

How Brave is Our New World?

Both the ol' British Empire, stretching back to the sixteenth century, and the new American superempire, with its roots in America's national origins, have arisen like monsters from the deep and then surfed around the world on the crest of waves: the wave of expanding commerce, reformatted as "free trade," and the wave of foreign investments, renamed "globalization," as Bernard Potter would agree.

Nothing comes to disrupt the repose of the party as we continue to celebrate globalization as synonymous with happy-go-lucky cultural hybridization. In that respect, Delphine Munos in this issue puts Indian identity-as-blending to the test in her reading of one of Shauna Singh Baldwin's short stories. Raphael Dalleo, for his part, re-asserts, through his analysis of masculine performance in 1970s Jamaica, that anti-colonialism is not coeval with postcolonialism. Yet, our globalized world is not wary enough of such amalgamations or convenient binaries such as Islam/Christianity or nature/culture. We indeed recently witnessed *tsunamis*, the "Arab Spring" uprisings, and the enigmatic burial-at-sea of al-Qaeda's spiritual leader.

The "Tsunami: Pictures for Japan" by artist David Revoy and this issue of *Postcolonial Text* act as timely reminders that we are "little perpetrators." The term is borrowed from the South African official report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I take my cue here from Shannon Hengen's interview of the South African poet Antjie Krog, which opens this issue and introduces the idea of responsibility-in-complicity. This is indeed a useful concept, since I believe that we should all accept some responsibility-in-complicity for what is happening around us in the geo-political sphere and also, possibly, for what we term "natural" catastrophes.

However, assuming some responsibility does not entail being mawkish or engaging in a counterproductive collective guilt or refraining from buying flowers, unlike Mrs. Dalloway, when a war is raging *out there*. As the South African journalist, playwright, and novelist Ashraf Jamal reminds us, guilt is passé and confession mostly bad news. This is his way of saying that we should move beyond the aching resentment of an uneasy conscience while being attentive to what the world is whispering to us.

In her Gothic foray into Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, Michelle Giles listens to the whisperings in Roy's haunted house and advocates, along with Roy, to stop playing with "toy histories." It is indeed up to us, readers of literature, to understand these whisperings from the past and, by the same token, to question the apologies that dominant nation-states regularly concoct to appease the legitimate anger of others in and outside hegemony. Such is the case with Prime Minister Stephen

Harper's 2008 Apology to the South Asian Canadian community, as analyzed by Alia Somani, about the *Komagata Maru* incident in 1914 denying Punjabi emigrants' entry into Canada as British subjects. Meanwhile, shell-shocked Septimus did not know that Mrs. Dalloway was buying flowers. Or did he intuit it?

Our post-New World Order need not say it with flowers, but should realize that it can only be "brave" if all of its denizens take on responsibility for their little everyday complicities.

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