I am privileged to be asked to respond to Archie Lee's compact, fresh, and thought-provoking paper. I come to the assignment from a social location that finds me something of a novice in respect to key areas of the discussion. I have a special interest in Asia and Asian biblical interpretation and have visited Hong Kong, yet I do not have a thorough knowledge of Hong Kong's history and current political-social climate. And despite my primary interest in Asia, my familiarity with the theoretical literature of postcolonial discourse has been developed up to now in relation to the African context. I am an Old Testament scholar, but my specialization is not in prophetic literature or in the so-called postexilic or restoration period. Speaking out of this location I take my task to be one of raising questions, questions of a concerned and sympathetic "outsider" that I hope will encourage Lee in the further development of the work he has presented.

Lee helpfully recognizes that Hong Kong is "an anomaly in postcolonial discourse" because of the absence of "a hostile anti-colonial attitude." Also distinctive is the tension between being a part of Chinese culture, yet wanting to maintain a separate identity vis-à-vis the People's Republic of China (PRC) of which Hong Kong is now a part. This desire for separate identity, fueled partly by Hong Kong's very different economic pattern and partly by the status of so many of its citizens as refugees (or descendants of refugees) from the PRC, suggests to Lee the basic analogy he hopes to draw out from Trito-Isaiah and the early restoration period. There is tension between groups as a community seeks to reassess and re-establish its postcolonial identity in changed circumstances. In the case of biblical Judah, scholars posit tensions and disagreements between the Jews who returned from Babylon and those who had remained in Judah over the half century of the Exile. In Lee's paper, the analogous groups are (as I read it) primarily subgroups within Hong Kong disputing how to move into the new era of relationship with the PRC, but sometimes the
people of Hong Kong as a whole trying to establish their identity in relationship to the Mainland, seeking ways to build upon continuities as well as dealing with discontinuities and disagreements. It is my understanding that Lee wants to put the circumstances of the ancient Judahite and contemporary Hong Kong situations into dialogue without identifying specific modern groups with particular parties to the ancient dispute. On the one hand, this approach is helpful because it asks us to focus on the dynamics of the respective situations. Yet the various biblical texts have a point of view, claiming implicitly or explicitly that one party to the disputes is in the right. Isa. 56:3-7 advocates welcome of the foreigner; Ezra 9 rails against mixed marriages. And in the end it seems to me that Lee does not stick just to the dynamics of internal dispute, but comes down on the side of a constructive hybridity. Is this a choice in principle, or is it specific to the anomalous situation of Hong Kong? Those of us less familiar with the contemporary scene will need guidance in identifying and assessing the parties to any internal Hong Kong disputes. Also, are the power dynamics between Hong Kong and the PRC such that despite cultural continuity, the role of the PRC is also to be compared to that of the Persian Empire structure in which Judah was a semi-autonomous unit?

My interest in learning more about how Lee would specify the roles of particular groups in the mutual interpreting of the ancient and modern postcolonial situations leads me to ask after the social locations of the various sub-groups present in Hong Kong. Here I look beyond the political disputes mentioned above to ask about how economic class differences and gender differences within the Hong Kong community may cause the postcolonial context to be perceived, experienced, and responded to differently by different parts of the Hong Kong citizenry. Lee’s paper alludes already to some aspects of this question. He mentions, for example, that some of the wealthier people have left or at least have the option of leaving. What difference does it make whether people have such a choice or not? Is the apathy and indifference with which he reports the populace responded to July 1997 to be associated primarily with this lack of choice on the part of people of average or low economic means? And should we suppose that in ancient Jerusalem there was also a large proportion of apathetic citizenry not interested in the matter of self identity in the new situation? Can the vision of democratization that Lee suggests may