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Preface

Lourdes López Ropero
Isabel Díaz Sánchez

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ISABEL DÍAZ SÁNCHEZ

University of Alicante

lourdes.lopez@ua.es / isabel.diaz@ua.es

The field of postcolonial literature and criticism is, despite prophetic disclaimers such as Epifanio San Juan's *Beyond Postcolonial Theory* (1999), a thriving one. The common argument that the continuing presence of colonialism in the modern world questions the field and signals its failure is not feasible, since the word *postcolonial* is currently used metaphorically to describe literary works or critical practices which are concerned with colonialism, its aftermath, and its seemingly inevitable recurrence in the modern world.

Besides, one needs to step back into colonial times in order to account for the racial make up of an increasingly multicultural West. Far from being a 'trendy' research field fuelled

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by the advent of poststructuralism, postcolonial studies have thus become essential to help us understand the new world order we are steeped in.

To compound the matter, the field has to face a very basic problem: one of naming. There is lack of agreement over what rubric is best to name it. The much-battered term *post(-)colonial* came to replace the highly anachronic *Commonwealth*, which in turn conjured up the image of sturdy Britannia ruling the waves. At present, the term *postcolonial* shares its currency, we would argue, with the more capacious *New Literatures in English*, which may be preferred by those aiming to exorcise the neocolonial ghost still looming over the former, but still may raise chronological objections. In the absence of a non-controversial rubric and in keeping with our desire to explore the boundaries of the label postcolonial, we have chosen the descriptor *New Literatures in English* as a suitable one for this volume.

This collection of essays aims at spotlighting the international currency of the field, gathering the contributions of well-known experts and new voices. Through this special issue, the *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* also intends to join the initiative of other Spanish Journals of English Studies which have published monographic studies on the field in the

last few years (*Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* 1994 and 1997; *Links and Letters* 1997, among others). Our aim has been not only to underline the international prevalence of postcolonial studies, but to stir a debate by asking contributors to touch upon the problems besieging postcoloniality, and inviting them to stretch and redefine the field of postcolonial literature. Therefore, whereas some of the essays deal with well-established New Literatures, others put forward less 'canonized' ones, or even, as Feroza Jussawalla does in her piece, claim the right of authors from colonizing races to adopt a postcolonial stance and write a postcolonial work.

The multifarious quality of this research area which the articles in this volume exhibit has led us to organise it in alphabetical order. Our initial intention was to devise a number of thematic areas or even a nationality-based arrangement of the articles, but it turned out to be impractical. In view of what has just been stated, the reader will find, for example, a revealing interview by Maria Frías with Ghanaian writer Ama Ata Aidoo which focuses on feminist theories and its controversies, together with critical and linguistic approaches to postcolonial literature, and also a bibliographical analysis of Border Studies by María Dueñas.

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In the volume, Naipaul's latest fictional work is studied in the article by Jesús Varela-Zapata, while the subversive postcolonial writing by Shashi Tharoor is covered by John Skinner. Can an American writer really be considered a "postcolonial" writer? or Can a "White American" writer be considered postcolonial when in fact most theoretical positions associate American Literature with imperialism? These are two questions that Feroza Jussawalla analyses through Kingsolver's *Poisonwood Bible*. Caribbean migration to Canada and the paradigms of migration that determine the representation of masculinity is studied in Carmona's article. The reader can also approach postmodernist and postcolonial Indian-English and African fiction thanks to the articles by Saikat Majumdar, Ayo Kehinde and Gbemisola Adeoti.

Three studies are dedicated to language as being an important issue for postcolonial writers. Bénédicte Ledent focuses on West Indian writers and how Caribbean diaspora uses and transforms the English language. María Lirola offers a critical analysis regarding the relationship between the use of language and the author's ideology in Hispanic Literature and Juan Zarandona proposes the first translation into Spanish from the hybrid Africaans and English in Pauline Smith's *Anna's Marriage*. From another perspective, Lourdes López's

critical essay centers on the term “diaspora” as one of the main topics in New Literatures in English. She considers the term diaspora to be an analytical field with which to apprehend multcentred New Literatures. In this guise, Carmona examines masculinity and migration of British Caribbeans to North America in Austin Clarke’s novel *The Question*. We have also included the collaboration of Paloma Fresno and her study that highlights the contribution of Maori writers to the reconstruction of New Zealand’s national profile. The idea of hybridity is also at the heart of Fernández’s thematic study of Black British poetry. Another relevant article is the one by Celia Wallhead where she argues for a new generation of postcolonial writers and observes the way Richard Flanagan and Matthew Kneale explore the extermination of the Tasmanian Aborigines in their writing. Dealing with cultural identities in contemporary New Literatures, we find Eva Darías’ questioning of visual codes to construct cultural identities within a national framework in contemporary Canadian literature and culture. Among this display of postcolonial fiction and non-fiction writers, Ana Bringas offers her particular study of three poetry collections by Afro-Caribbean poet, Grace Nichols. Her poems address myths related to black womanhood and topics such as race, class and gender oppression are present in her creative writing. Following another minority writing, Silvia

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Falquina establishes two parameters in order to study Native American texts; one parameter could be the one which reinforces dichotomies, and the other would be a more hybrid and relational model. Falquina understands New Literatures as the result of open dialogues if the second model she proposes is used. Diane Green's analysis of Welsh writing and postcoloniality shows a new insight within the field of New Literatures due to the ambiguous position of the nation of Wales regarding colonization, while García Ramírez focuses on literature for children through her analysis of Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. Finally, Herrero proposes an interesting work on "in-betweenness", that is, of authors who, by having been born in one country and living in another, have the opportunity of bringing together two different cultural settings.