Disciplining Criticism: Edward Said Ten Years On

12–13 December 2013

Presented by the UNESCO Chair in Transnational Diasporas and Reconciliation Studies and the Hawke Research Institute, University of South Australia
Program

Day 1: Thursday 12 December 2013  H6-12, Level 6, Hawke Building, City West Campus

8:30–9:00  REGISTRATION

9:00–9:05  Welcome to country
Professor Stanley Nangala
Head of School: David Unaipon College of Indigenous Research
University of South Australia

9:05–9:15  Welcome address
Professor Pal Ahluwalia
Pro Vice Chancellor, Education, Arts and Social Sciences
University of South Australia

SESSION 1

9:15–10:15  Edward Said’s Enduring Legacy: Disciplining Criticism
Professor Pal Ahluwalia
Pro Vice Chancellor, Education, Arts and Social Sciences
University of South Australia

10:15–10:45  MORNING TEA BREAK

SESSION 2

10:45–11:45  Refashioning Orientalism: Thoughts on Said
Professor Reina Lewis
University of the Arts London

11:45–12:45  The Changing Role of the Odalisque in Visual Criticism:
A Feminist Reading of Edward Said’s Impact on the Visual Arts
Dr Chloe Patton
University of South Australia

12:45–13:45  LUNCH BREAK
Session 3

13:45–14:45  Locating the Trophy Body: Visibility and Atrocity in a Necro-Geopolitical Order  
Professor Suvendrini Perera  
Curtin University

14:45–15:45  Policing the Borders of International Relations  
Professor Philip Darby  
Institute of Postcolonial Studies

15:45–16:15  Afternoon Tea Break

Session 4

16:15–17:15  The Other Balfour Declaration  
Professor Barry Hindess  
Australian National University

17:15–17:45  Summing-Up  
Dr Katrina Jaworski and Dr Chloe Patton  
University of South Australia
Program

Day 2: Friday 13 December 2013  H6-12, Level 6, Hawke Building, City West Campus

SESSION 1

9:00–10:00  Said(ism)- A Thing of the Past!
            Professor Mustapha Marrouchi
            University of Nevada

10:00–10:30  MORNING TEA BREAK

SESSION 2

10:30–11:30  The World, the Text, and the Postcolonial Critic:
              What I Learned from Edward Said
              Associate Professor Deepika Bahri
              Emory University

11:30–12:30  Raw Thinking
              Dr Katrina Jaworski
              University of South Australia

12:30–13:30  LUNCH BREAK

SESSION 3

13:30–14:30  Said and the Subject
              Mr Yassir Morsi
              University of South Australia

14:30–15:30  Notes on Black Urbanism
              Professor AbdouMaliq Simone
              University of South Australia

15:30–16:00  AFTERNOON TEA BREAK
SESSION 4

16:00–17:00  Said, Sovereign, and the Biopolitical
Professor Stuart Christie
Hong Kong Baptist University

17:00–17:15  Summing-Up and Closing Address
Professor Pal Ahluwalia
University of South Australia
Day 1: Thursday 12 December 2013

Session 1: 9:15–10:15

*Edward Said’s Enduring Legacy: Disciplining Criticism*
Professor Pal Ahluwalia

It is now ten years since Edward Said’s untimely death in 2003. During his extraordinary life he was recognised as one of the most engaging intellectuals in the world. He was that rare breed of academic critic who was a vocal public intellectual, having done more than any other person to place the plight of Palestine before a world audience. His importance as a cultural theorist is now widely accepted in two areas: his foundational place in the growing school of postcolonial studies, particularly through his book Orientalism; and his insistence on the importance of the ‘worldliness’ or material contexts of the text and the critic. This insistence placed him, for a time, outside the mainstream of contemporary theory, but was soundly vindicated. Indeed, no other cultural critic revealed so powerfully how ‘down to earth’ theory really is, for it comes to being in some place, for a particular reason, and with a particular history. Orientalism constituted a critical moment in the formation of postcolonial studies. It did this by placing the question of power, representation and colonialism firmly on the wider agenda of the New Humanities. In doing this, the question of the non-West and politics were firmly tied to theory in new and exciting ways. By offering both an ontic and ontological description of the effects of colonialism, evidenced through the binary of Europe and its other, this book gave us both an empirically based description of a power relations and the promise of the foundations of an ontological one. It not only opened up the possibility of revealing the power of representation, but also opened a new space through which psychoanalysis, philosophy and even theology could speak once again to questions of self and Being. This paper looks at the wider impact and enduring legacy of Edward Said’s work in the ‘new humanities’.

Session 2: 10:45–12:45

*Refashioning Orientalism: Thoughts on Said*
Professor Reina Lewis

To reflect on the cumulative and present impact of Said’s work on intellectual and political life is to revisit the historicity of his oeuvre. Prescient but not predictive, his call to speak to truth to power has been followed by many, but we may now find ourselves speaking different truths to different powers and engaging with previously unimagined interlocutors. Critical engagement with Said has from the start expanded the corpus of scholarship on Orientalism, most especially the corrective focus on women and gender provided by feminist respondents. Introducing new sources for and categories of analysis, research on gender and sexuality has added new forms of inter- and trans-disciplinarity to the critical field. The reactivation of Orientalist stereotypes within securitised cultural politics post 9/11 alongside the up-veiling popularised by the global Islamic revival has accorded a hypervisibility to women whose clothing identifies them as Muslim. Applying in contexts of Muslim minority and in some of Muslim majority, like Turkey, visibly Muslim embodiment is seen as a challenge.
Abstracts

to the privatisation of religion within secular modernities. This paper evaluates the methodological challenges posed by a research project that in taking seriously as forms of everyday religion the blended spiritual and material practices of cool young hijabis, requires textual analyses of digital hijabi fashion mediation in blogs and social media alongside ethnographic studies of daily dress practices framed by a cultural retail geography of the growing commercial modest fashion industry. Against the common trivialisation of fashion, this paper argues that through engagement with neoliberal consumer culture young women are creating new forms of religious interpretation and authority whose impact, limits, and potential can indeed be best understood by revisiting the field of criticism prompted by Edward Said.

Dr Chloe Patton

Despite the very visual nature of his style of criticism, Edward Said was a somewhat reluctant contributor to discussions of Orientalism in the visual arts, admitting it was an area in which he felt ‘tongue-tied.’ Nevertheless, his intellectual legacy for visual arts scholars and practitioners cannot be understated. This paper traces the trajectory of postcolonial perspectives within the visual arts since the publication of Orientalism through the evolution of the figure of the odalisque, also known as the hareem slave. The first part of the paper explores critical responses to visual representations of the odalisque, moving through the early take-up of Said’s work in critiques of Orientalist painting and colonial postcards, to the aesthetic practices of women whose identities are entangled in colonial histories. I argue that through these interventions, the critical understanding of the odalisque has changed from that of object of vision to agent of vision, a shift which has useful theoretical implications for debates about subjecthood and agency that have emerged in response to Said’s ‘residual humanism.’ The second part of the paper looks at the curious position the odalisque now holds in the politics of representing the status of Orientalism in the current art market, where the frenzied buy-up of Orientalist art by Middle Eastern institutional and private collectors has ignited a popular backlash against Said’s work.

Session 3: 13:45–15:45

Locating the Trophy Body: Visibility and Atrocity in a Necro-Geopolitical Order
Professor Suvendrini Perera

After The Last Sky, a book combining Edward Said’s written text with photographs by Jean Mohr can be seem as initiating a narrative genre that makes visible the suffering of those subjected to everyday political violence. Almost four decades on from the publication of After the Last Sky, a plethora of forms (documentaries, witness narratives, human) seek to record these forms of bearing witness. In this essay, I seek to explore the visibilization of atrocity through a set of questions posed by Allen Feldman: “How does one perceive during and after chronic political violence? What knowledge emerges from the terror zones, and at what cultural sites does it appear? Where does violence emerge into visibility, and what visibilities does violence create?” (Allen Feldman, “Violence and Vision: The Prosthetics and Aesthetics of Vision” Public Culture 10.1 (1997), 31. The essay considers how
violence emerges into visibility and the visibilities that violence create, in the form of the trophy body of atrocity, in two spatially and temporary discontinuous terror zones, whose terror, I argue is refracted through the orientalist and imperial violence of the Abu Ghraib trophy images.

Policing the Borders of International Relations
Professor Philip Darby

One might imagine that Edward Said’s work has made a substantial impact on disciplinary international relations. As we all know, some of his writing speaks clearly to the politics of the international – Orientalism, Culture and Imperialism and his advocacy of the cause of the Palestinian people. Then there is his understanding of the role and approach of the intellectual that many of us would see as a corrective to the statist tradition which has long informed world politics. Thus the argument that Said’s critical stance, humanist vision or even the tensions if not the contradictions in his methodology might enliven debate about the world order and the North-South encounter, in the process locating politics in new places and broadening our horizons about the nature of the international. Mostly, however, IR scholars have not approached Said’s work in such terms. Indeed, what is remarkable is that, in large part, the discipline has not seen Said as relevant to its concerns. In short, either he has been ignored or at best marginalised. Certainly he has been taken up by a sprinkling of postcolonial scholars and some critical theorists but they have little clout when it comes to the mainstream of the discipline. Keeping Said’s case in mind, this paper will go on to examine IR’s self-imposed isolation from other knowledge formations and the scholarly conventions which work to safeguard its established archive from challenge. It will also reflect on what might be done to advance the prospects of change.

Session 4: 16:15–17:15

The Other Balfour Declaration
Professor Barry Hindess

Arthur James Balfour is remembered today as the British Foreign Secretary who signed a letter, dated November 2, 1917, to Baron Rothschild. Generally known as the Balfour declaration, this letter affirmed that the British government viewed ‘with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object’ and added the qualification ‘it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country’. In Chapter One of Orientalism, Edward Said examines another, somewhat earlier and less familiar declaration, this time in the course of a speech on June 13, 1910 to the House of Commons. Here Balfour spoke of ‘the problems with which we have to deal in Egypt’, problems that he described as belonging ‘to a wholly different category’ than those ‘affecting the isle of Wight or the West Riding of Yorkshire’.

1 Quoted in Said 1978, p.31
Said(ism)-A Thing of the Past!
Professor Mustapha Marrouchi

Viewed from a distance in time and space, Edward Said’s life was like a Catherine-wheel breaking free from its stake. Leaping and spinning and scattering crowds, emitting fountains of alarming flares and sparks as it bounded in and out of public squares and university auditoriums, flinging dazzling light into dim minds, his career left scorch marks and illuminations across the 20th century. When it finally stopped and the flames died in 2003, the darkness suddenly seemed absolute. Now he is almost forgotten. Some critics think that this oblivion is to do with the gigantic incorrectness of his personal life, mostly revealed after his death: the snobbery, bullying, narcissism, ruthlessness, and even his bourgeois upbringing made him vulnerable to accusations of total lack of respect for those who disagreed with him. A better explanation is the change of the times we live in. The whole context in which Said wrote, fought, survived, preached, and rampaged—the epoch of cold war, totalitarian dictatorships, Arab potentates, millennial mobilizations, and total wars—have vanished. A decade after his death, a re-evaluation of Said(ism) is well-nigh. The wrinkle in this logic of new appraisal must include his cosmic restlessness, his inability to leave anything as it was, a dynamic that infused his whole life. Roughly speaking, that life seems to have fallen into the horrible underworld of this century. Even so, how are we to re-read the reserves of synthesizing energy that simply outstripped anyone else’s? After all, Said was able to house within his own capacious and flexible scheme, like one of those skyscrapers that can bend in the wind, a remarkable number of newly important bodies of thought, including structuralist semiotics, longue durée history of the Annales variety, Frankfurt School Kulturkritik, postcolonial theory and practice, and contrapuntal reading of works of art. All that is now part of yesteryear. Why? The answer to the question posed here may be hard to find, but one is tempted to venture the following impression. Unlike Foucault, Derrida, or even Deleuze whose revival keeps rising, Said(ism) has been placed on the shelf, put aside, so to speak, like a mini-project. The reason(s) behind this neglect lies in the new climate that has swept the world in general and the Arab world in particular. No longer can the intellectual, whether amateur or specific, pontificate from his ivory tower. No longer is he or she at ease in a world riddled with contradictions? With Islamism rampant across the world, bourgeois liberal values are no longer valid to combat fundamentalism of any kind. What can one say about his bravery and courage on every level, physical, moral, spiritual, and above all, his capacity for indignation—that invaluable ingredient for making things happen, which remained with him until his untimely death? And finally, will Said(ism) last or will it wither to the extent that it will lose its vitality and force to become dry and sapless?
Abstracts

Session 2: 10:30–12:30

The World, the Text, and the Postcolonial Critic: What I Learned from Edward Said
Associate Professor Deepika Bahri

For the postcolonial critic who steps into the turbulent and treacherous currents of literary criticism, buffeted alternately by the rival claims of aesthetics and politics, Edward Said has sage advice. His manifesto for criticism in 1983 and through the rest of his life remained organized around a clear, invariable message: total subscription to total theory, any theory that threatens to become religious around the edges would spell the death knell of “critical activity or consciousness” (292). To remain worldly in the best sense of the word, criticism needs to remain “sceptical, secular, reflectively open to its own failings” (WTC 26). No closed circles for Said, nor the straight lines of teleological dialectic. Instead there are overlapping sets, contrapuntal notes, and, to use Said’s own words, “an unstoppable predilection for alternatives” (WTC 247). I take Said at his word to press forward a dialogue with V. S. Naipaul, a postcolonial intellectual whose stance he found not only difficult but which he once described as downright “immoral” (“Intellectual” 53). This paper will focus on the logic of fragmentary identity in V. S. Naipaul’s novel, Half a Life as an aesthetic instantiation of Said’s politics of secular interpretation. As Said concedes with characteristic generosity even in his most pejorative assessment of the author in 1986, Naipaul is “too remarkable and gifted a writer to be dismissed” (“Intellectuals” 53). Indeed by 1993 Said even speaks approvingly of the early Naipaul “sifting through the debris of colonialism and postcolonialism, remorselessly judging the illusions and cruelties of independent states and the new true believers” (“Representations” 54). It is this Saidian spirit that animates the ensuing discussion.

Raw Thinking
Dr Katrina Jaworski

What does the phrase, “thinking otherwise”, mean? It means thinking differently or radically re-imagining something. The phrase makes sense but not its mechanics, namely, the thinking of thinking. In its obviousness, thinking is left to its own devices, unattended and perhaps taken for granted. Heidegger did not take thinking for granted. For him, without thinking, there was no being, no existence par excellence. Yet despite his thought-provoking work, Heidegger missed a point about thinking. In his disembodied and contained phenomenological framework, he was too obsessed with the process of thinking to realise thinking relies on something other than itself. But there is hope for thinking post Heidegger. Thinking, I think, needs Said’s reconceptualization of the figure of the organic intellectual. Combining the thinking of Heidegger and Said, I will argue that we need to rethink thinking as raw. To develop the argument, I will draw on Butler’s notion of performativity as a heuristic method of analysis to work out the mechanics of raw thinking. I will also demonstrate that raw thinking requires a sensate ontology through which thinking, like Said’s, can be unruly, critical and always passionate.
Abstracts

Session 3: 13:30–15:30

Said and the Subject
Mr Yassir Morsi

Said’s Orientalism is an openly political work. Its aim is not simply to investigate the array of disciplines, or to elaborate on Orientalism’s cultural origins, but to challenge the legitimacy of the discourse that describes the other. Orientalism, through emphasising the relationship between power and knowledge, seeks to articulate the potential to resist and recreate the European representation of the Orient. In doing so, Said is clearly indebted to Foucault’s ideas on discursive formations. However this Foucauldian debt raises a question about Said’s work: how does one representation become misrepresentation without referencing something real? Said argues for the use of ‘narrative’, rather than ‘vision’, when interpreting the geographical landscape known as the Orient. By this he means that a historian and scholar should turn not to a panoramic view of half of the globe, but rather to a focused and complex view of history that allows space for the dynamic variety of human experience. Said argues that by adopting critical consciousness as a perspective, it is possible for the critic to deal with a text in two ways—he may begin to describe not only what is in the text, but also what is invisible. Said’s strategy of resistance is based upon intellectuals who exercise their critical consciousness not simply to reject imperial discourse, but to critically intervene within the intrinsic conditions through which knowledge is made possible. Hence, for Said, resistance is twofold: to know the Orient outside the discourse of Orientalism, and to represent and present this knowledge to challenge Orientalists. For Said, the location of critical consciousness lies in challenging the hegemonic nature of dominant culture, but the question remains: what is the ‘ontological’ nature of this critical subject that resides in this neutral space? In the ensuing debates surrounding this question we see how Said appeals to a particularly European and liberal concept of the subject.

Notes on Black Urbanism
Professor AbdouMaliq Simone

Life in cities has always been hard for many. There is no shortage of tales of woe, no lack of thickness in the accounts of sludge, grime, miasma, humid and bitter atmosphere, nor of avarice, violence, and horror stories that top horror stories. The struggles to exist are relentless and replete with perverse aesthetics and romance. Yet, black urban lives, in all of their heterogeneity, say something significant about the evanescence, fragility, and multiplicity of space, space as the continuous recalibration of orientations, of coming at the city from different angles as its angles and angels come at you from all directions. While the poor may come in all complexions and ethnicities, the struggles of keeping different angles open fall largely to a city’s black inhabitants. For the lengths they were forced to travel across different sites of capture meant the acquisition of an intricate toolbox of escapes and endurance. Where the lines of making history were not open, where the accumulation of the orienting and legitimating stories of genealogy were cut off, illumination—the play of light as the primary source of rapid transformations of feeling and lucidity—necessitated all kinds of tricks. Endurance entailed small apertures in the wall of confinement and designs overlaid onto the architectures of subjugation to cast illusory
images. It required screens through which shadow worlds could harbor explorations and yearnings. Gods and spirits were redressed in figures who feigned blindness so they could then safely insert themselves in the middle of things without being noticed. Slavery took blackness across a world ill prepared to manage all of its untoward implications. Black urban settlement required the honing of sensitivities which relied upon being ready to heed “the call”—the capacity to “call upon” all that had happened to a people, and to hear “its call.” No matter that the strivings for recognition, to be seen as “just as good as anyone else” led many to overcompensate and become parodies of those responsible for revitalizing the use of race as critical weapons at every important juncture. Blackness was something that always maintained its “design elements” to upend any clear reading of things. As Sun Ra always said, in relationship to America (or to Africa, for that matter), “we are not from here.” “Space is the Place”—the name of Sun Ra’s renowned film of a planet just for blacks—was both the literal and ironic designation of the terms of black belonging, its simultaneously here and nowhere.

Session 4: 16:00–17:00

_Said, Sovereignty, and the Biopolitical_
Professor Stuart Christie

Building from and beyond the nationalist frame for Said studies, this essay seeks to bring Said’s legacy into dialogue with a new vocabulary energizing transnational sovereignty studies—as distinct from the rapacious forces of capital-driven globalization (Nadesan)—that has emerged during the decade since his death. I take particular note of Said’s career-long interest in what may be called the ecological and biopolitical formations of sovereign resistance. I suggest that Said’s turn toward the biopolitical augured what may be called the “late style” of sovereignty studies more generally; namely, the linking of local (primarily nationalist) indigenous resistance to biopolitical and ecological advocacy on a planetary scale (Wainwright). Incorporating gestures toward the biopolitical and planetary, the “late style” of sovereignty studies enables further dialogue with subsequent work by philosophers—notably, Giorgio Agamben—and allows for the fruitful revisitation of key concepts within the Saidian framework (such as the world, the critic, and the postcolonial) in the twenty-first century context. An apparent lack of correspondence between the nation-state and the emergence of plural sovereignties exercised on a planetary scale finds an effective parallel in my critique of Agamben’s instrumented asymmetries—between “bare life” and “good life”, exclusion and inclusion, zoe and bios—mirroring Said’s own career-long commitment to Giambattista Vico’s belief in the inherent plurality of being, mind, and world (Curthoys and Ganguly). My essay concludes by suggesting that the “late style” of sovereignty studies can learn from the example of Said’s own biopolitical turn, which presaged not only the potential reductions nationalism risks imposing upon planetary plural sovereignties, but also offers an effective critique of the amorphous threat Agamben identifies, in Homo Sacer, as “zones of indistinction” in our time increasingly globalized. Finally, Said’s legacy merits our reconsideration in terms that bio-politics can provide, even as the cause—the struggle on behalf of sovereign peoples everywhere seeking to achieve political liberation based upon, and constituted by, the environmental integrity of their lived spaces—remains the same.
Keynote Speakers

**Professor Pal Ahluwalia** has been the Pro Vice Chancellor of the Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences at the University of South Australia since March 2008. His main research interests lie in the areas of African studies and social and cultural theory, and his work is widely published and internationally renowned for breaking down disciplinary boundaries and challenging orthodoxy. In October 2008 Prof Ahluwalia was appointed Chair in Transnational Diasporas and Reconciliation Studies for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

**Professor Deepika Bahri** is Associate Professor in the English department at Emory University. She is the author of *Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature* (U of Minnesota P, 2003) and editor of two collections of essays: *Between the Lines: South Asians and Postcoloniality* (Temple UP, 1996) and *Realms of Rhetoric: Inquiries into the Prospects of Rhetoric Education* (SUNY P, 2003). In 2006 she edited *Empire and Racial Hybridity*, a special issue of the journal, South Asian review. HIV/AIDS in developing countries is a secondary research interest. Based on preliminary research in this area, she has written a report entitled AIDS Prevention and Control in Tamil Nadu for USAID. Her research and teaching center on postcolonial and critical theory, with a special interest in aesthetics and the socio-political context in which art is produced and received. She maintains as an extensive Postcolonial Studies Website. Her current book project focuses on the representation of racial and cultural difference in literature.

**Professor Stuart Christie** is Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at Hong Kong Baptist University. He is the author of two books, *Worlding Forster: The Passage from Pastoral* (Routledge, 2005) and *Plural Sovereignties and Contemporary Indigenous Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). He has also co-edited, along with Zhang Yuejun, *Modern American Poetry and the Chinese Encounter* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). His articles have appeared in College Literature, Modern Fiction Studies, PMLA, Foreign Literature Studies (外國文學研究), Western American Literature, Literature Compass, Media Studies, and The American Indian Quarterly among numerous other publication venues. Currently, he is at work on a Hong Kong government-funded project exploring the rise of the literary public intellectual after 1930.
**Presenters**

**Associate Professor Philip Darby** is Director of Institute of Postcolonial Studies and a principal fellow in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne.

**Professor Barry Hindess** moved to the Australian National University in 1987 (from Britain) and then to ANU’s Research School of Social Sciences, where he learned to pass as a political scientist. He is now Emeritus Professor in ANU’s School of Social Sciences. Like many senior academics he has published more than he cares to remember, including *Discourses of Power: from Hobbes to Foucault*, *Governing Australia: studies in contemporary rationalities of government* (with Mitchell Dean), *Corruption and Democracy in Australia*, *Us and them: elites and anti-elitism in Australia* (with Marian Sawer) and papers on neo-liberalism, liberalism and empire and the temporalizing of difference.

**Dr Katrina Jaworski** lectures in Cultural Studies at the School of Communication, International Studies and Languages, University of South Australia. Her research focuses on the agency of suicide in particular, and the philosophy of death and dying bodies more broadly. Other research includes violent extremism, African genocide and older men and urban sheds. Her forthcoming book is *The Gender of Suicide: Knowledge Production, Theory and Suicidology* (Ashgate, March 2014).

Presenters

**Professor Mustapha Marrouchi** is Professor and Rogers Fellow in Postcolonial Literature, Research Associate at ISS (Claremont, California), as well as the coordinator of The Graduate Circle at UNLV. He is the author most recently of *The Fabric of Subcultures: Networks, Ethnic Force Fields, and Peoples without Power* (New York: Lang, 2011) and editor of *Embargoed Literature: Arabic* (West Chester: WC Press, 2010), winner of the 2010 Horizon Award. An influential cultural critic, Professor Marrouchi has written widely on Islam(ism), terrorism, African-American literature, the Arab revolution, Arabic literature, theory, colonial discourse, couscous, war and soccer. Professor Marrouchi is currently working on a book he calls *Unspeakable Things Spoken at Last* as well as on an essay tentatively titled *The Clash of Ignorance in the Global near Future* and another on *The Arab Spring: Between Hopes and Impediments.*

**Mr Yassir Morsi** recently submitted his PhD at the University of Melbourne in political science and Islamic studies. He looked at contemporary liberal thought and its dealings with/production of the ‘Muslim question’. His research engaged with a broad range of critical theorists to question whether liberalism’s ‘ontological’ assumptions of an abstract subject creates an irrational excess that is projected onto the Muslim Other. Using Nietzsche’s Birth of tragedy, Yassir’s thesis examined the culturally formed discursive of the ‘war on terror’, and its narrating of September 11. He describes September 11 as a Dionysian event. Its terror was an surplus of colonial violence and the global market’s unarticulated ‘drunkenness’. However, western mainstream media, in film and documentaries, commonly represses the Dionysian qualities of September 11. Instead, they often see September 11 as an Apollonian event where terrorism becomes an articulation of clean binaries, and the rationalisation of a clash between caricatures: the liberal self against the religious other.

**Dr Chloe Patton** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding at the University of South Australia. Her research interests address the social and political consequences of twenty-first century multiculture, particularly in relation to how the so-called ‘Muslim Question’ plays out across the West. A visual ethnographer by training, she has a keen interest in the aesthetics of embodied cultural practice, and is currently completing a manuscript on visual representations of young Muslims in the West.
Professor Suvendrini Perera completed her PhD Columbia University, New York, and her BA at the University of Sri Lanka, Kelaniya. She is Professor of Cultural Studies in the School of Media Culture & Creative Arts and Deputy Director of the Australia-Asia-Pacific Institute at Curtin University, Australia. Perera is the author/editor of six books, including Australia and the Insular Imagination: Beaches, Borders, Boats and Bodies (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2009), Our Patch ( API 2007); Enter at own risk (co-edited with Graham Seal and Sue Summers, Black Swan, 2010) and Living Through Terror (co-edited with Antonio Traverso, Routledge, 2011). Currently she is working on a volume on trophy war videos titled Old Atrocities, New Media.

Professor AbdouMaliq Simone is an urbanist with particular interest in emerging forms of social and economic intersection across diverse trajectories of change for cities in the Global South. Simone is presently Research Professor at the University of South Australia and Visiting Professor of Urban Studies at the African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town. Key publications include, In Whose Image: Political Islam and Urban Practices in Sudan (University of Chicago Press, 1994), For the City Yet to Come: Urban Change in Four African Cities (Duke University Press, 2004), and City Life from Jakarta to Dakar: Movements at the Crossroads (Routledge, 2009).
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