geographers in particular have a great deal to learn – and "unlearn" – from the interdisciplinary field of postcolonial studies as they strive to "decolonize" the geographical imagination (Pieterse & Parekh 1995; Ngugi 1986; Spivak 1988).

However, as I have tried to indicate in this chapter, the field of "postcolonial geographies" has much to contribute to the study of forms of colonial and imperial power. In particular, studies of the landscapes of postcolonialism often revolve around significant questions of space, place, and territory. As a number of commentators have observed, the work of postcolonial critics, from Said's explorations of "imaginative geography" to Bhabha's notion of a "third space" of hybrid identities, is often profoundly geographical in its theoretical emphasis (Blunt & Wills 2000). At the same time, many criticisms that have been leveled at theoretical analyses of "colonial discourse" argue that overgeneralized accounts have a limited relevance; what is needed, it is often claimed, is more studies that take account of the very specific conditions and circumstances in which colonial power operated (Thomas 1994). In an important way therefore, all postcolonial studies need to be concerned with geography; without the specifics of location in time and space "postcolonialism," like any other term, can only be applied in a very loose and general way. The conventional preoccupations of geographers with space and place make them well positioned to ground the often abstract debates of postcolonial studies within specific historical and geographical settings and, in so doing, to engage with the material as well as the discursive, the physical as well as the

symbolic, dimensions of colonialism and its legacies (Driver 2001; Barnett 1997; Yeoh 2001).

I began this chapter by discussing how varied notions of postcolonialism have found an increasingly influential place within geography. It is now clear that this flow of ideas is not simply in one direction and that geographers in general, and cultural geographers in particular, have distinctive contributions to make to this expanding field. As Shurmer-Smith argues, cultural geographers are well placed to employ postcolonial theory in the "deconstruction" of a range of different postcolonial cultural artifacts, including films, novels, poems, music, and theater, in order to reveal and confront continuing forms of imperial and colonial prejudice and discrimination. However, she also urges cultural geographers to think more critically about "the very notion of postcolonial culture outside former colonies" as well as the process by which cultural products are legitimated through what Mitchell (1995) terms "postimperial criticism" emerging from metropolitan centers of authority (Shurmer-Smith 2002: 76). The production, legitimation and reception of (postcolonial) cultural products are intensely geographical processes. For example, in discussing the genre of what she calls "transnational novels" Shurmer-Smith notes that Arundhati Roy's 1997 Booker Prize winning novel *The God of Small Things* was translated from English into the major European languages before it appeared in any Indian language.

The making of postcolonial cultural geographies is not only a matter of deconstructing cultural representations for the marks of imperial and colonial power. As I have noted, it also involves exploring the everyday cultural worlds of colonial and postcolonial subjects and narrating the resistances and negotiations that shape the "contact zones" of colonial encounters and postcolonial landscapes, from London to Lagos. The fact that "postcolonial geographies," like postcolonial studies more generally, stem from Western and metropolitan institutions, notably universities, does not prohibit them from developing radically new perspectives or from fostering links with world wide political movements to highlight inequalities and promote social justice (see, for example, Blunt & Wills 2000: 198–203). The fact that some postcolonial critiques have shown how the language and techniques of geography placed it squarely as an imperial science should not stop us from attempting to explore as fully as possible the shape of postcolonial geographies.

As part of an evolving body of work, postcolonial geographies represent an important and diverse strand of work. As such, postcolonial geographies are set to occupy an increasingly important position within human geography in general and cultural geography in particular, as postcolonial perspectives continue to challenge geographers to think more deeply about the processes of colonialism and imperialism. The work of those who have pioneered postcolonial geographies in the last decade extends well beyond the usual confines of "cultural geography"; yet thinking more carefully about postcolonial geographies challenges cultural geographers in particular to employ new understandings of "culture" to understand better the operations of colonial power and to challenge dominant, eurocentric knowledges. The "culture" of colonialism is not to be located simply in the world of texts and representations, but in the material and performed realities of the everyday. Nor is "culture" to be treated as some separate domain, that can be isolated from, or explained by, the economic or political dimensions of colonialism; cultures of empire

need to be considered in their full and complex articulations with other forms of colonial rule (Dirks 1992; Thomas 1994). Finally, postcolonial geographies need to be sensitive to the precise cultural and historical differences in the operation of – and resistance to – forms of colonial power. By undertaking work that locates colonial and postcolonial geographies more precisely in time and space, geographers are continuing to shape the development of this field and to probe the continuing effects of colonialism on the cultural landscapes of the present.

REFERENCES

Alavi, H. 1972: The state in postcolonial societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh. *New Left Review* 74, 59–82.

Anderson, K. 2000a: Thinking "postnationally": dialogue across multicultural, indigenous, and settler spaces. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90, 381–91.

Arnold, D. 2000: "Illusory riches": representations of the tropical world, 1840–1950. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 21, 6–18.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., and Tiffin, H. 1989: *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London: Methuen.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., and Tiffin, H., eds. 1995: *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

Barnett, C. 1998: Impure and worldly geography: the Africanist discourse of the Royal Geographical Society, 1871–73. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* NS 23, 239–52.

Barnett, C. 1997: "Sing along with the common people": politics, postcolonialism, and other figures. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15(2), 137–54.

Bell, M., Butlin, R. A., and Heffernan, M. J., eds. 1995: *Geography and Imperialism, 1820–1940*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Best, B. 1999: Postcolonialism and the deconstructive scenario: representing Gayatri Spivak. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 17(4), 475.

Bhabha, H. K. 1990: *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge.

Bhabha, H. K. 1994: *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Blaut, J. 1993: *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*. New York: Guilford Press.

Blunt, A. 1994: *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa*. New York: Guilford Press.

Blunt, A. 1999: Imperial geographies of home: British women in India, 1886–1925. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* N.S. 24, 421–40.

Blunt, A. and McEwan, C., eds. 2002: *Postcolonial Geographies*. New York: Continuum.

Blunt, A. and Rose, G., eds. 1994: *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*. New York: Guilford Press.

Blunt, A. and Wills, J. 2000: *Dissident Geographies: An Introduction to Radical Ideas and Practice*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Clark, S. H. 1999: *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*. London and New York: Zed Books.

Clayton, D. 2000a: The creation of imperial space in the Pacific Northwest. *Journal of Historical Geography* 26(3), 327–50.

Clayton, D. 2000b: *Islands of Truth*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Clayton, D. 2001: Questions of postcolonial geography. *Antipode* 33(4), 3.

Cook, I., et al., eds. 2000: *Cultural Turns/Geographical Turns: Perspectives on Cultural Geography*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Crang, M. 1998: *Cultural Geographies*. New York and London: Routledge.
Crush, J. 1994: Post-colonialism, de-colonization, and geography. In N. Smith and A. Godlewska, eds., *Geography and Empire*. Oxford: Blackwell, 333–50.
Crush, J. 1996: The culture of failure: racism, violence and white farming in colonial Swaziland, *Journal of Historical Geography* 22(2), 177–97.
Dirks, N., ed. 1992: *Colonialism and Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Driver, F. 1992: Geography's empire: histories of geographical knowledge. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 10, 23–40.
Driver, F. 2001: *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Driver, F. and Gilbert, D. 1998: Heart of empire? Landscape, space and performance in imperial London. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 16, 11–28.
Driver, F. and Gilbert, D., eds. 1999: *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Driver, F. and Yeoh, B. S. A. 2000: Constructing the tropics: introduction. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 21, 1–5.
Duncan, J. S. 2000: The struggle to be temperate: climate and "moral masculinity" in mid-nineteenth century Ceylon. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 21, 34–47.
Duncan, J. S. and Gregory, D., eds. 1999: *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing*. London: Routledge.
Edney, M. 1997: *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765–1843*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Frenkel, S. and Western, J. 1988: Pretext or prophylaxis? Racial segregation and malarial mosquitos in a British tropical colony: Sierra Leone. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78, 211–28.
Gelder, K. and Jacobs, J. M. 1995: "Talking out of place": authorizing the Aboriginal sacred in postcolonial Australia. *Cultural studies* 9(1), 150.
Gelder, K. and Jacobs, J. M. 1998: *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation*. Carlton South, Aus.: Melbourne University Press.
Gibbons, L. 2000: Race against time: racial discourse and Irish history. In C. Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire: A Reader*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 207–23.
Godlewska, A. 2000: *Geography Unbound: French Geographic Science from Cassini to Humboldt*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Godlewska, A. and Smith, N., eds. 1994: *Geography and Empire*. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell.
Goldberg, D. T. and Quayson, A. 2002: *Relocating Postcolonialism*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
Graham, B. and Nash, C., eds. 2000: *Modern Historical Geographies*. London: Prentice-Hall.
Gregory, D. 1994: *Geographical Imaginations*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
Gregory, D. 1995a: Imaginative geographies. *Progress in Human Geography* 19, 447–85.
Gregory, D. 1995b: Between the book and the lamp: imaginative geographies of Egypt, 1849–50. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* N.S. 20, 29–57.
Gregory, D. 1998: Power, knowledge and geography. *Geographische Zeitschrift* 86, 70–93.
Gregory, D. 2000: Postcolonialism. In R. J. Johnston et al., eds., *Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell, 612–15.
Guha, R. and Spivak, G. C., eds. 1988: *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hall, C. 2000a: Introduction: thinking the postcolonial, thinking the empire. In C. Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire: A Reader*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1–33.
Hall, C., ed. 2000b: *Cultures of Empire: A Reader*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Howell, P. 2000: Prostitution and racialised sexuality: the regulation of prostitution in Britain and the British Empire before the Contagious Diseases Acts. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 18, 321–39.

Hudson, B. 1977: The new geography and the new imperialism: 1870–1918. *Antipode* 9, 12–19.

Jackson, P. and Jacobs, J. M. 1996: Postcolonialism and the politics of race. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14, 1–3.

Jacobs, J. M. 1996: *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City.* London: Routledge.

King, A. D. 1984: *The Bungalow: The Production of Global Culture*. London: Routledge.

King, A. D. 1990: *Urbanism, Colonialism and the World Economy: Cultural and Spatial Foundations of the World Urban System*. London: Routledge.

Kusno, A. 2000: *Behind the Postcolonial: Architecture, Urban Space, and Political Cultures in Indonesia.* London and New York: Routledge.

Landau, P. S. and Kaspin, D., eds. 2002: *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lester, A. 2000: Historical geographies of imperialism. In B. Graham and C. Nash, eds., *Modern Historical Geographies*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education, 100–20.

Lionnet, F. 2000: Transnationalism, postcolonialism or transcolonialism? Reflections on Los Angeles, geography, and the uses of theory. *Emergences: Journal for the Study of Media & Composite Cultures* 10(1), 25–35.

Livingstone, D. N. 1992: *The Geographical Tradition.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Livingstone, D. N. 1999: Tropical climate and moral hygiene: the anatomy of a Victorian debate. *British Journal for the History of Science* 32, 93–110.

Loomba, A. 1998: *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge.

Mace, R. 1976: *Trafalgar Square: Emblem of Empire*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Maddrell, A. 1996: Empire, emigration and school geography: changing discourses of imperial citizenship. *Journal of Historical Geography* 22, 373–87.

Maddrell, A. 1998: Discourses of race and gender and the comparative method in geography school texts, 1830–1918. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16, 81–103.

McCarthy, C. and Dimitriadis, G. 2000: Art and the postcolonial imagination: rethinking the institutionalization of third world aesthetics and theory. *Ariel* 31(1/2), 231–54.

McClintock, A. 1995: *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest.* New York: Routledge.

McClintock, A., Mufti, A., Shohat, E., and Social Text Collective. 1997: *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

McDowell, L. M. 1997: Colonial and postcolonial geographies. *Feminist Review* 57, 168.

McEwan, C. 1996: Paradise or pandemonium? West African landscapes in the travel accounts of Victorian Women. *Journal of Historical Geography* 22(1), 68–83.

McEwan, C. 1998: Cutting power lines within the palace? Countering paternity and eurocentrism in the "geographical tradition." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* NS 23, 371–84.

McEwan, C. 2000: *Gender, Geography and Empire: Victorian Women Travellers in West Africa*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Mishra, V. and Hodge, B. 1994: What is post-colonialism? In P. Williams and L. Chrisman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory.* New York: Columbia University Press, 285–8.

Mitchell, D. 2000: *Cultural Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Mitchell, W. 1995: Postcolonial culture, postimperial criticism. In B. Ashcroft et al., eds., *The Post-colonial Studies Reader.* London: Routledge, 475–9.

Moore-Gilbert, B. J. 1997: *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics*. London and New York: Verso.

Morton, S. 2002: *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. New York: Routledge.
Nash, C. 1994: Remapping the body/land: new cartographies of identity, gender and landscape in Ireland. In A. Blunt and G. Rose, eds., *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*. New York: Guilford, 227–50.
Nash, C. 2002: Cultural geography: postcolonial cultural geographies. *Progress in Human Geography* 26(2), 219–30.
Naylor, S. J. 2000a: "That very garden of South America": European surveyors in Paraguay. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 21, 48–62.
Naylor, S. J. 2000b: Spacing the can: empire, modernity, and the globalization of food. *Environment and Planning A* 32, 1625–39.
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. 1977: *Petals of Blood*. London: Heinemann.
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. 1981: *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*. Nairobi: Heinemann.
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. 1982: *Devil on the Cross*. London: Heinemann.
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. 1986: *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: Heinemann.
O'Brien, S. 1998: The place of America in an era of postcolonial imperialism. *Ariel* 29(2), 159.
Orlove, B. S. 1993: Putting race in its place: order in colonial and postcolonial Peruvian geography. *Social Research* 60(2), 301–36.
Pieterse, J. N. and Parekh, B. 1995: Shifting imaginaries: decolonization, internal decolonization and postcoloniality. In Pieterse and Parekh, eds., *The Decolonization of Imagination: Culture, Knowledge and Power*. London: Zed Books, 1–19.
Ploszajska, T. 2000: Historiographies of geography and empire. In B. Graham and C. Nash, eds., *Modern Historical Geographies*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education, 121–45.
Radcliffe, S. A. 1997: Different heroes: genealogies of postcolonial geographies. *Environment & Planning A* 29(8), 1331.
Rattansi, A. 1997: Postcolonialism and its discontents. *Economy and Society* 26, 480–500.
Robinson, J. 1999: Postcoloniality/postcolonialism. In L. McDowell and J. P. Sharp, eds., *A Feminist Glossary of Human Geography*. London: Arnold, 208–10.
Ryan, J. 1997: *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire*. London: Reaktion Books.
Ryan, D. 1999: Staging the imperial city: the Pageant of London 1911. In F. Driver and D. Gilbert, eds., *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Said, E. W. 1978: *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
Said, E. W. 1993: *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf.
Sampat-Patel, N. 2001: *Postcolonial Masquerades: Culture and Politics in Literature, Film, Video, and Photography*. New York: Garland.
Schneer, J. 1999: *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Shurmer-Smith, P. 2002: Postcolonial geographies. In P. Shurmer-Smith, ed., *Doing Cultural Geography*. London: Sage, 67–77.
Shurmer-Smith, P. and Hannam, K. 1994: *Worlds of Desire, Realms of Power: A Cultural Geography*. London: Arnold.
Sidaway, J. D. 1997: The (re)making of the western "geographical tradition": some missing links. *Area* 29, 72–80.
Sidaway, J. D. 2000: Postcolonial geographies: an exploratory essay. *Progress in Human Geography* 24(4), 591–612.
Simon, D. 1998: Rethinking (post)modernism, postcolonialism, and posttraditionalism: South–North perspectives. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16(2), 219.
Sluyter, A. 2002: *Colonialism and Landscape: Postcolonial Theory and Applications*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Somerville, M. and Hartley, L. 2000: Eating place: postcolonial explorations of embodiment and place. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 21(3), 353–64.
Spivak, G. C. 1987: *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Methuen.
Spivak, G. C. 1988: "Can the subaltern speak?" In C. Nelson and L. Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. London: Macmillan, 271–313.
Stoller, P. 1994: Artaud, Rouch, and the cinema of cruelty. In L. Taylor, ed., *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays From V.A.R. 1990–1994*. New York: Routledge, 84–98.
Thomas, N. 1994: *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government*. Cambridge: Polity.
Thomas, P. 2002: The river, the road, and the rural–urban divide: a postcolonial moral geography from southeast Madagascar. *American Ethnologist* 29(2), 26.
Williams, P. and Chrisman, L., eds. 1993: *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory*: *A Reader.* New York: Columbia University Press.
Yeoh, B. S. A. 1996: *Contesting Space: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment in Colonial Singapore*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
Yeoh, B. S. A. 2000: Historical geographies of the colonised world. In B. Graham and C. Nash, eds., *Modern Historical Geographies*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education, 146–66.
Yeoh, B. S. A. 2001: Postcolonial cities. *Progress in Human Geography* 25(3), 456–68.
Young, R. 1990: *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West.* London: Routledge.
Young, R. 2001: *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction.* Oxford: Blackwell.