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Beyond the Postcolonial, but Why Exactly? Ten Steps towards a New Enthusiasm for Postcolonial Studies

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Abstract: Postcolonial theory has now been evolving for over thirty years and has gone through several changes. My purpose in this article is to explore the question whether ›postcolonialism‹ is still a vital paradigm and how it is applied today. I will thus be participating in the discussion of a theme inherent in postcolonial studies from the very beginning: that of self-reflexive analysis. My purpose here is to give reasons why we still should join the club, and what we see in the current, everyday world that calls for postcolonial literary studies. In the following, I suggest ten current challenges that would benefit from the postcolonial apparatus of concepts and criticism. In this task, I am (critically) leaning on the Anglophone postcolonial scholarship.

I first capture some of the criticisms directed at postcolonial theorizing, and suggest some general perspectives on these self-critical debates. My aim is thus to provoke discussion of the new orientations occurring in postcolonial studies following the collapse of the intellectual power of »the narrative of decolonization itself«, as argued by Simon Gikandi in his analysis of contemporary globalization (2001, 637). In the first section, I want therefore to ask whether it is currently enough merely ›to reveal and deconstruct‹ structures of colonial power embedded in fiction, as many literary scholars did in the 1990s, and whether such readings can become paradigmatic standpoints of postcolonial theorizing.

Next, I consider the impact of postcolonial studies on contemporary fiction writing. I suggest that the institutionalizing of postcolonial scholarship has also affected contemporary world literatures. The question arises whether literature (or the politics of publishing) has reacted to postcolonial debates, and whether there exists such a thing as ›postcolonial canon formation‹, shaping the idea of the ›proper‹ postcolonial novel. The third section of this article, however, focuses on the new challenges and questions that postcolonial theorizing faces. I try to answer some of the criticisms postcolonial theory has faced, and provide a list of topics and contexts within which postcolonial theorizing is still a vital theoretical tool extending beyond its ›routines‹.

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My ›ten steps‹ towards a new enthusiasm for postcolonial studies do not constitute a coherent paradigm shift, or a concise view, but suggest some current openings based on the tradition of postcolonial studies. First, I will discuss multi- or interdisciplinarity and claim that such contemporary postcolonial topics as ecocatastrophes, studies on war, peace, and terrorism, or the social media, for example, are far too complicated issues to be studied from the point of view of one discipline only. The second challenge for postcolonial literary studies in this article has to do with the post-occidental turn. I suggest that studies on many kinds of minority literatures may benefit from the ›triangularization‹ of the binary legacy of British Imperialism inherent in Postcolonial literary studies.

I call the third challenge ›turning the direction of influences‹. I wonder what if postcolonial theoretical influences would not be borrowed merely from the critical discourse of Commonwealth literary studies: Postcolonial studies have a great deal to learn from other indigenous modes of criticism. The fourth reason not to abandon postcolonial is the question of historicization, providing a context for current (political) rhetorics and actions, particularly media narratives. My fifth new challenge for postcolonial studies concerns the re-politicization of otherness, a theme discussed widely by Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Morton. What they mean is that ›the other‹ is currently represented in terms of fear rather than of oppression. I suggest that the postcolonial vocabulary has the potential to tackle this new form of fear.

Relating to previous challenges, my sixth suggestion for postcolonial studies is more political and leads us more directly towards the emerging field of terrorism studies and analyzing the rhetorics of current world politics. The seventh new application is obviously related to religion and religious identities: Postcolonial terminology has the explanatory power to analyze the way, for example, that the current Islamophobia draws on old racist discourses and imageries. Following from these contemporary political challenges, my eighth proposition for postcolonial studies relates to the new media environment: globalization, the free flow of images in the (social) media, but at the same time the unedited dissemination of hate speech. The remaining two steps for postcolonial studies are related to the emerging field of posthumanism, dislodging the human agent from the position of sole structurer of the surrounding reality. They concern both ecocriticism and new materialism.

Like this article too, the postcolonial critical practice has self-analyzed its own problems ever since its zenith. The ten new steps listed above, however, are reasons why I want to join the postcolonial club sometimes represented as old-fashioned. For ethical reasons, I am – and want to be – enthusiastic about postcolonial theorizing.

Keywords: postcolonial theory, methodology, postcolonial aesthetics, canon formation

Postcolonial theory has now been evolving for over thirty years and has gone through several changes. My purpose in this article is to explore the question whether ›postcolonialism‹ is still a vital paradigm and how it is applied today. I will thus be participating in the discussion of a theme inherent in postcolonial studies from the very beginning: that of self-reflexive analysis. Postcolonial scholars themselves have been among those most critical towards their own tools. John C. Hawley puts it exactly right: In its constant self-reflexivity, postcolonial theory ›cries out against its own lingering success in the academy‹ – as though its colonization of several departments ›demonstrates the sort of imperial impulse that it purportedly dissects and condemns (as if postcolonial studies is just the sort of club postcolonial theorists might not want to join)‹ (2010, 776). My purpose here is to give reasons why I still want to join the club, and what we see in the current, everyday world that calls for postcolonial literary studies. In the following, I suggest ten current challenges that would benefit from the postcolonial apparatus of concepts and criticism. In this task, I am (critically) leaning on the Anglophone postcolonial scholarship.¹

I first capture some of the criticisms directed at Anglophone postcolonial theorizing, and suggest some general perspectives on these self-critical debates. My aim is thus to provoke discussion of the new orientations occurring in postcolonial studies following the collapse of the intellectual power of ›the narrative of decolonization itself‹, as argued by Simon Gikandi in his analysis of contemporary globalization (2001, 637). Some of these critical debates are addressed in the well-established reader *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (2005): Globalization, the economy, and the process of transculturation provided by media technology become reasons, the editors of the reader claim, why postcolonial scholars must redirect their criticism in a myriad directions instead of merely ›wishing away Eurocentrism‹ (Loomba et al. 2005, 8). In the first section, I want therefore to ask whether it is currently enough merely ›to reveal and deconstruct‹ structures of colonial power embedded in a text, as many literary scholars did in the 1990s, and whether such ›paranoid readings‹² can become paradigmatic standpoints of postcolonial theorizing.

¹ Including Francophone postcolonial studies, a large and prominent field, would exceed my abilities in the frame of an article, but I hope that the discussion could be carried on by someone more familiar with the Francophone field.

² Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has analysed ›paranoia‹, which according to her, circulates around the argumentation of certain critical theories. Sedgwick uses Paul Ricœur's term ›the hermeneutics of suspicion‹ in relation to the method of deciphering, placing its faith in exposure, whereas a good scholar is never sufficiently paranoid. Sedgwick claims that paranoid reading operates with an anticipatory mimetic strategy, whereby certain power structures ›must always be presumed or

Next, I consider the impact of postcolonial studies on contemporary fiction writing. I suggest that the institutionalizing of postcolonial scholarship has also affected contemporary world literatures. The question arises whether literature (or the politics of publishing) has reacted to postcolonial debates, and whether there exists such a thing as ›postcolonial canon formation‹, shaping the idea of the ›proper‹ postcolonial novel fitting the purposes of postcolonial theorizing. Here I draw on the critique by Neil Lazarus, according to whom postcolonial theorizing has contributed to the appearance of new literary works that »give the impression of having been produced precisely with an eye to their postcolonial reception« (2011, 23). Can we say that the postcolonial critical discourse has itself become a sort of ›master-discourse‹, in its generic readings celebrating hybridity, constructed identities, deconstructed power structures, and imaginary home (land)s?

The third section of this paper, however, focuses on the new challenges and questions that postcolonial theorizing faces. John C. Hawley has recently stated that »if postcolonial studies is to retain/regain its disruptive potential, it needs to remain aware of the pitfalls attendant on its own institutionalization, and to find ways to avoid becoming a predictable routine« of revealing and deconstructing (2010, 782). Nevertheless, probably none of us is prepared to abandon postcolonial theory as such. I therefore suggest that we need to go beyond the idea of ›pitfalls‹, and examine why we are still compelled to ask postcolonial questions. I try to answer some of the criticisms postcolonial theory has faced, and provide a list of topics and contexts within which postcolonial theorizing is still a vital theoretical tool extending beyond its ›routines‹. Finally, I want to suggest *an œuvre of strategic enthusiasm* for postcolonial theory. I have entitled the three sections of the article ›Frustration‹, ›Canon‹, and ›Future‹.

1 Frustration

Postcolonial methodology has been criticized widely ever since the 1990s – mainly by postcolonial scholars themselves, who are more than active in self-critical interrogation. Its ›academic‹ and ›elitist‹ commitments to Western modes of theorizing have aroused controversy: It has been seen as so preoccupied with constructions and deconstructions of identity positions that particular and local everyday

self-assumed – even, where necessary, imposed – simply on the ground that it [the power structure] can never be finally ruled out« (1997, 12; for more, cf. *ibid.*, 1–25).

experience has been in danger of becoming blurred. Carole Boyce Davies argued in 1994 that postcolonial theory is often an overly totalizing (Western, academic) discourse. She called it a »conceptual sweep«, which attempts to »contain all of these [non-Western] cultures, movements and peoples in some giant conglomerate-like, monolithic sprawl« (1994, 82). The Westernness of postcolonial theorizing has been discussed extensively, and it has been argued that different kinds of cultures and countries with a colonial background have been colonized over again by the theoretical imperatives of Western universities. Moreover, by teaching many different kinds of non-Western texts side by side in a neatly fenced-off slot called »postcolonial literature«, the well-meaning literary intelligentsia in the Western universities is bringing about a new ghetto for postcolonial authors, creating corollary pressures for some authors to be defined as postcolonial in order to be read.³

The ambiguity of postcolonial discourse has been criticized from early on. On the one hand, according to Boyce-Davies, postcolonial theory defined people as »minorities« and »subjectivities« and then forced them to act like one – »leaving us [...] forever forced to interrogate European discourses« (1994, 85). For her, postcolonial theory must be challenged to spell out who has the right to develop new sites of identity – seldom the subject of postcolonial study. Indeed, Davies describes postcolonial theory as a master-narrative, which like postmodernism legitimizes itself as a neutrally critical discussion (cf. *ibid.*, 80–92). On the other hand, Epifanio San Juan speaks of »postcolonial hypnosis by the mysteries of discourse«, prohibiting the »postcolonial evangelist« from posing disturbing questions about »concrete historical conjunctures« while allowing him or her to occupy »the realm of floating signifiers« (2000, 7). Thus both Davies and San Juan have demanded a decolonization of postcolonial theory itself.

In *Beyond Postcolonial Theory* (2000), San Juan lashed out heavily at postcolonial theorizing. Postcolonial theorizing, according to him, has a »dilettantish« relationship to capitalism (*ibid.*, 6). Postcolonial criticism has been unable to fully analyze the myriad ways capitalism is involved in transnational, »electronically produced cultural hybridity«, or the drive by late capitalism to govern global multitudes. For San Juan, this is due to postcolonial studies' tendency to assign »ontological priority to the phenomenon of cultural difference between colonized and colonizer«, ignoring the analysis of »in-between« spaces, critical of capitalism (*ibid.*). However, while I accept San Juan's more intersectional claims

³ For more on the problem of Western theory and the new ghettos of Postcolonialism, cf. McLeod 2010, 287–293.

regarding postcolonial theorizing, we must ask ourselves: If we do not prioritize any difference but try to drag along all kinds of hegemonies in our analysis, will the task become a ›mission impossible‹? Will we grow so deeply entangled in our critical web that our political statements become diluted with infinite complexity?

The fundamental criticism directed at postcolonial studies has been the lack of analysis of historical materialism. Arif Dirlik for one, in his oft-quoted 1994 essay, charged postcoloniality with having become »a projection of the subjectivities and epistemologies of First World intellectuals of Third World origin« who themselves benefit from the un-articulated capitalist logic of postcolonial theory (1994, 343). For Dirlik, global capitalism fuels the condition of postcoloniality seeking a maximum advantage from fetishizing difference: »I would suggest instead that postcoloniality is the condition of the intelligentsia of global capitalism« (ibid., 356). Provoked, McLeod calls Dirlik »an intellectual Luddite«, unprepared to »make sense of the world in new ways and with new vocabularies« and adhering to the »familiar lexicon of Marxist critique« (2010, 297). I would like to argue that while postcolonial critical practice should be able to incorporate Marxist criticism, nothing in the current world of multiplicities can be adequately explained with just one set of critical tools. McLeod has a point in saying that while »postcolonialism is inevitably fated to inhabit the contemporary milieu of capitalist modernity« (ibid., 298), that does not inevitably condemn it to complicity with global capitalism.

The primary fallacy of postcolonial critical practice for San Juan, however, combines his previous critical points: The minefields facing the poststructuralist rise of postcolonial theory lay in theorizing agency. San Juan writes that when hybridity, local knowledges, cyborgs, and borderland scripts became slogans of postcoloniality, they tended to »obfuscate the power of the transnational ideology and practice of consumerism« (2000, 8). He seems to be claiming that an inadequate commitment to theorizing agency creates slogans, often related to some kind of utopistic realm of equality in third space, and clouds scholars' views related to the aforementioned »concrete historical conjunctures« (ibid., 9). Moreover, he claims that neither liminality, interstitiality, nor even the »third space of enunciation« can save us from the claims of historical materialism and the complex analysis of agency. I think that San Juan is right on target in saying that postcolonial critics tend to remove the colonizer/colonized relationship »from their circumstantial ground« (ibid.); this results in separating the phenomenon analyzed from its larger structure while leaving this structure intact. However, I do not think that all postcolonial scholars have failed to analyze agency, even in the context of historical structures. The much maligned Homi K. Bhabha, for example, has argued with extreme intricacy regarding the issue of agency in a poststructuralist frame-

work (cf. 1995); which, sadly enough, often remains un-studied and mis-argued – leaving Bhabha, unfairly, floating with the signifiers.

In 2010, *Modern Fiction Studies* published a theme issue on the current state of postcolonial theory. In their introduction, Alfred J. López and Robert P. Marzec raise yet another critical point: the problem of the multiplicity of national and colonial histories, of individual variations of race, class, ethnicity and gender. Their claim is that no meta-theoretical model has ever done them all justice; they suggest that the most immediate danger posed by the signifier »postcolonial« is »that of renouncing cultural and historical specificity in the name of theoretical consistency« (2010, 678). John McLeod too reminds us of the problems which arise if words such as »postcolonialism« or »colonialism« are attached to »any and every example of international or intercultural conflict at the expense of an attention to the specifics of each case« (2010, 284). I would like to add that this terminological persistence should be rethought even on the ›colonial side‹ – i. e. the side which frames otherness as otherness. If such concepts as ›European‹, ›Western‹, ›Us‹, ›The European novel‹, ›Western Art Forms‹ – which are meant to define, or to contrast, what is alien, strange, or indigenous – remain stereotypical constructions, how diverse can the differentiated, defined otherness be? Is there such a thing as ›the European novel‹? I argue that while we need to deconstruct the generalizing tendencies of the postcolonial critical practice, we should also avoid arguments of a unified ›Westernness‹, as though it could not include multiple ›normalcies‹.

Writers such as Neil Lazarus, Benita Parry, Timothy Brennan and David Scott have all presented more recent criticism of postcolonial theory. They all have been suspicious of the heavy poststructuralist imprint inherent in postcoloniality. Scott, for one, has contested the ›anti-essentialist dogma‹ which this kind of constructivist postcolonial critique ends up repeating: For him, the constructivist paradigm is no more successful than the essentialist one. Quite the contrary, he argues that postcolonial studies have taken an excessively paradigmatic standpoint on scholarship. For Scott, a particularly problematic paradigm is that ›Europe‹, and I might also add ›the Western‹, is construed as unitary and unchanging (cf. 2005, 395). Europe has become the norm against which the other, in need of emancipation, is defined, read and interpreted. In such thinking, both ›the metropolitan‹ and ›the margin‹ are stabilized constructs, even though they both remain inherently multi-faceted and ambivalent. Scott goes on to note that the idea of Europe – required of the opponent of any critical discussion of colonialism – is stable, known in advance (cf. *ibid.*). While postcolonial criticism insists that colonial discourses and identities have to be deconstructed and revealed as social constructs, the same requirement does not apply to projections of Europe.

2 Canon

More severe criticism of postcolonial literary theory has been offered by Neil Lazarus, who is concerned that recent postcolonial scholarship has been too dogmatically connected with hybridities, multiculturalism, migrancy, liminality, and an undifferentiating disavowal of nationalism. According to him, such studies end up repeating the same stories about »unstable social identities«, »volatile truths«, or »constructed histories« (2011, 22). A scholarly approach which reads the type of novel labeled »cosmopolitan« or »postcolonial« ends up, once again revealing power structures and deconstructing them. Moreover, current postcolonial research tends to register the presence of Anglophone writers who are easily able to »adopt generic and modal conventions« convenient to Euro-American readers – and of course, to Anglo-American publishers. According to Lazarus, this produces a sort of a »new genre of cosmopolitan writing«, ignoring and excluding many interesting and revisionary forms of writing which do not fit in with the poststructuralist paradigms of postcolonial studies (cf. *ibid.*, 22–25). He argues that

In a strict sense, there is only one author in the postcolonial literary canon. That author is Salman Rushdie, whose novels – especially *Midnight's Children* and *The Satanic Verses* – are endlessly and fatuously cited in the critical literature as testifying to the imagined-ness [...] of nationhood, the subjectivism of memory, the instability of social identity, the narrated nature of history, and so on. (*ibid.*, 22)

Like the tendency of ›postcolonial studies‹ to turn into a meta-theoretical model, producing analyses of its own relationship to colonialism, postcolonial literary criticism too is on the verge of failing. The danger is that postcolonial critical practice is prone to call upon literature suited to its conceptions and ways of thinking, in turn obligating authors to create novels repeating these conceptions in order to attract attention. Provocatively speaking, every good postcolonial literary character received the status of a self-searching migrant, seeking lost origins and imagining hybrid homes, and this migrant became a leitmotif of the 1990s postcolonial novel. This way of thinking creates a »normative transnationalism«, a »form tailor-made« for postcolonial writers, to use Peter Hitchcock's and John C. Hawley's terms (2010, 781). In many of the ›canonized‹ postcolonial novels, the main character suffers from sickness or mental disbalance of some sort, metaphorizing cultural displacement; then after various efforts finds a way to reconnect with his/her own cultural heritage through acknowledgement of the ancestral heritage and a re-figured version of history.

Scholars coming from other than Anglophone areas may be in a key position to challenge the paradigms of postcoloniality. However, we must be careful not to repeat postcolonial ways of thinking drawn from Anglo-American debates – in

order, for example, to please the Anglophone readers of our dissertations – or to force readings which do not do justice to the particularities of our local literatures. Indeed, Hawley has pointed out that »arising from Commonwealth literary courses plagued by Anglophone bias«, postcolonial studies »still struggles to incorporate other literary histories« (2010, 778); he urges postcolonial theory to »address more clearly [...] non-Anglophone anomalous works that inherently challenge the postcolonial paradigm« in order to avoid the colonizing impulse of postcolonial theory (ibid., 784). My question thus is: Are we forcing the emergence of a new postcolonial canon by our use of Anglophone concepts and our highlighting of certain readings? And does the machinery of publishing compel authors to repeat certain storylines, those of normative transnationalism, in order to be marketed as ›postcolonial‹?

Consequently, questions of aesthetics and of ›new canon formations‹ seem to be the ›sore spots‹ of postcolonial literary studies. Postcoloniality should not operate as a silencing device of literary criticism: A novel may not be ›good‹, even when the author comes from a marginalized or indigenous background and recycles all the conventions of the new cosmopolitan writing. Aesthetics, or the poetic qualities of literature, its *literariness*, may become taboo topics in postcolonial critical practice, as though an aesthetic perspective is always a sign of Western Patriarchy. Lazarus, insightfully, argues that reading across postcolonial literary studies is to find »the same questions asked, the same methods, techniques, and conventions used, the same concepts mobilized, the same conclusions drawn – about the work of a remarkably small number of writers« (2011, 22). Such narrowed-down institutional recognition reduces the genre of the »good postcolonial novel«, making it appear as aesthetically axiomatic. This results, as Hawley concludes, »in a partial view of contemporary writing« (2010, 779). If postcolonial literary analysis ends up drawing iterative conclusions, the aesthetic potential of postcolonial novels is reduced to implementing postcolonial standpoints.

Postcolonial literary studies, as Timothy Brennan points out, have a tendency to ignore or exclude certain fiction, which is considered insufficiently political or is seen as not fitting in with the paradigm of »cosmopolitan writing«. Authors who do not »embody politics in a readily consumable form« are labeled as too »socialist« (1997, 207); novels which are too experimental, or have an explicitly modernist style, have received short shrift in new postcolonial canon formation (cf. ibid., 203–207). In short, I would like to suggest a closer dialogue between postcolonial literary studies and other methodologies of literary theory, allowing us to recognize the fuller potential of ›postcolonial aesthetics‹.

López and Marzec draw a timeline of postcolonial literary studies, starting from what they call a Commonwealth phase in the mid-1960s and before, with a focus on the study of non-English writing. However, while the inclusion of so-

called Commonwealth writers in department curricula represented an important step forward, it »paradoxically served to further emphasize England's continued conceptual centrality implicit in the term« (2010, 679sq.). Out of the Commonwealth phase, López and Marzec show, grew a body of »anti-colonial literature and theory«, constituting a »substantial critique of Eurocentric literary scholarship«, although its approach »never abandoned the oppositional model inherent to the Commonwealth relation«. The writers then note that the anticolonial approach tended to privilege writings which were more explicitly nativist or oppositional, establishing »precolonial cultures and identities«, while still relying on the binary logic »they strove to undo« (ibid., 680). According to López and Marzec, the next phase of postcolonial literature (which seems to come close to what Lazarus and Brennan call cosmopolitan writing) pushed the boundaries of the postcolonial »to explore the exigencies of life under globalization and its aftermath«; it includes such writers as Zadie Smith, Amitav Ghosh, Kiran Desai and Junot Diaz, to name but a few (ibid.). Postcolonial studies have become detached from their original Anglophone anti-Imperial ethos, turning into a term of low critical value while still forcing an Anglophone bias on all the literary phenomena it is applied to. As McLeod notes, »postcolonialism still accepts uncritically the *geographical divisions* of Anglophone Commonwealth literature« (2010, 280; emphasis in the original). This leads to my main question: Do we need to cling to the concept of ›postcolonial‹ at all? Has it become totally obsolete?

3 The Future: Ten Steps

If we are ready to accept the claims of the collapse of the intellectual power of the narrative of decolonization, and of the colonizing impulses of the postcolonial itself, what, then, are the current and new challenges facing postcolonial critical practice? Why do we need postcolonial theory in literary studies? As a scholar who has published a thesis based on the ›reveal and deconstruct‹ argument, I am nevertheless not prepared to give up on postcolonial studies. Here I try to assemble some suggestions for up-to-date topics for postcolonial literary studies. They do not constitute a coherent paradigm shift, or a concise view, but suggest some current openings based on the tradition of postcolonial studies. I have collected these ideas by reading recent research, listening to conference papers, talking with colleagues, and assembling my own ideas. What might be a current rationale for postcolonial literary theory – what can we do *after* we have revealed power structures and deconstructed texts?

3.1 Interdisciplinarity

The first path to the future, I think, is linked to the institutionalization of postcolonial studies. As mentioned earlier, recent postcolonial scholarship has migrated beyond the field of literary studies, leading to interdisciplinary challenges. But the challenge is, how do we find each other? Postcolonial perspectives have moved into disciplines which are often unfamiliar to literary scholars. A quick look at a scholarly database for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 shows that the keyword ›postcolonial‹ has occurred in recent journal articles in such fields as geography, technology, archaeology, health care and nursing, the study of war, peace and military conflicts, education, musicology, trauma studies, Arabic and Hebrew studies, and information technology and media studies. It may be a challenge for us literary scholars to connect with our fellow scholars, with their new uses of postcolonial theory. Thus trans- and interdisciplinary projects, I think, may be a desired new path for postcolonial studies to take: Ecocatastrophes, studies on war, peace, and terrorism, or the social media, for example, are far too complicated issues to be studied from the point of view of one discipline only.

The challenge to such interdisciplinary ›new paths‹, however, may lie in the loss of postcolonial studies as an innovative tool for literary analysis. According to López and Marzec, the current tendency in postcolonial studies seems to be towards the social sciences, under such titles as ›Third World Studies‹, ›Globalization Studies‹, or ›Global Studies‹. They claim that »today global studies sounds more palatable for university administrators, policy makers, and presumably disinterested scholars seeking to hand over value-free judgments and generate protocols for governing the existence of diverse social systems across the planet« (2010, 682). Where does this path of globalization studies, whether transdisciplinary or led by the social sciences, leave us literary scholars? In the demanded strategic wielding of the language of the corporate university, demanding either innovations or solutions leading to world peace, we must be careful not to turn our back on our expertise on texts and discourses. Linked with the following nine steps I will try to figure out what concretely can literary studies bring to the postcolonial studies table.

3.2 The Post-Occidental Turn

The second reason to stick with the postcolonial is the analytical power it has in analyzing several kinds of literary and language areas constituted during the post-Soviet era. This is related to the challenge to postcolonial theory suggested by Ania Loomba and her co-editors of the anthology *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (2005). In the introductory article, they suggest that postcolonial studies

have been too occupied with a West/Rest geography to notice that Latin American literary studies and other programs of area studies have redressed »the entire legacy of core-periphery thinking« (2005, 6). For example, they suggest that Latin American studies triangulate the old West/Rest binary, providing new debates about alternative modernities, post-occidental criticism. The post-Sovjet Europe, for example, has witnessed the rise of a wide spectrum of literatures written in minority languages constituting local/transnational/migrant identities, such as Sami literature in Scandinavia, or *Gastarbeiterliteratur* in Germany. Studies on these minority literatures may benefit from the »triangularization« of the binary legacy of British Imperialism inherent in Postcolonial literary studies.

The post-Occidental turn in postcolonial studies may help us to consider other instances of subordination beyond the legacy of the West/Rest paradigm of British Imperialism,⁴ as well as tackling questions concerning the post-Soviet literature. In Baltic reflections on the post-Soviet era, for example, the usefulness of the colonial/postcolonial terminology is constantly questioned. As Violeta Kelertas explains in *Baltic Postcolonialism* (2006):

Resistance to the application of these terms [colonial/postcolonial] overlooks the facts that Russia and/or the Soviet Union were colonial empires – that Russia was a colonizer and that the Soviet Union was one as well. Soviet and post-Soviet self-descriptions have contended that both the U.S.S.R. and, later, Russia served as a liberator of workers of the world and a facilitator of emergence from other »real« colonial empires. Technically, for Marxist (later Marxist-Leninist) propaganda purposes, 20th century Russia recognizes only old »capitalist« empires like England, Germany, Spain, France, Holland, and Portugal as colonizers. It fails to acknowledge its own hegemonic, self-serving interests and actions. (2006, 1)

Here Kelertas is defending the uses of postcolonial theorizing in the context of the contemporary Baltic discussion of post-Soviet conditions. As Nancy Condee explains in her discussion with Gayatri Spivak, Harsha Ram and Vitaly Chernetsky: »Russia remains a challenge to scholars of the First and Third Worlds who would see modernity as inextricably intertwined with capitalism, the nation-state, and liberal democracy.« (Spivak et al. 2006, 831)

3.3 Turning the Direction of Influences

Consequently, the third new path for Postcolonial Studies is related to the direction of influences. This idea is drawn from Simon Gikandi's book *Maps of Englishness*

⁴ For more on the »triangularization« of postcolonial studies, cf. also Hawley 2010, 777–779.

(1996) where he problematizes the separate nature of ›England‹ and ›the Colonies‹. According to Gikandi, England and the colonies do not exist separately, but are in constant interaction; England without the colonies, for Gikandi, is an illusion (cf. 1996, 56, and 80sq.). He does not focus on the question of »how Europe constitutes itself as a subject gazing at the other«, but on »how the other gazes at Europe« (ibid., 20). What if theoretical influences are not merely borrowed from the critical discourse of postcolonial Commonwealth literary studies and then, somewhat belatedly, applied to or incorporated into other languages and literary histories? Postcolonial studies have a great deal to learn from other indigenous modes of criticism besides those of the British Commonwealth. How, for example, would the aforementioned postcolonial literary canon formation change, if the scholarly critique were able to draw on literary genres not applicable to the area of the British Empire? How would genre borders be disrupted by an analysis of the indigenous Scandinavian Sami yoik? Or Baltic area studies by an analysis of Russian cultural imperialism? If the direction of theoretical influence could be shaken, the seminal concepts applied in postcolonial literary criticism might be other than hybridity, mimicry, or migrancy.

3.4 Historicization of Current Media Narratives

The fourth reason not to abandon postcolonial studies follows from the third one. It is the question of historicization, providing a context for current (political) rhetorics and actions. Postcolonial critical practice has developed tools for interpreting the globalist hyper-agendas underlying narrative strategies of expansion, and they could be applied to contemporary politics as well. With historicization, postcolonial literary scholars have the potential to theorize the contingent nature of the narrative strategies used to justify contemporary acts of violence, such as ›pre-emptive‹ strikes. After the terrorist attack in London in July 2005, Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Morton wrote in their book *Terror and the Postcolonial* that »the so-called war on terror demands that postcolonial studies interrogate and re-interrogate the histories of violent colonial occupations« in order to analyze historical contingencies in current counter-terrorist discourse (2010, 8). Postcolonial literary studies have created a substantial archive of histories and narrative strategies, both on occupations and on resistance and counter-activism movements (cf. ibid., 7–9). The myriad and proliferating debates over such terms as resistance, subordination, dislocation, diaspora, (forced) migration, subjectivity, and self vs. alterity can help us to historicize and interpret the enormous complexity of current headlines. In the summer of 2013, for example, the headline news in Scandinavia were the violent riots in Sweden, mainly in suburban areas of Malmö

and Stockholm, where young, unemployed men with immigrant backgrounds were expressing their social frustration. Such stories in the evening news easily fuel nationalist movements if they are not properly contextualized (and historicized) in the public debate.

3.5 Re-politicization of Otherness

My fifth new challenge for postcolonial studies is therefore to analyze the re-politicization of otherness, which is a theme also discussed by Boehmer and Morton. What they mean by the re-politicization of otherness is that ›the other‹ is currently represented in terms of fear rather than of oppression. The other to be feared is no longer someone with the wrong skin-color but someone who is a suspected suicide-bomber (cf. Bohmer/Morton 2010, 6–22). Again, the postcolonial vocabulary has the potential to tackle this new form of the fear of otherness, analyzing for example how old racist arguments and narratives are recycled in the (media) stories concerning military conflict. In the autumn of 2015, during the ›refugee-crisis‹ in Europe the re-politicized other got the face of a Syrian man. Even new walls were constructed on the borders of European countries. Such postcolonial concepts developed by literary scholars as resistance, local experience, conquest and globalization can be useful in analyzing this re-politicization of otherness. I also believe that in the analysis of current global conflicts, the social and political sciences alone are not enough: Literary scholars are educated in analyzing related issues (effects of alienation, social exclusion, blame, guilt, fragmented subjectivities, ethics of encounters, and so on) and thus equipped to contribute on public debates of re-politicized otherness.

3.6 ›Terrorism Studies‹ and World Politics

Relating to previous challenges, my sixth suggestion for postcolonial studies is more political and leads us more directly towards the emerging field of terrorism studies. In their above-mentioned book, Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Morton write persuasively that postcolonial studies has the tools to examine contingencies of violent colonial occupation, and also resistances to such forms of occupation, and the terroristic shapes and rhetoric these histories and forms have taken (cf. 2010, 8). Everyday US politics (at least in the pre-Obama era), Israeli politics, or Putin era Russian politics – which have not been adequately analyzed in terms of imperialism – could be better understood in terms of postcolonial analysis. Indeed, the current multi-disciplinary cluster of critical

theory and practice called ›Terrorism studies‹ would inevitably benefit from postcolonial scholarship.

In postcolonial studies we possess a conceptual and methodological ›archive‹ that can provide the appropriate tools for an analysis of the rhetoric surrounding topics such as counter-terrorism, surveillance procedures, detention laws, the online recruitment by ISIS of young immigrant boys, and even military actions. In her forthcoming book Hanna Meretoja discusses the ethical potentials of storytelling. For her, storytelling has the potential to build inter-subjective worlds and to help us understand the singular and the unique lives of individuals. Moreover, fictional narratives are able to tell stories from the other's perspective thus opening multifaceted views for us to apprehend (cf. forthcoming 2017). Each of these ethical potentials of the narrative might designate literature and literary studies as key elements even in the fields of terrorism studies and postcolonial political analyses.

3.7 Religious Identities

The seventh new application of postcolonial studies, and one of the most obvious, is thus related to religion and religious identities. Postcolonial terminology has the explanatory power to analyze the way, for example, that the current Islamophobia draws on old racist discourses and imageries. With religious identities beginning to take the place of ethnic or even racial ones, literary scholars have the theoretical concepts with which to interpret the intersection of ethnic and religious formations of identity. Questions of religion are also related to the above-mentioned interdisciplinary path for postcolonial studies. Loomba et al., for example, highlight the importance of postcolonial problematics for medievalists: »[T]he rhetoric of a clash of civilizations – and the fact of deep interdependence between cultures – can both be traced back to medieval and early modern European and Christian writings on Islam, as well as Judaism« (2005, 26). Postcolonial critical practice might offer the apparatus for explaining how contemporary neo-colonialism revives earlier narrative scripts, including the vocabulary of the Crusades (cf. *ibid.*).

I also think that questions concerning ›the sacred‹ and ›the secular‹ are potential sites of postcolonial studies. The larger scopes of Religious Studies and the philosophy of religion might help us to understand the role of the sacred and its boundaries in the social processes of identity constitution. Safeguarding the limits of what is culturally understood as the sacred has been in the background of several recent (multi)cultural conflicts, as we have tragically seen in the cases

of the Dutch film director Theo Van Gogh and the Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks.⁵ Moreover, postcolonial investment in the theoretization of social and collective identity constructions may have explanatory power in examining many kinds of local religious identities, including others besides those located on the Islamic-Christian-Judaic axis. During the past few years, for example, at least in Finland, there has been considerable controversy and public debate around people writing memoirs after leaving various locally-based Revivalist movements. Postcolonial literary scholars are equipped to analyze these stories from the point of view of collectivity/agency/identity/decolonizing the mind.

3.8 New Media Environment

Following from these contemporary political challenges, my eighth proposition for postcolonial studies relates to the new media environment: globalization, the free flow of images in the (social) media, freedom of expression, but at the same time the unedited dissemination of hate speech. The field of postcolonial media studies has the potential to address the issue of *how* current political events are disseminated and related to the world. Media scholars and those dealing with the digital culture, armed with postcolonial concepts, critiques, and terminology, might be able to tackle issues of the global transfer of information and affective news images as new modes of imperialist (unifying, manipulative) knowledge production. The multinational media corporations recall the colonialist epistemological machinery in their ability to manipulate news flows, to disseminate images, to select which stories are told. Furthermore, these media corporations create and disseminate information about multiculturalism either as a success story or as a threat. I consider that postcolonial literary scholars might have a great deal to offer in the field of media criticism and the politics of publishing.

In the autumn of 2014 the war on the Ebola virus, supposedly originating from the West-African country of Liberia, was all over the news. The media coverage recycled the rhetoric of the anticipated closing of Western borders, stories about an African disease, poor people contaminated because of their close contact to animals, and so on. The Ebola panic fueled by the Western media

⁵ Theo Van Gogh was murdered November 2 2004, after the release of his short film *Submission*. The film criticized the treatment of women under Islam. Lars Vilks became known after his satirical drawings of the prophet Muhammad were displayed in several Swedish galleries in 2007. Since then Vilks' life has been seriously threatened several times, most recently on February 14 2015 in Copenhagen.

reiterated many such narratives, already familiar to postcolonial literary scholars. However, what would we see if we looked at the multinational chains of business subsidiaries and economic affiliations connecting the international media houses and the pharmaceutical corporations? The enormous power of the social media could also be placed under postcolonial scrutiny. As the editors of the special issue of *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* called »Networking the globe: culture, technologies, globalization« (2013) mention: »From social networking sites such as YouTube and Facebook to global satellite news channels including Al-Jazeera and the BBC World Service, digital forms of culture have multiplied in recent years, proliferating conduits and connections across the globe; these shape our lives in multifarious ways.« (Stadler et. al. 2013, 503) Facebook, for example, played quite a role in the midst of the turmoil called ›The Arab Spring‹, and YouTube is said to have a role in recruitments by organizations such as ISIS. The cross-fertilization of media studies and postcolonial literary studies will definitely be needed in the future.

3.9 Ecocriticism

The remaining two steps for postcolonial studies are related to the emerging field of posthumanism, dislodging the human agent from the position of sole structurer of the surrounding reality. Relating to issues of nature and animals, my ninth topic, is the challenge posed by Ecocriticism and Critical Animal Studies – which both are influentially applied and developed by literary scholars. The roots of a number of natural disasters lie in the colonial rearranging of nature to better serve the rising consumer culture of the West. In some regions, such as parts of the Caribbean, contemporary tourism recalls the colonial occupation. Some resort hotels actually operate according to the logic of colonial rule: As Ian Strachan has argued, resort hotel have emerged as ›new plantations‹, where the violent Caribbean past is sold to solvent tourists as a kind of fantasy (cf. 2002, 112–136). The contemporary hotel resembles a plantation, where the colonial hierarchies of race and gender are reasserted. Postcolonial literature and its ecocritical studies can help us to understand the consequences of natural catastrophes on an individual level. The human suffering after the Haitian earthquake in 2010 might have been better understood in the light of postcolonial literature and theory.

Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin have considered ecocritical challenges to postcolonial critical practice and vice versa (cf. 2010). The postcolonial theoretical apparatus can help us to understand the continuing imperialist modes of social and environmental dominance. They use the term ›ecological imperialism‹ to describe the wide-ranging implications of the violent appropriation of

indigenous land, the ill-considered introduction of non-domestic flora and fauna, and unsuitable agricultural practices. The theoretical investment by postcolonial studies in conquest and diaspora, racism and indigeneity, let alone hybridity, are all concerns of ecocriticism as well (cf. *ibid.*, 3–6). Meretoja proposes that ›the sense of the possible‹ is one of the key elements if the potential of storytelling is concerned (cf. 2017, *passim.*). This ›sense of the possible‹, I think, is what literature might bring to the postcolonial and ecocritical tables.

Indeed, in terms of the ecology, imperialism still has a severe impact. The field of postcolonial studies provides concepts to consider the masculinist, reason-centered culture's continuing bio-colonization by viewing nature and animals as other, or the ways multinational corporations capitalize on »indigenous natural-cultural property and embodied knowledge – to western-patented genetic modification« (Huggan/Tiffin 2010, 4). Postcolonial literature is concerned with such concepts as miscegenation, otherness, racism, translation, the trope of cannibalism, speaking and voice, wildness, the savage, and the animalistic inner wild, which are all, according to Huggan and Tiffin, points of intersection between postcolonial and animal studies, which they call ›zoocriticism‹ (cf. *ibid.*, 18, and 134sq.). Furthermore, in terms of posthumanism, ecocritical attention to speciesism, the deconstruction of anthropocentrism, and reconsideration of the human place in nature, might benefit from postcolonial vocabulary of literary scholars.

3.10 (New) Materialism

Following the posthumanist attention to a material understanding of people, animals, and the environment, my tenth and final new pathway for postcolonial studies reacts to a tendency in contemporary research: namely the (new) Materialism. I believe that even postcolonial literary scholars may need to come to terms with this current ›ontological turn‹ in the humanities. Many materialist thinkers have criticized the ›textualism‹ of 1990s postcolonial theory, among the most notable Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Arif Dirlik, Benita Parry, Timothy Brennan and Aijaz Ahmad. Parry, for one, bases her materialist criticism of postcolonial studies on Marxist historical materialism (cf. 2004). It is in a highly material reality that history occurs. According to Parry, when departments of English and Cultural Studies threaded postcolonial criticism onto a linguistic string, pursuing a textualist account of culture, they relinquished its material beginnings: »[A]n air-borne will to power was privileged over calculated compulsions, ›discursive violence‹ took precedence over the practices of a violent system, and the intrinsi-

cally antagonist colonial encounter was reconfigured as one of dialogue, complicity and transculturation«, disengaging postcolonialism from historical capitalism (ibid., 4). If the 1990s were the time of the textual turn in the humanities – when everybody busied themselves with the discursive constructedness of reality – in the 2010s there seem to be more and more critics applying Deleuzian ideas of a new materialism and new ontologies. I feel that this new materialist turn could provide novel conceptualizations to postcolonial literary scholarship, following the era of Bhabha's and Spivak's poststructuralism.

In their volume *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* (2010) Simone Bignall and Paul Patton envision the intersections of postcolonial criticism and Deleuzian philosophy – much condemned by postcolonial thought for his lack of direct engagement. On the contrary, they point out that Deleuze's conceptual range, including for example nomadology, the rhizome, the uses of de/reterritorialization, the process of becoming, or the concept of desiring-production would resonate with issues pertinent to postcolonialism (cf. 2010, 1–8). Alongside his concepts, Bignall and Patton speak of the »Deleuzian oeuvre«:

In his work, the concepts undergo continuous variation as components are modified in the passage from one plateau to the next. The book ends without a conclusion but instead with a set of definitions and rules for the construction of concepts. Clearly, the system of concepts laid out in the course of the book could be continued without limits to the variation it employs. (ibid., 7)

This oeuvre, the general logic of the Deleuzian textual rhythm, the limitlessness of variation, seems to me applicable to the postcolonial ethos. The encounter between unrelated theories includes the potentiality for epistemic evolution, leading to new questions. Conversely, as Bignall and Patton argue, »communication with Deleuzian concepts may prompt a critical *becoming* of postcolonial theory, providing a useful philosophical perspective for evaluating and improving the adequacy of the existing solutions« (ibid., 12; emphasis in the original). This theoretical encounter, moreover, fits in with the postcolonial ethos of encountering: Postcolonial theorizing cannot act against its own premises, highlighting encounters with an alterity, even when encountering another way of thinking.

Conclusion – Beyond What? ›Paranoia‹ Perhaps

The field of postcolonial studies is connected to the tradition of critical theorizing, which relies on constant self-reflection. Scholars in postcolonial studies want, to the point of Sedgwickian ›paranoia‹, to reflect critically upon their own

concepts and idioms. It seems to me that postcolonial critical practice has been in a process of constant change from the very beginning. It may be even less ›canonized‹ than it seems to be; it has become almost obligatory for every scholar to acknowledge its flaws and fallacies, its institutionalization, and its colonizing and canonizing impulses, thus creating a narrative of an institutionalized theory. It is just possible that accusing postcolonial criticism of linguistic obscurity, of particular standpoints, of universalizing minority experiences, of being Western or historically non-specific, is itself a straw-man argument. Just as there is no stable ›West‹, there is likewise no critiqueless postcoloniality: Postcolonial critical practice has self-analyzed its own problems ever since its zenith. The ten new steps listed above, however, are reasons why I want to join the postcolonial club condemned as obsolete. For ethical reasons, I am – and want to be – enthusiastic about postcolonial theorizing.

On January 7 2015, two gunmen attacked the headquarters of the Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris, long after I had completed the first version of this article. How do we analyze what happened in Paris on that and the following days, without asking postcolonial epistemological questions? How do we encounter and understand the tragic events around Charlie Hebdo in their full historical and sociological complexity, without locking ourselves into black-and-white binary positions, if we do not engage with the critical theory developed over thirty years for examining conflicting worldviews and encounters with otherness? For me, it is obvious that multidisciplinary analysis, including sociological, political, historical and economic perspectives, is needed in order to properly contextualize the events that took place in Paris that day. We need points of view that go beyond those of the British Commonwealth in order to understand the French postcolonial condition and its relation to the Arab countries as a context of cultural conflict. Moreover, in order to understand the full complexity of the tragic events epitomized in Charlie Hebdo, we have to historicize the multicultural situation in France today, including the re-politicization of otherness – in the image of a Jihadist. A postcolonial nomenclature should be applied in trying to understand acts labeled as terrorism, or the religious identity politics involved in the situation in Paris. New forms of postcolonial media analysis are also urgently needed if we want to understand the fast-spreading generalizations, such as the *Je suis Charlie*-campaign spreading in the social media. What does the notion of everybody being Charlie represent? And why did the matter of freedom of speech seem to overshadow other extremely disturbing issues, such as the anti-Semitism involved in the Paris happenings. Is it perhaps the case that *Je suis Charlie* manifests distress over basic Western values? All this makes me ask: Why exactly should we move beyond postcolonial studies?

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