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

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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‹.

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.

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