Anke Bartels / Lars Eckstein /
Nicole Waller / Dirk Wiemann

Postcolonial Literatures in English

An Introduction

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Anke Bartels / Lars Eckstein /
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Postcolonial Literatures in English

An Introduction

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1 Introduction

As we write this introduction, German conservative minister of home affairs Horst Seehofer declared "migration" to be "the mother of all problems" (Eddy 2018). He dropped this remark in the wake of a violent and openly racist mass rally in the Eastern German city of Chemnitz following the death of a young Cuban-German man, presumably at the hands of two refugees from Syria and Iraq, three years after what some call the "long summer of migration" (Yurdakul et al. 2017), others the "refugee crisis" of 2015. Seehofer's statement was widely criticized and ridiculed, even by conservative politicians and journalists. And yet, it hardly led to a sustained critical debate – neither about the question of migration to and from Germany at large, nor the context which Seehofer actually implied, that is, the more recent movement of refugees from the Global South to Europe.

What is in many ways missing in current debates about migration (and in fact most other pressing social, political, economic, or ecological questions) is a sustained postcolonial perspective: a perspective on planetary concerns which moves beyond a narrow, Eurocentric point of view. What if, for instance, we looked at the "long summer of migration" in Europe not from the southeastern German provinces, but from the vantage point of atolls in the South Pacific currently swallowed by rising sea levels? From the vantage point of diverse Indigenous communities in settler colonies like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the US or South Africa? From the vantage point of Afrodiasporic people, whose ancestors had the legal status of insured cargo on slave ships whilst philosophers in Königsberg, Glasgow, Paris or Berlin formulated sophisticated ideas about the universal rights of man? A postcolonial debate on migration would indeed insist on a *pluritopic* perspective: On strategies of knowing and interpreting the world from multiple locations, drawing on multiple traditions of thought and critical inquiry. It would also reflect on why certain ways of knowing and interpreting the world have marginalized and displaced others.

On the most general level, this would involve analyzing the intimate entanglement of colonialism with the emergence of capitalism as a globally dominant mode of relation, both among humans, and between humans and non-human animals, lifeforms and things. On a specific level, a postcolonial perspective would look into the complex interplay of 'migration' and related ideas such as 'sovereignty,' 'nation,' or 'race,' with concrete historical, political and economic events in specific communities and regions across the planet. It would have to account for the multiple and complex legacies of European colonialisms in this context. And yet it would also "provincialize" Europe (Chakrabarty 2000) in the process: It would challenge its privilege as the only legitimate location of knowledge production, and foreground other (hi)stories of migration – after all, only a fraction of today's 68.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide arrive at the shores of the industrialized nations of the Global North (UHNCR 2018).

A postcolonial perspective on migration, in other words, would look into questions of power and knowledge: Which images of migration dominate in global and local discourses, and who decides which modes of migration are a "problem" and which are not? From which trajectories have such images emerged, which institutions are stabilizing them, and in whose interest? Such institutions are not only

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overtly economic or political or educational: They are also *cultural*, as most famously argued, perhaps, by the US-Palestinian literary critic Edward Said.

Literature – understood in the widest sense, here, as the imaginative projection of world – is crucial in this context. This includes novels, poetry, plays, paintings, or opera as in Said's focus on the long 19th century in *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993); today, it involves all of these and newer medial forms like film, podcasts, computer games, and many more. Colonial (and neo-colonial) literature in the widest sense, Said argued, was (and continues to be) foundational in supporting and perpetuating colonial ideas, and thus in sustaining empires and imperial ideologies (see ch. 6). And yet, literature and the arts have also always produced counter-discourses and counter-images which critiqued, complicated, and challenged (neo)colonial orders.

In this book, we offer an introduction to some of the arenas, concerns and critical debates into which such postcolonial literatures have intervened. Their critical 'worldings,' we shall argue, are inherently analytical, conceptual, and theoretical. Reading, studying and teaching *Postcolonial Literatures in English* surely is not the mother of all solutions to the world's problems. But it may help to foster critical literacy in schools, universities and other educational institutions, a critical literacy that is urgently needed to come to critical terms with the new ethnic nationalisms (see ch. 2), chauvinisms and parochialisms which seem to gain steady ground around us, in Germany and across the globe.

What are Postcolonial Literatures in English?

Postcolonial Literatures in English explode the scope of a short book as this one. They explode the scope of any single book, both in terms of the geographical and the temporal reach of the phenomena it encompasses. Geographically, the field of postcolonial literatures in English covers all continents from Asia to Africa, from the Americas to Oceania, and not to forget, Europe itself. Temporally, postcolonial literatures cover a vast period of history. Even within the rather narrow scope of "the new literatures in English" (see Sarkowsky and Schulze-Engler 2012), commonly referring to the emergence of a diverse scene of writers from formerly colonized regions and their prolific entry into Western mainstream markets and higher education syllabi since about the 1960s and 1970s, such literatures can hardly be called "new" anymore. In our reading, however, postcolonial literatures begin much earlier.

Against a common misunderstanding, we insist that the 'post' in postcolonial is not a temporal marker, signifying a time or period 'after' colonialism. The temporal interpretation is problematic, not least because colonial relations still exist in many parts of the world, be it in the form of the continuing existence of overseas territories and dependencies of the US or European states, in the form of internal colonization of Indigenous peoples in settler colonies, or in the guise of multiple neocolonial dependencies across the globe.

In our reading, the 'post' in postcolonial marks a critical perspective and forms of ideological positioning which are 'post' colonial, by way of challenging, critiquing, refracting, subverting, or offering alternatives to colonial trajectories of ordering the world. In simplified terms, postcolonial literatures 'move beyond' a Eu-

rocentric perspective on the planet shaped by colonialism and its legacies (see also Ashcroft et al. 1989; McLeod 2000; McClintock 1992). Postcolonial literatures therefore are in many ways coterminous with Western modernity, and begin as early as the Early Modern period when European powers and their trading companies gradually set out to globally assert their imperial interests.

How can a slim introductory book possibly cover this geographical range and historical depth? It certainly cannot in any near-comprehensive way. This volume therefore does not propose to be a literary history of postcolonial literatures in English. Each geographical region or nation would need one if not several volumes of books to roughly do justice to their postcolonial literary trajectories. And yet, any logic of categorizing postcolonial literatures in English by country or region is itself problematic.

Here, for once, migration is indeed the problem: The very nature of globalized modernity has enhanced enormous movements across the planet – ranging from inhuman regimes of utmost brutality such as the Atlantic slave trade or the forced removal of Indigenous communities from their ancestral lands, to migrations enforced by economic pressures, political discrimination or ecological depravation, to the diverse labor flows of multinational corporate capital. They all set challenges to any territorial logic attributing authors, and even more problematically, their art and writing, to singular affiliations of place. Take a case as early as that of Olaudah Equiano, whose formative slave narrative first published in 1789 we briefly discuss in a chapter on "Postcolonial Oceans": Equiano was probably born in what is today Nigeria, was enslaved and transported to the Americas, grew up mostly in England, yet spent much of his working life between the Caribbean and the US. His writings, therefore, are justly claimed by Africans, African Americans, Black British people, and diasporic Africans from across the globe.

Before the background of the multiple regional and global entanglements engendered by the joint trajectories of colonialism and capitalism, an attempt to outline the possible scope of postcolonial literatures in a single volume thus again begins to make better sense. While this book will have to remain patchy and selective, what it can offer is a range of exemplary discussions of themes and concepts which have been, are, and hopefully will be pertinent in postcolonial literary studies in English.

This volume presents a combination of longer thematic essays and concise interludes addressing select key concepts in postcolonial studies. Concepts that have been well established over the past decades will be introduced in nine shorter "Interludes." They address critical debates around the terms 'nation,' 'language,' 'Orientalism,' 'diaspora,' 'hybridity,' 'Indigeneity,' 'epistemic violence,' 'empire' and 'writing back.' The remainder of the volume consists of eight long chapters (and a Coda) in which we trace and further develop concepts which have either received less critical attention in the past, and/or are of vital relevance in current critical debates shaping the field of postcolonial literary studies. This is also why these chapters are written in the style of an academic argument.

We should admit that our choice of chapter themes, here, is selective, in view of what we, as a research collective, hold to be of vital importance in current debates, and which debates we hope to promote for the future. Our choice of chapters focuses on "Postcolonial Writing and World Literature," "Border Epistemologies," "Postcolonial Enlightenments," "Postcolonial Oceans," "Postcolonialism and Ecology," "Indigenous Sovereignty," "Postcolonial Feminism and Intersectionality," and "Postcolonial Futures." These longer chapters combine an overview and critical dis-

cussion of the concepts they foreground with exemplary readings of postcolonial literary texts.

In our choice of literary examples, we have attempted to cover a wide, if not representative, range of literary genres (novels, drama, autobiography, epic poetry, lyrical poetry, lyrics, documentary film, even a map), geographic regions to which authors and texts relate (the Caribbean and North America, West Africa, Europe, South Asia, Australia, Pacific Islands) and gendered identities, both of authors and as performed in their works. The short interludes on select key concepts and the long thematic chapters are persistently cross-referencing each other, and hopefully generate a network of related ideas, conceptual interventions, aesthetic choices and political propositions which reflects the deeply entangled world postcolonial literatures map out.

How Do We Read Postcolonial Literatures?

We should briefly comment on the 'we' of our authorial voice, which attentive readers will already have noticed. This 'we' is neither meant to be patronizing, nor to be mistaken for a *pluralis majestatis*. The 'we' simply denotes that this volume was written by a collective of researchers, all based at the English and American Studies Department at the University of Potsdam. This collective not only involves the names which by publishers' policy have to be on the book cover (even though we would have preferred a collective identity), it also involves a group of graduate and postgraduate students – Marianna Bähnisch, Monica Gutierrez, Farai von Pentz, Vira Sachenko, Florian Schybilski – who have actively co-written most of the short "Interludes." While sections of the longer chapters have initially been drafted by either one of us whose names appear on the cover, often drawing on individual research, each sentence in this volume has been critically revised by more than one member of the collective.

This book is thus the result of multiple conversations within our team, and it stands for a particular school of researching and studying postcolonial literatures in English which we have collectively developed at the University of Potsdam over the past couple of years. This understanding of postcolonial literary studies manifestly shapes this book, and we should very briefly attempt to make it more transparent.

We wish to begin by asserting that the modern world as we know it today has been manifestly shaped by colonialism. This is self-evident for all those spaces across the planet which have been colonized, but we mean this in a more encompassing sense. The point we wish to make is that the structural foundations of the capitalist world system were not primarily developed in Europe and then exported to the rest of the planet through colonization and trade, but that it was basically the other way round. Modernity emerged in the colonial peripheries and was only belatedly imported to Europe (see e. g. James 1989; Williams 1994).

In the 15th century, it was on the island of São Tomé off the West African coast that the Portuguese experimented with the first system of agrarian mass production, based on standardized slave labor coercively mass-migrated from the African mainland. In the late 16th and the 17th century, this model was exported to the Americas, later to the Indian Ocean and parts of Asia, and adopted by other European powers. The Caribbean slave plantation in particular served as the laboratory for radically

new ways of organizing life and social relations. It helped to shape and establish notions of wholly disenfranchised labor and standardized modes of production, of forced mass migration, of the managerial relation to land, of the pervasive commodification of both humans and nature, of racial hierarchy and social stratification based on capital and skin color rather than inherited title, of technologies of mass surveillance, of a system of global finance based on stock market principles, insurance companies and profit maximization for shareholders, of industrial mass production in the largest factories of the time, the Caribbean sugar mills. All these hallmarks of capitalist modernity emerged in, or in relation to, the colonized world, at a time when European societies remained largely pre-industrial and feudally organized. They ring so contemporary and familiar because they were essentially imported to Europe from the colonies when the Western world began to reinvent itself as truly modern in the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, and then spread across the globe (again) by imperialism and accelerating economic globalization.

We insist that the rise of global capitalism and colonialism are intricately entangled, and cannot be thought of or analyzed separately. It is in this sense that there are no spheres of life or spaces on the planet which have not been affected by colonialism, including in the so-called West: One could go as far as claiming that European and other colonizing nations colonized, and continue to colonize themselves in the ongoing processes of industrialization and resource extraction on their own territories, the turn to monocultures, the sacrifice of human lives and nature for the interests of capital, the racialization of societies, the commodification of all walks of life, or the introduction of mass surveillance which has been given a new twist and scope with the digital revolution (see Foucault 2003, 103). Yet of course, such ironies must not be overstated, lest we conflate the differences, specificities, conditions of hegemony and the concrete inequalities produced by different colonial regimes across time and space.

All this matters for our understanding of postcolonial (literary and cultural) studies. As a research collective, we hold it imperative that readings in postcolonial literatures in English address and contextualize the material conditions which shape literatures or related arts, and which they themselves speak toward. We are suspicious of approaches in the field which merely focus on the play of significations across cultures without tying such play back to the material world, or which read emancipation only in relation to individual freedom without addressing relational solidarity, as such practices can be all too easily accommodated by liberal and neoliberal readings of plurality and difference. Instead, we promote a critical practice which invests in notions of justice in an ever more unequal world (see Bartels et al. 2014), and in accountability in a global media context where historical truths are ever more under siege by those who deal in 'alternative facts,' more often than not in the interest of White supremacy (Fraser 2017).

Beyond this insistence on material grounding, justice and accountability, however, we wish not to partake in the ideological fights of the past as to what postcolonial studies really are, what its authoritative genealogy is, and who has more or less title to the term or the field. For us, postcolonial studies have many academic trajectories, each valid and important in their own right. They include the political movements of decolonization and their early theorizations by the likes of Frantz Fanon or C. L.R James; the coordinated articulation of anti-colonial resistance in the Bandung conference of 1949 and the non-alignment movement; the different trajectories and schools of subaltern studies, decolonial studies and Indigenous renais-

sance emerging from South Asia, Africa as well as from the Americas and other settler colonies since the 1960s, which have attempted in various ways to retrieve ways of thinking and being beyond the optics of colonialism; the formative writings of Edward Said or Valentin-Yves Mudimbe studying Europe's invention of its Others in the interest of imperial control; certainly also approaches since the 1970s and 1980s which have productively used poststructuralist theory to illuminate or problematize colonial and postcolonial discourses, such as in the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak or Homi Bhabha.

We emphatically reject more recent sectarian tendencies in the field which promote a categorical divide between so-called decolonial schools of thought and activism, and postcolonial paradigms (see also ch. 5). We reject such identitarian sectarianism as it is not helpful to the larger goals within the field. More importantly, however, we simply do not agree with the strategic reading of postcolonialism by select voices in the decolonial camp which conflate postcolonial studies with a very narrow tradition, and often a simplified reading of academic work building heavily on poststructuralist ideas. While we neither want to deny nor to denounce this tradition, for us, 'postcolonial' marks a much more inclusive umbrella of academic trajectories, as outlined above (for a discussion of current trends and debates within the field of postcolonial studies, see the Coda to this book). It encompasses a very wide theoretical repertoire from a wide range of intellectual traditions, socio-historical contexts and political agendas. There is no singular paradigm, no one-size model that fits all problems or contexts or texts. Often postcolonial ideas and approaches are in friction with, sometimes in contradiction to each other. This, however, should not necessarily be seen as a weakness, but rather as a strength of postcolonial studies. It is vital to find one's own position and allegiances within the web of available discourses and approaches; yet we also hold it to be very important not to foreclose critical dialogue across all camps, nor to deny that different approaches provide solutions to different situations and problems.

In this sense, we want to encourage students of postcolonial literatures in English not to first choose a conceptual approach or theoretical position, and then 'apply' it, as it were, to any worldly problem or literary text at hand. Our advice is to instead begin by asking what exactly the problem is, or, when we discuss literature, what it is that the text stages as a problem. One of our core propositions in this introduction to *Postcolonial Literatures in English* is that literature itself is already inherently conceptual and theoretical in the ways in which it projects world. This crucial capacity for 'worlding' is something that we hope to bring out in the different chapters in this volume, which weave the analysis of literature and theory in and out of each other. Literature, we argue, is theory, just as theory is literature. Literature and theory should, in the best of readings, be able to illuminate, enrich, and critique each other.

This brings us to the role of the critic. We believe in the interventions of postcolonial feminism in particular, as well as in Indigenous, critical whiteness, decolonial and related studies variably insisting that positionality matters (see e. g. Smith 1999; Mohanty 2003; Hill Collins 2000). It is important that students and scholars of postcolonial literatures in English, such as ourselves, reflect on their own speaking positions *vis-à-vis* the subject material they engage with. To be very clear, we are explicitly not advocating a tribalization of discourses in this context. We are very doubtful of an academic world (or activist discourses for that matter) where only women could talk about women, people of color about people of color, poor about

the poor, etc., even if we respect the strategically essentialist policies of past and present emancipatory movements, especially when they are thought along intersectional lines.

What positionality involves, for us, is to critically interrogate the privilege of one's institutional position including questions of gender, race and class, and to make such reflections transparent and operative in writing. This may be done implicitly or explicitly, always depending on the subject matter one addresses. On a more foundational level, it includes reflecting upon the ways in which we have been shaped by specific genealogies of knowledge, and how such genealogies of knowledge are entangled in the joint trajectories of colonialism and capitalism we have outlined above. Such genealogies tacitly frame and inform the ways in which we speak, how we relate to the Other, and not least also how we structure and disseminate our academic work (see e. g. Spivak 1990; Haraway 1988).

This book was written by four White senior scholars in the Western academy with a more diverse team of early career scholars, playing toward the generic requirement of a university text book. This in many ways limited the possibilities of more dialogic and experimental writing, but required us to produce knowledge that can be authoritatively studied for exams and discussed in classrooms. We have attempted to do this in a spirit of humbleness, of not already knowing the Other in postcolonial literatures, but in respectful conversation. Wherever we deemed appropriate, we acknowledge the limit of our speaking positions and the knowledge about the texts we generate. None of our readings are final, but mean to be the beginning rather than the end of critical debate.

Since positionality is also always conveyed through language, we deem it important to highlight the constructed nature of 'racial' identities. Thus, we have chosen to capitalize both the words White and Black. However, even though both categories share the very fact of their constructedness, Whiteness was and is often constructed as a position of purity and privilege, whereas Black was and is frequently constructed as a position of Otherness. At the same time, 'Black' also denotes the reappropriation of the term as a site of agency and cultural identity by various people of color. For the latter reason, we have also chosen to capitalize the term Indigenous.

The Chapters in the Book

Let us conclude with a brief overview of the longer chapters in this book, the ideas they revolve around, and why we think they matter.

Our first chapter focuses on **Postcolonial Writing and World Literature**. Postcolonial and 'world' literature have had, and continue to have, an uneasy relationship. This concerns both the elitist and Eurocentric heritage of the concept of world literature from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe to select 21st century theoretical frameworks, as well as the more recent tendency to, especially in the US, re-label what used to be 'comparative literature' as world literature. We take this as a timely challenge to begin this book by systematically exploring, critiquing, and reformulating this uneasy relationship from a distinctly postcolonial perspective. In doing so, we project a new understanding of world literature through and with the epic poem *Omeros* by Caribbean poet and playwright Derek Walcott, as well as the novel *The Satanic Verses* by Indian-British novelist Salman Rushdie.

From a critical assessment of both the concepts of 'literature' and 'world,' we move to **Border Epistemologies**. While *ontology* refers to questions of *being* in the world, questions of *epistemology* ask how world can be *known*, and how such knowledge is organized and ordered. Border epistemologies thus refer to, in a deliberately ambiguous way, both knowledges of/on/across (territorial) borders, as well as to (colonial) frontiers of knowledge, as we begin to explore through a documentary film on the Mexican-American frontier by Swiss film maker Ursula Biemann. Epistemology and epistemic violence are particularly important concerns in postcolonial studies, as processes of colonization have not only drawn and redrawn territorial lines; they have also clearly delineated what is legitimate (scientific) knowledge and what is not. Reflecting on these concerns is urgent and important because we ourselves, as academics, are part of these ongoing processes of delineation. In this chapter, we explore some of the significances of border epistemologies through the novel *The Lonely Londoners* by Sam Selvon, who infuses the genre of the (Western) novel with the sounds, styles and ethics of Trinidadian calypso music, as well as through Gloria Anzaldúa's semi-autobiography *Borderlands/La Frontera*, which returns us to the Mexican-American border and the ways in which it generates new, plural forms of subjectivity and language.

Eurocentric epistemologies originate for a substantial part in the European Enlightenment, which proclaimed the universal rights of man, based on the notion of presumably universal notions of what man is (ontology), what he may know (epistemology) and what judgements (aesthetics) he can make. We deliberately use 'man' for mankind here, as the model subject of these proclamations has been implicitly or explicitly male, White, and from the mercantile classes. Postcolonial studies have fundamentally critiqued and challenged the European Enlightenment for its racist, elitist and exclusivist politics. And yet: Postcolonial critique in theory and literature has also explored the unfulfilled promises of its visions for global justice and peace. In **Postcolonial Enlightenments** we take time to explore the ambivalences of the Enlightenment and its postcolonial revisions. Our focal text, here, is the novel *A Harlot's Progress* by the British-Caribbean writer David Dabydeen, which brings out the thorough entanglement of the European Enlightenment and the Transatlantic slave trade.

This takes us straight to the chapter on **Postcolonial Oceans**, in which we challenge Western assumptions of the seas as spaces in which European men wrote history, including that of modernity as Western invention belatedly gifted to the colonized world. Our focus in this chapter is instead on postcolonial narratives which enable a shift of perspectives on modernity. These reconfigurations will be discussed with the help of Tupaia's Map, a chart of the Pacific drawn by a Polynesian master navigator for Captain James Cook in 1769/1770, documenting a vast and thoroughly interconnected 'sea of islands' preceding colonial orders. We then move on to a formative Atlantic slave narrative, Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* and Caryl Phillips's fictional revision of it in his novel *Cambridge*, exploring further the entanglements of slavery and capitalist modernity. And we conclude with yet another narrative of modernity, focusing on Amitav Ghosh's auto/biography *In an Antique Land*, which traces histories of indenture and slavery in the Indian Ocean.

From postcolonial oceans, it is a small step to reflections on the environment. In recent years, the uneasy relation between postcolonial and different strands of eco(-logical) criticism have come to the fore with the ever more pressing urgency to stop ecological depravations across the globe, and to stop global warming in particular.

In **Postcolonialism and Ecology**, we therefore investigate the common ground, yet also the differences between both fields. Again, we explore this through readings of literary texts. We begin with Nigerian writer Helon Habila's novel *Oil on Water* as an exploration of the corporate violence inflicted upon postcolonial 'sacrifice zones,' here by the global oil industries in the Niger delta. Then, we discuss a play by the Indian playwright Manjula Padmanabhan, *Harvest*, which offers a postcolonial critique of the notion of the 'posthuman' featuring in some prominent ecocritical theorizing. Finally, we reflect on questions of time, space and agency in the poem "Tell Them" by Marshall Islander poet-activist Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, rallying against the consequences of global warming for Oceania.

Postcolonial histories and stories of ecological devastation often crystallize the conflict between colonial and neocolonial capitalism on the one hand, and those people and peoples, on the other hand, who inhabit and lay claims to the lands that are polluted, destroyed, or swallowed by rising sea levels. It is in this context also that postcolonial studies have begun to pay more systematic attention to the notion of sovereignty, both in terms of a thorough critique of imperial notions of political control and the ownership of land, and in terms of a revaluation of alternative conceptions of relating to country. We therefore devote a chapter to questions of **Indigenous Sovereignty**, with a particular focus on settler colonial contexts. Louise Erdrich's novel *The Round House*, and Alexis Wright's novel *Carpentaria* respectively help us to exemplarily rethink sovereignty in Native American and Indigenous Australian contexts.

Our chapter on **Postcolonial Feminism and Intersectionality** focuses on feminist interventions in male-dominated theories. While postcolonial feminism challenges the way women from the Global South are represented in Western discourses (including mainstream feminist discourses), intersectionality is concerned with the entanglement of gender with other identity categories such as class, caste, race, or age. While postcolonial feminism has a longstanding history and tradition, postcolonial critiques of the intersectionality paradigm are still relatively recent. The literary texts we work with in this chapter intervened into the debates in both fields much *avant la lettre*: The play *Anowa* by Ghanaian playwright and poet Ama Ata Aidoo, and the play *Chiaroscuro* by Black Scottish writer Jackie Kay challenge both Western and male hegemony, by retelling histories as well as charting the present from a female point of view.

Our last chapter provides a glance to the future: It responds to increasing disaffection among critics that the focus of postcolonial studies is too preoccupied with past and present injustices to be able to project **Postcolonial Futures**. We account for this by thinking through and with exemplary literature from within the African diaspora, and First Nations contexts respectively. Our discussion of Afrofuturism and Afrodiasporic science fiction is sounded by a reading of Burial and The Spaceape's dubstep track "Spaceape," while we engage with Cherie Dimaline's young adult novel *The Marrow Thieves* as an example of Canadian Indigenous Futurism and Indigenous science fiction. Both texts offer a critique of the idea of singular timelines to work towards a plurality of postcolonial temporalities.

We conclude, finally, with a coda on **The Future of the Postcolonial**, drawing on self-critique from within the field to envision a world which has moved beyond colonial trajectories.

There are many ways in which this book can be read. We arranged the long chapters and short interludes in such a way that it makes good sense to start on

page one and read from beginning to end – knowing well that few people still read books in this way. So basically, reading this book can start anywhere. We have made sure to cross-reference themes and concepts across the chapters and interludes so that all sorts of zigzag courses through the volume are possible. Still, each of the chapters also stands firmly on its own (including an individual list of references), in case readers are less interested in the larger whole than in specific topics for studying or teaching purposes. It has been fun, and an experience writing this book together as a team of authors: We have fought over ideas in conviviality, critically questioned our approaches, and learned lots from each other. We hope this sprit comes across in the pages to follow.

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2 *Interlude:* Nation

Originating from the Latin *natio* (meaning birth, tribe, kin), the term 'nation' describes a form of socio-political organization that is prevalent in most countries today and is considered normative and, strangely enough, without alternative. In spite of its universality and apparent givenness, however, the nation is far from natural. It is rather a relatively new and specific kind of political community with a strictly regional genealogy: It first emerged in early modern Europe, got consolidated in the process of colonialist expansion and empire-building in the 18th century, and was subsequently 'exported' as the globally dominant form of collectivity (see ch. 13). The concomitant ideology, nationalism, plays down this historicity by suggesting that the nation itself is virtually eternal but its current political form, the nation-state, of relatively late provenance. As political theorist Benedict Anderson observes, "[i]f nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical,' the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past" (1991, 11).

From a postcolonial perspective, the nation is a deeply ambiguous and slippery construct. It is true that various forms of nationalism and their goal of attaining autonomous nationhood have been the primary model of achieving independence for colonies. Most anticolonial liberation movements, especially from the 19th century onwards, were galvanized by aspirations of achieving independence *as nation-states* to be built after the envisaged victory over the colonizers. It is not for nothing that one of the most prominent and effective anti-colonial mass organizations in modern history called itself the Indian *National* Congress, and that all over the global South the early strategists and theorists of anti-colonial struggles – including such canonical thinkers as Jawaharlal Nehru, Frantz Fanon, or C. L. R. James – placed questions of nationhood and national identity at the heart of independence politics. At the same time, however, anticolonial nationalism appears to have a seminal trans-nationalist tendency built into it right from the start. "The most urgent thing today for the intellectual is to build up his nation," asserts Fanon in his address to the 1959 Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists, and then hastens to add that nation-building does not aim at the consolidation of an exclusive, closed community in potential competition with other national communities. Instead, "the building of a nation is of necessity accompanied by the discovery and encouragement of universalizing values. […] It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows" (Fanon 1990, 199). In Fanon's vision, this internationalism springs first and foremost from a pan-African solidarity; for C. L. R. James, from the unity of the global working class beyond the boundaries of colonial and racist divides; for Nehru and his partners in the non-alignment movement, in the peaceful cooperation of budding nation-states all over the global South.

Yet the nation and the nation-state are themselves deeply problematic constructions, whether in Europe, the US or the (former) colonies. From the largely socialist perspective that was shared, however discrepantly, by most early anticolonial activists (notably excepting Gandhi), the nation-state appeared as a necessary tool with an in-built expiry date. It was an ultimately bourgeois instrument that could at best be utilized in the initial stages of collective emancipation, but had to be superseded by an alternative political form that would be more appropriate for the expected 'new humanity' to come after independence. As such, the nation-state was regarded

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as an obstacle for emancipation and rather a form that would empower a national elite at the expense of the popular masses.

Moreover, any project of building a nation (and a nation-state) had to be pursued in compliance with the logic of the established role models embodied, paradoxically, in the political constitutions of the former colonizers. Thus, the obligation to mold the community into the "nation form" (Balibar 1991, 94) defined the precondition for political independence and simultaneously limited the possibilities to conceive of alternatives. As the Indian political theorist Partha Chatterjee observes, postcolonial nation-building was essentially "derivative," (1986, 21) that is in imitation of given forms developed elsewhere: "[N]ationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined communities from certain 'modular' forms already made available by Europe and the Americas" (Chatterjee 1993, 5). In this sense, the very fact that there were no viable alternatives to the nation-state in the Western image for the newly independent post-colonies points to a severe impoverishment of the political imagination, reducing anticolonial politics to "an ambivalent reduplication of metropolitan discourse rather than an uncompromising alternative to it" (Lazarus 1993, 71).

In their ambivalence, nations and nationalisms are crucial and contentious objects of debate in postcolonial studies. Marxist literary theorist Fredric Jameson caused a major stir in the field when he attributed special importance to the concept of nation in relation to the literatures of 'Third World' countries, claiming that "Third-world texts [...] necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: *the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society*" (Jameson 1986, 69). Jameson's apodictic and unabashedly generalizing assertion earned him a veritable shitstorm from all corners of the postcolonial camp, including fellow Marxists like Aijaz Ahmad.

In hindsight, the vehemence of these responses (for an overview, see Wiemann 2008, 67–74) appears perhaps somewhat high-strung but may be taken as an indicator of the thorough disillusionment with the concept of the nation that had become prevalent in postcolonial thought and practice by the 1980s. Instead of rigid national affiliation, not to speak of the utopian expectations associated with the postcolonial state, dispersed and fluid models of community and identity in the mode of diasporic, liminal and hybrid in-betweenness dominated the postcolonial field. By that time, it had been immensely enriched (or distorted, dependent on one's worldview) by the appropriation of poststructuralist theory. Like 'progress,' 'reason,' or 'emancipation,' the nation, for the postcolonial critic of that period, was a Eurocentric category waiting to be deconstructed by exposing its "impossible unity," as Homi Bhabha (1990a, 1) announces on the first page of the introduction to his influential edited volume, programmatically entitled *Nation and Narration*. Both the ontological status and the basic coherence of the nation had dramatically shifted: Not only was the nation now a "story," or a "second-degree fiction" (Balibar 1991, 99); it was moreover a fragmented and inconsistent one. For the nation's "unity" turned out to be nothing but the effect of an institutionalized ideological concerted effort of a continuously applied "national pedagogy" which was, however, "at the same time patched and fractured in the incommensurable perplexity of the nation's living" (Bhabha 1990b, 317). The actual, concrete and mundane 'living' of multiple singularities is here pitched as a "practice that destroys the constant principles of the national culture" (Bhabha 1990b, 303). The diasporic and minori-

tarian hybrid subject is the privileged agent of this micropolitics that undoes the nation's cohesion.

The nation may be a story, and an inconsistent one at that. Even so it has resurfaced with reinvigorated force in the 21st century. The post-1989 "promise that globalisation would lead to a global or planetary consciousness" (Eckstein and Wiemann 2018, 43) and that people all over the world would begin to "think and feel beyond the nation" (Cheah and Robbins 1998) is now a mere shadow, especially in the industrialized regions of the world that have returned to aggressive policies of economic separatism, border militarization and anti-immigration legislation in the name of the 'national interest.' Postcolonial studies have yet to reposition themselves to these ascendant neo-nationalisms worldwide, and take up the challenge to participate in the contest over what kinds of communities may be imagined beyond the nation.

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3 Postcolonial Writing and World Literature

What is the relation between postcolonial writing and world literature? Are these two distinct and perhaps even entirely different corpora, or is the former simply a subset of the latter? The current "transnational turn in English and other literatures" (Jay 2010, 199) as well as in literary studies is no doubt a response to economic, political and demographic globalization. In the process, "[t]he disciplinary fields of postcolonialism and world literature are currently engaged in some sharp exchanges over the global study of literature" (Helgesson 2014, 483).

The underlying conflict appears to be about the question whether globalization has rendered not only the older paradigm of national literatures but also the notion of the postcolonial obsolete, and whether accordingly the latter should now be subsumed under the umbrella term 'world literature.' As Elleke Boehmer observes, even "in postcolonial studies circles, world literature is increasingly taken to refer not only to 'the best ever written,' as before, but to literature produced within and in response to a globalizing world" (2014, 301). In this context, some critics not only perceive but expressly applaud the alleged supersession of the postcolonial by the paradigm of world literature (e. g. Spivak 2004, 81), while others worry that the "overshadowing of postcolonial by world literature" might lead to a thoroughgoing depoliticization: For "[o]rganized as it is around the world-historical event of colonialism, the category of the postcolonial is inescapably political. World literature, I would say, is not" (Robbins 2011, 384). Apparently, then, it implies a political self-positioning whether one sticks to the term 'postcolonial' or replaces it by 'world literature.' Before returning to that contentious question in the final section of this chapter, we will have to discuss some other important aspects of the tense relation between postcolonial and world literature. These aspects include:

- The normative Eurocentric tradition of the term 'world literature,' which by tacit convention was/is understood as 'the best ever written.' Whenever we refer to this normative and exclusive understanding of the term, we will use capital letters and write 'World Literature.'
- The transnational turn in literary studies, especially in the discipline of Comparative Literature, which has given rise to a new, more open and inclusive understanding of world literature.
- The impact of globalization, in particular mass migration and transculturation, on literary practices.

We will start by looking at a literary text that exemplarily touches upon the ways in which a postcolonial exposure to the normativity of World Literature engenders a new kind of world literature that is no longer exclusively defined and determined by Eurocentric standards.

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Reading World Literature in Reverse: Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (1990)

Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott's verse novel *Omeros* (1990), mostly set in the postcolonial Caribbean island of St Lucia, comprises four intertwined major plot lines. The first of these strands focuses on the relationships between Hector and Achille, two fishermen, and the local beauty Helen. The second subplot is devoted to the elderly Plunketts, a British expat couple who have retreated to St Lucia after the experience of World War II. A third narrative relates the affliction of Philoctete, who is suffering from a wound in his shin which is ultimately cured by the local healer, Ma Kilman. Finally, a self-referential fourth plotline gives room to the reflections of Walcott as author-narrator who ruminates on his travels to North America and Europe, his failed marriage and the difficulties of writing a postcolonial epic poem.

In a crucial passage, the speaker remembers how, as a young boy in 1950s colonial St Lucia, one of the Windward Islands in the Lesser Antilles, he initiated himself into World Literature. Back there/then, a visit to the neighborhood barber amounted to an act of familiarization not only with "the world's events" but also with the corpus of "the World's Great Classics."

I grew up where alleys ended in a harbour
And Infinity wasn't the name of our street;
Where the town anarchist was the corner barber
With his own flagpole and revolving Speaker's seat.
There were rusted mirrors in which we would look back
On the world's events. There, toga'd, in a pinned sheet,
the curled hairs fell like commas. On their varnished rack,
The World's Great Classics read backwards in his mirrors
Where he doubled as my chamberlain. I was known
For quoting from them as he was for his scissors
I bequeath you that clean sheet and empty throne. (71)

It is to be assumed that both "the world's events" and "the World's Great Classics" are biased constructions: the former probably captured in the headlines of outdated international newspapers reflected in the barbershop's mirrors, the latter most likely a number of exemplars from the 50-volumes series edited from 1899 to 1901 by Timothy Dwight and Julian Hawthorne from the Colonial Press in New York, spanning European and North American writing from Homer (vol. 1) to Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill (vol. 50), with heavy doses of Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Milton, Racine, Goethe and Pushkin in between.

For the colonial subject in the Caribbean periphery, all this is accessible only at a skewed angle, in reverse, and through a glass darkly, as it were: "read backwards in his mirrors." Even so, however, "the classics in the barbershop are instantly recognizable for the ambition, aspiration, and cultural perfectibility they synecdochally signify" (Mukherjee 2014, 91). But at the same time, as the reverse optics suggests, the reception of the classics in the barbershop occurs against the grain of established standards, so that their claim to universal validity gets contested in the act of such inverted reception. Their appeal, then, is somewhat "countercultural, as the association with the anarchist barber suggests" (Mukherjee 2014, 91).

Accordingly, if the barbershop scene, like all initiations, engenders a transformation of the speaker, then this transformation does not take place as a full submission

of the speaker to the authority of World Literature as unquestioned norm; it rather enables a dissident participation in the sense of what Edward Said has described as a "voyage in" in which the colonized subject assumes for her/himself "the same areas of experience, culture, history, and tradition hitherto commanded unilaterally by the metropolitan centre. [...] No longer does the logos dwell exclusively, as it were, in London and Paris" (Said 1994, 295). In the barber's mirror, the speaker imagines himself as agent of world-historical events and world-literary achievements alike, in other words, as metropolitan subject. Thus the barber's sheet becomes a toga, the chair a throne, and the hairdresser himself the chamberlain to the speaker who must have incorporated much of the mirrored canon of World Literature: "I was known for quoting from them" at apparent ease. Given the solemn diction and slightly antiquated semantics, readers are misled to – erroneously! – assume that the last line of the quoted passage ("I bequeath you that clean sheet and empty throne") must in fact be one of those citations lifted from the *Great Classics* that the speaker as a child recited to the rhythm of the barber's scissors. However, this is neither Shakespeare nor Tennyson but Walcott himself, whose magnum opus, *Omeros*, is, among other things, a long meditation about the poetics and politics of postcolonial quotation as well as a text that owes its very existence to the technique of creative recycling.

Omeros is a key text of the emergent Anglophone postcolonial canon, an extensive reflexion on the Black Atlantic (see ch. 9), a critique of colonial historiography, and an inquiry into the conditions of subaltern speech (see ch. 5). At the same time, though, *Omeros*'s postcolonial status has been questioned by hosts of critics right from the text's first publication. For indeed, the text excessively resonates with manifold echoes of the high canonical European epic tradition: Not only is it composed in the complicated and conspicuous form of *terza rima* stanzas canonized as the formal hallmark of Dante's *Divine Comedy*; it is moreover suffused with allusions and references to Vergil's *Aeneid*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* and, most prominently, the Homeric epics. Its cast is made up of protagonists that bear names like Achille, Hector, Helen and Philoctete, all taken directly from the *Iliad*, whose legendary author gives his name – not in the Latinate 'corruption' Homer but in the classic Greek original – to the book as a whole: Omeros. Hence the extensive "critical debate about *Omeros*, which raises the question of whether its reliance on the form of the European epic undermines its status as a Caribbean and postcolonial text" (Jay 2006, 545).

Detractors of Walcott's postcolonial credentials would highlight how a text like *Omeros* is couched in an ostentatious command over the exclusively Western canon of World Literature. In this line of argument, Walcott repeatedly came "under considerable attack for his elitist portraits of popular culture and his increasing Euro-modernist leanings" (Okpewho 2002, 35). On the other hand, defenders of Walcott's postcolonial Caribbean poetics and politics would propose to read the excessive resonances and recourses in *Omeros* not as submissive assimilation to the Western standard but as tokens of a self-consciously defiant act of claiming world-literary status from a peripheral speaking position constituted through the obligation to 'write back' (see ch. 18). As a result, *Omeros* appears to lead to vexed undecidability and aporias instead of positive and clear-cut positions, questions rather than answers:

> Is Walcott recolonizing Caribbean literature for Europeans by using this and other Greek types? Or is he decolonizing it by representing Caribbean agony? Does the poet re-enslave the descendant of slaves by shackling him with a European name and prototype? Or does he liberate the African Caribbean by stealing a literary type from former slavers and making it signify their brutality? (Ramazani 1997, 411)

This dual status of the text as a whole, which allows for a reading as affirmative as well as subversive of World Literature (along with all its historical colonial implications), becomes apparent most strikingly through the politics involved in the naming of the characters: For such names as Hector, Achille, Helen and Philoctete do not only echo the foundational epics of the European literary canon but also refer to one of the most violent aspects of colonial history: the Atlantic slave trade and the plantation economy in the Caribbean. Here, it was common practice among slave owners to name their house slaves after heroes and gods from the classical epics or after historical figures like Hannibal or Caesar (the given name of Oroonoko, the eponymous 'royal slave' of Aphra Behn's 1688 mildly abolitionist novel).

This ambivalence of proper names is already written into the book's very first paratext. After all, the very title, *Omeros*, establishes the ambiguous status of a text with two author's names on its cover: 'Derek Walcott' and 'Omeros.' Who speaks, and who ventriloquizes whom in this configuration? Is Walcott ghostwritten by Omeros/Homer, whose 'original' the narrative so obviously recites and reiterates, with whatever difference? Or is Homer, as an epitome of a canonized European legacy – *The World's Great Classics* – hijacked and put to use for the purposes of the postcolonial pirate? If the poem's speaker repeatedly evokes an intangible filiation between the Greek epic poet and himself, then it is important to note that this is a relation that is grounded in the linguistic materiality of the proper name 'Omeros' that can be literally analyzed (taken apart) into segments displaced from classic Greek to "Antillean patois":

> I said, "Omeros,"
> and *O* was the conch-shell's invocation, *mer* was
> both mother and sea in our Antillean patois,
> *os*, a grey bone, and the white surf as it crashes
> and spreads its sibilant collar on a lace shore.
> Omeros was the crunch of dry leaves, and the washes
> That echoed from a cave mouth when the tide has ebbed.
> The name stayed in my mouth. (14)

This is a visceral incorporation through which the name/the original enters the speaker's "mouth" but is not swallowed. The speaker's utterances therefore issue from a mouth that is at least partly occupied by Omeros, who thus will act as an ever-present ghostly co-speaker (just as he shares the book's title page with 'Derek Walcott,' as we have seen).

In this scenario, not one speech act will belong to the speaker alone; it will always also be to some extent Omeros's. By making Homer his constant co-speaker, Walcott appears to acknowledge that his own epic poem is heavily indebted to and pre-calibrated by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In this logic, there would be something deeply unoriginal about *Omeros*, as if to confirm the critique of the Trinidadian-British writer V. S. Naipaul who identified Caribbean culture as a mere imitation of European forms of expression. The "mimic man" decried by Naipaul as the prototype of the (post)colonial subject especially in the Anglophone Caribbean cannot but 'quote' an unattainable original, which will of course always be European. Therefore according to Naipaul, Caribbean culture has always been and will always remain restricted to emulation and imitation as "nothing has ever been created in the West Indies, and nothing will ever be created" (Naipaul 1972, 8; also Naipaul 2012, 26).

As early as 1974, Walcott had critically engaged with and radically revaluated this charge of postcolonial literature as a mindless imitation of colonial master texts:

> Precisely, precisely. We create nothing ... Nothing will always be created in the West Indies because what will come out of the West Indies is like nothing one has ever seen before. [...] The impromptu elements of the calypso, like the improvisation and invention of steelband music, supersedes the tradition of the origins: these forms originated in imitation and ended in invention. (Walcott 1974, 9)

Inasmuch as he reconceptualizes the technique of quoting as a fully viable act of creating newness, Walcott achieves a reassessment of mimicry as no longer imitation but creative *bricolage*: The site where "nothing will always be created" is in this perspective not uncreative or sterile but to the contrary a vibrant laboratory where, from the recombination of given resources, unheard-of newness emerges. If Walcott thus postulates a poetics of productive contamination and syncretism, he partakes of a commonplace of 1980s and 1990s Anglophone postcolonial theory where, influenced by Homi Bhabha, Salman Rushdie and Edouard Glissant, among others, hybridity (see ch. 10) had become a key concept of criticism as well as a poetological paradigm: "*Mélange*, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is *how newness enters the world*" (Rushdie 1991, 394) and produces a literature that is truly worldly beyond the confines of Europe:

> The syncretic or hybridizing effects of colonization define the context in which subjectivity and identity develop, so that mimicry, defined in positive terms by Walcott as the imaginative work of appropriation and invention, is central both to being Caribbean and writing about it. *Omeros* is as much a poem about writing about the Caribbean as it is a poem about the Caribbean, one that explores the politics and poetics of mimicry, linking "unoriginality" to the condition of colonization and the processes of cultural syncretism. (Jay 2006, 556)

In this perspective, Homer as a privileged representative of canonical World Literature gets appropriated, rephrased and modified by the postcolonial speaker. For sure this doubleness of Walcott and Homer corresponds to the constitutive hybridity of the text, as many critics have emphasized (see e. g. Hoegberg 1997; Ramazanai 1997; Tynan 2006; Johnson 2007; McConnell 2013).

The Eurocentric Inception of World Literature

This, for sure, entails a full reconceptualization of the very idea of world literature as such. For 'world literature' is first of all World Literature, that is, a term with a distinctly European aura: Not only does the idea of world literature first emerge in Europe; it has moreover, right from its inception in the first third of the nineteenth century, a long-lived Eurocentric bias of which the prime inventors of the phrase *Weltliteratur*, Goethe as well as Marx and Engels, are not entirely innocent. "The epoch of world literature is at hand," declares a remarkably enthusiastic Goethe in one of his conversations (or rather, monologues) with Eckermann, only to emphasize that

> while we thus value what is foreign, we must not bind ourselves to some particular thing, and regard it as a model. We must not give this value to the Chinese, or the Serbian, or Calderon, or the *Nibelungen*; but, if we really want a pattern, we must always return to the ancient Greeks, in whose works the beauty of mankind is constantly represented. All the rest we must look at only historically. (Eckermann 1998, 65–66)

The World Literature that Goethe here envisions is a system of aesthetic connectors and exchanges across epochs and national boundaries; but his insistence on the irrevocable normativity of "the ancient Greeks" indicates that it is a system with Europe at the center. Elsewhere, Goethe eclipses non-European literatures altogether and predicts the advent of "a universal world literature" as the result of "more neighbourly relations" among European nation-states, and a concomitant "freer system of intellectual give-and-take":

> This movement has been in existence only a short time, it is true, but long enough for one to form an opinion on it and to acquire from it, with business-like promptitude, both profit and pleasure. (qtd. in Strich 1949, 32)

Profit and pleasure acquired with business-like promptitude: The commercial diction that is creeping into this well-nigh 'materialist' genealogy of World Literature appears to anticipate the scenario envisaged, a goodly decade later, by Marx and Engels. In the *Communist Manifesto*, they famously diagnose the ambivalent and irreversible globalization of social life under the auspices of triumphant capitalism that has given "a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country":

> In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, and universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature. (Marx and Engels 1988, 213)

What obviously holds the Goethean and the Marxian concepts of World Literature together is the importance assigned to the notion of universal exchange, whether conceived as "intellectual give-and-take" or as "intercourse in every direction." Moreover, both these pioneers of World Literature prioritize Europe over the rest of the world (including North America). In Marx's writings, this manifests especially in the corpus from which he draws his rich allusions and references that range from Sophocles to Dante, Shakespeare to Goethe and beyond. In his extensive study on the manifold literary resonances and allusions in Marx's writing, S. S. Prawer notices a many-layered "tissue of references to the literature of many nations" but ultimately arrives at the conclusion that,

> [d]espite his interest in the politics and social organization of China and India, however, and despite his occasional references to North American writers like Fenimore Cooper and Mrs Beecher Stowe, "world literature" means, for Marx, essentially the literature of Western Europe. (Prawer 2011, 424)

For more than a century, this privileging of Europe has remained the hallmark of what came to be known as Comparative Literary Studies. This Eurocentric bias went virtually uncontested during the periods of the discipline's emergence and ascendancy. As a consequence, the literatures of most other regions of the planet were systematically marginalized if not outright excluded. But not only that: This disciplinary monoculturalism also ensured that European paradigms concerning the most fundamental concepts of literary studies appeared as universally valid and applicable. This includes such concepts as 'genre,' 'period,' 'author,' 'style' – and not least 'literature' itself. That term may "now provide the dominant, universalizing, but by no means absolute vocabulary for the comprehension of verbal-textual

expression worldwide" (Mufti 2010, 488). In fact, manifold alternative concepts and practices of multiple forms of "verbal-textual expression" have existed in history and keep coexisting with 'literature' even today. This holds true for traditional non-European terms like the Chinese *wen* or the ancient Egyptian *medet nefret* that are routinely translated as 'literature' even though they do not really coincide with that term at all (see Damrosch 2009, 7). With respect to the Sanskrit-derived lexicon of modern Hindi and adjacent North Indian languages, S. P. Anand observes that the word *sahitya*, which has been widely accepted as the equivalent of 'literature,' in fact resonates with entirely different connotations and associations:

> While 'literature' of English deals with letters, language, compositions expressed through writing etc., 'sahitya' of Sanskrit denotes a social activity. Interestingly, matters like letters, writing or even language fail to find a mention under the Sanskrit word. In other words, literature inclines towards form and techniques, and sahitya to actual activities. (Anand 2000, 12)

Obviously, the question whether to speak of 'literature' or of 'sahitya' is not merely a matter of nomenclature but involves an entire worldview. The becoming-dominant of 'literature' worldwide is therefore one of many instances of the expansive globalization of modern Western paradigms at the expense of all other epistemologies, increasingly occluding the "diverse ways of being human" (Chakrabarty 2000, 254) that actually coexist and persist on the planet. Any postcolonial critique of this monoculture of the mind will therefore have to start with – but should not stop short at – "a denser analysis of how 'literature' was produced on a global scale as a differentiated object of knowledge in the nexus of colonialism and orientalist philology" (Helgesson 2014, 486).

From Comparative Literature to World Literature

The monopoly of 'literature' is surely not the only residue of colonialist epistemic violence (see ch. 14); it rather stands in a row with a range of other naturalized paradigms that keep occupying the mental and imaginary worlds of most people on the planet – among them, most notably, the notions of the subject (as distinct from the 'object world' that it faces), of rationality (as the supreme mode of reasoning and sense-making), or of the nation (as the only legitimate form of political collectivity; see ch. 2). Of these, the notion of the necessity of the nation is most obviously written into the legacy of Comparative Literature as a discipline which has traditionally and deep into the 1980s operated on the assumption that languages, literatures and nations are organically and indissolubly linked with each other. It has thereby contributed to the consolidation of the notion of national literatures, whose principal commensurability was ensured by the mostly implicit and unreflected category of literature itself. However, in the wake of the current "transnational turn in literary studies" (Jay 2010, passim) and the concomitant redeployment of the Goethean term of *Weltliteratur*, this fixation on national literatures appears increasingly as a heavy limitation. According to Emily Apter, a new Comparative Literature will have to situate itself in a post-national constellation in which "philology is linked to globalization." It

> expands centripetally towards a genuinely planetary criticism, extending emphasis on the transference of texts from one language to another, to criticism of the processes of creoliza-

tion, the multilingual practices of poets and novelists over a vast range of major and "minor" literatures, and the development of new languages by marginal groups all over the world. (Apter 2006, 10)

The effects of "linking philology to globalization" differs substantially from those of conventional Comparative Literature: While the latter compares nationally and linguistically circumscribed corpora and canons, the former addresses conjunctures and disjunctures of acts and institutions of literature across linguistic, national and temporal boundaries. It conceives of literature – now in the sense of 'world literature' proper – either sociologically as a globally integrated domain of cultural production and consumption, or anthropologically as a universal species-wide faculty with locally and historically specific articulations.

Sociologically inclined approaches to world literature tend to produce the link between philology and globalization by way of analogy with the world market. Franco Moretti has influentially analyzed transnational literary developments as processes that take place within an uneven "planetary system" (Moretti 2004, 148), a hierarchically structured field of centers and peripheries that "is unified by the international literary market" (Moretti 2013, 135). As soon as the exclusive Eurocentric bias of World Literature gives way to a truly global perspective that seriously engages with all forms of writing from all cultural settings and periods, world literature becomes a forbiddingly vast, indeed unmanageable corpus that defies all control. This is why Moretti maintains that world literature is not an "object" but a "problem" of study – a "problem" that calls for new ways of dealing with literature(s): In place of the traditional mode of "close reading," which he cheekily derides as "the very solemn treatment of very few texts taken very seriously" (Moretti 2004, 151), Moretti provocatively proposes to develop techniques of "distant reading," which abandons the preoccupation with individual literary works in favor of a "focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes – or genres and systems" (Moretti 2004, 151). What thus comes into view are macroscopic interrelations between far-flung, apparently disparate literary phenomena, as Moretti's own studies in the history of the global spread of the novel amply demonstrate (see Moretti 2006, 364–400).

Similarly, Pascale Casanova's model, inspired by the cultural analyses of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, assumes that world literature is "based on a 'market' [...], which is to say a space in which the sole value recognized by all participants – literary value – circulates and is traded" (Casanova 2004, 13). All items that participate in the circuits of this "market" are therefore made commensurate by their subjection to the universal standard of the somewhat evasive category of "literary value": a term that Casanova attempts to unpack with the help of a chain of metaphors. One of these is the image of the Greenwich meridian of world literary space that defines the standard of a modernity that, in Casanova's analysis, remains firmly located in the US and Western Europe. Comparison in this uneven world literary space boils down, therefore, to a constant measuring of items against the standards defined at the ethnocentric "Greenwich meridian of literature [that] makes it possible to estimate the relative aesthetic distance from the centre of the world of letters of all those who belong to it" (Casanova 2004, 88).

Such centrist models that describe and criticize but to some extent also confirm world literary space as an asymmetric, unified core-peripheries system are important for any analysis of the colonialist power relations that have historically enabled

the global expansion of European literary formats and norms (so that a young boy in the 1950s would peruse *The World's Great Classics* in a St Lucia barbershop); moreover, at a synchronic level, they help to understand the market dynamics that keep structuring literary globalization today in a still largely Eurocentric fashion: Most powerful agencies that shape the spaces of world literature – prestigious publishers, influential critics, global retailers, award-granting bodies – operate from (and for) Western metropolitan locations. This does not necessarily mean, however, that one has to share Casanova's fear that a coming corporate literature will be reduced to a brand of "world fiction" consisting solely of literary "products based on tested aesthetic formulas and designed to appeal to the widest possible readership" (Casanova 2004, 171). Nor does one have to join Chris Bongie in his angsty dismissal of a newly dominant "global middlebrow" (Bongie 2003), or side with Sarah Brouillette in her assault on the shallow "world-readability" that the international literary market allegedly demands (Brouillette 2007, 80).

The sharpness of such critiques comes at the price of a distorting one-sidedness: There is a damaging and self-defeating tendency to deny the very possibility that literary texts themselves might have their own specific agency, and that acts of literature might not only be determined by a reified world-literary space but also, in whatever limited way, intervene into the shaping of that space. In this light, sociological analyses, indispensable as they are for the mapping of the world-literary system, would definitely benefit from a wider perspective, one which would enable systematic analyses of the *effects* that literature itself has on the world-system of which it is a part. It is this dialectics that a text like *Omeros* is premised on, and that endows it with a tension between imitation and creativity, subservient reverence for the prestigious European original and playful appropriation of that original for one's own purposes.

From the perspective of what could tentatively be called an 'anthropological' approach to world literature, the major shortcoming of a strictly sociological view lies in its disregard of the literariness of literature, and hence of the text as such. Gayatri Spivak dismisses literary world-system theories as "useless for literary study – that must depend on texture – because they equate economic with cultural systems" (2004, 108). Spivak's notion of world literature is explicitly delinked from the concept of globalization, which she formularizes as "the imposition of the same system of exchange everywhere" (2004, 72; also 2012, 338). Instead her agenda is the recuperation of an alterity of the text that 'distant reading' suppresses but that, for her, is the very essence of literature's capacity to train the reader into the particular mind-set not of globality but planetarity: "If we imagine ourselves as planetary accidents rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities, alterity remains underived from us, it is not our dialectical negation" (Spivak 2012, 451). The alterity of the text at hand – the invitation to grasp it not in terms "of the general laws of language but the laws specific to *this* text" (Spivak 2012, 257) – prepares for an encounter with the irreducible alterity of the planet since 'responsible' reading occurs as a "suspending [of] oneself into the text of the other" and a "striving for a response from that distant other without guarantees" (Spivak 2008, 23). This, then, is a programme for a planetary criticism that stages the scene of literature as a site of an emergent planetarity.

The notion of the planet has been adopted by Wai Chee Dimock who envisages world literature not in analogy to the world market but "parallel to anthropology: committed both to a local population and to an unlocal idea of species membership"

(qtd. in Spivak 2012, 446). As in Spivak, the horizon of world literature is therefore no longer the globe (as in globalization) but the planet as a site that is not primarily marked by core-periphery relations, but by the "complex paths of temporal and spatial displacements" (Dimock 2007, 276) that have always connected and disconnected the local with the world at large. In this vein, Dimock develops the notion of literature as an "ecology" of multiple and tangential interrelations and interdependencies across linguistic and temporal boundaries. Literature therefore is "globalized to be sure, permeated by world-history but also grittily local" at the same time (Dimock 2007, 296). Mathematical set theory and Mandelbrot's fractal geometry serve as epistemological models for this conceptualisation of literary as ecology.

Mandelbrot's approach is an attempt to overcome the abstractions of traditional, Euclidian geometry by the category of scale. In a famous example, he demonstrates how the length of the coastline of Britain varies dependent on the distance from which it is measured: From a great height, say outer space, most of its irregularities disappear from view and accordingly from measurement, while from close-up a multitude of nooks and crannies have to be accounted for that, as Mandelbrot puts it, do not appear on a school atlas map. However, his is not an argument of absolute relativity; it is instead an alternative conceptualization of spatial coherence – a coherence that is now grounded not in the self-identity of surfaces and bodies but much rather in the omnipresence of irregularities that resurface at each scale of representation and measurement in what Mandelbrot calls 'families of shapes.'

> Such irregularities are not limited to just one scale; they are much more deeply transitive. [...] Much more so than cleanness or smoothness, it is the rough weave of the fabric, the bumpy surface of pits and pocks, that is threaded throughout the world, in infinite extension and infinite regress. (Dimock 2006, 77)

For Dimock, this rough weave of the fabric threaded throughout the world cannot be translated into a linear system – a 'world-system' – but into a tangle of relations, so that the planet "counts as a 'system' precisely because its aberrations are system-wide, because pits and bumps come with many loops and layers of filiations" (Dimock 2006, 78). It is therefore not the homogeneity of a levelled continuous space but the recurrence of quirks and aberrations – the *misfit* – that produces the system's coherence: "a dialectic that makes the global an effect of the grainy" (Dimock 2006, 77) and the local "a 'nested' formation, for the local here is not purely indigenous but a 'cradling' of the global within one particular site: a sequence of diffusion, osmosis and readaptation" (Dimock 2007, 277).

In short: Where sociologists see 'literary value,' however ascribed and defined, as the third term that makes literary texts comparable, anthropologists like Dimock deploy the notion of alterity and system-wide aberrations. The "quirk" establishes some overarching pattern of fractal 'families of shapes,' which reveals itself only when phenomena at all scales are equally acknowledged. This involves a combination of close *and* distant reading.

Migrant's-Eye Views of the World: Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (1988)

David Damrosch, one of the more influential current theorists in the field, suggests that literary "works enter the realm of world literature by circulating out into the world, finding readers in distant times, places, and languages" (Damrosch 2009, 86), where they "serve as windows into foreign worlds" (Damrosch 2003, 15). According to this definition, the body of world literature is made up of texts that are internationally adaptable and therefore principally available to reception beyond their "culture of origin" (Damrosch 2003, 4). Stephen Heath puts a similar premium on mobility when he contends that world literature, far from depending solely on specific inherent qualities of the literary text, emerges and results from a particular kind of reception; that it, in other words, requires a trans-local, disembedded mode of reading "with a migrant's-eye view, which is another definition of 'world literature'" (Heath 2004, 174).

When both Damrosch and Heath privilege the categories of the mobile and the migratory in their conceptualizations of world literature, they project a notion of the latter that is to a large extent compatible with the most consensual descriptions of postcolonial writing as well. For as Neil Lazarus alleges, postcolonial theories from the mid-1980s to the turn of the millennium and beyond have been dominated by an "exaltation of migrancy, liminality, hybridity and multi-culturality" (Lazarus 2011, 21). Among the most prominent and prolific prompters of this trend is the British writer of Indian descent, Salman Rushdie, who, both as a novelist and an essayist, has had an immense impact on metropolitan postcolonialism. Indeed, many of Rushdie's phrases and coinages have "become critical touchstones for the *soma* of metropolitan postcolonial literature and culture" at large (Mukherjee 2014, 156) – a success that may, to some extent, be grounded in the circumstance that in Rushdie's writing and cultural politics, the postcolonial gets fused in highly productive ways with positions derived from 'Western' postmodernist theory and aesthetics. This holds true most notably for Rushdie's vociferous celebration of "our mongrel selves" (1991, 394) as "translated men" (1995, 29); his advocacy of the idea that "newness enters the world" (1991, 394) by way of intermingling and syncretization; and his militant aversion to the "absolutism of the Pure" (1991, 394).

How close and mutually adaptable these models of world literature and postcoloniality actually are can be gleaned from the circumstance that Heath borrows the term for his definition of world literature directly from Rushdie. If, as Heath suggests, world literature emerges from its reception with 'a migrant's-eye view,' then he lifts this very phrase from an essay in which Rushdie describes his own novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), in precisely these terms:

> If *The Satanic Verses* is anything, it is a migrant's-eye view of the world. It is written from the very experience of uprooting, disjuncture and metamorphosis (slow or rapid, painful or pleasurable) that is the migrant condition, and from which, I believe, can be derived a metaphor for all humanity. (Rushdie 1991, 394)

The Satanic Verses, like *Omeros*, entangles a plurality of plotlines into a multi-faceted whole. The main storyline focuses on the bizarre adventures of Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha, two Indian residents in London, who first miraculously survive a plane crash over the English Channel, and then metamorphose into an archangel (Gibreel) and into Satan (Saladin) respectively. While such supernatural story

elements clearly indicate the text's magic realist tendencies, *The Satanic Verses* is first of all to be read as an unabashedly allegorical narrative that cheekily acts out theoretical abstractions and critical concepts. Thus, the extremely polar transformations of the two protagonists into angel or devil appear as literal enactments of the work of either exoticizing or xenophobic representation. If Saladin morphs into a demon it is because he is being demon*ized* by a racist society that turns those whom it stigmatizes into monsters: "There are businessmen from Nigeria who have grown sturdy tails. There is a group of holidaymakers from Senegal who were doing no more than changing planes when they were turned into slippery snakes" (168), Saladin is informed by a fellow victim of racist demonization. How is this possible? "'They describe us,' [...]. 'That's all. They have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct'" (168). These transformations, grotesque and 'magical' as they may appear, are therefore first and foremost literalizations of ideological operations, namely the degrading racialization of Others.

If the result of this othering is the bizarre assemblage of incompatible elements – Saladin is, after all, half man, half goat – then Rushdie does not simply decry but much rather embrace precisely this joining of disparate components. Instead of harking back to a condition of purity, he endorses intermixture and indeed the concomitant 'pollution.' This celebration of syncretism holds true for the social fact of migrancy and the ensuing emergence of a diverse and transcultural society but also for the fundamental plurality at the core of all identity: the migrant's experience is, as Rushdie indicates, one of metamorphosis, and by extension this holds true for the host society as well.

In Rushdie's universe, nothing is safeguarded against the surge of hybridity, not even the most 'pure' cultural object imaginable: In the novel's most controversial subplot, the Quran itself is shown to be a composite text produced by at least two writers rather than the revealed word of God dictated to the prophet Mohammed. If this, to pious sensibilities, may be gross blasphemy (and indeed Rushdie had to go into hiding for years after the publication of *The Satanic Verses*), it may for others usher into the domain of religion the hitherto absent dimension of dialogue.

In his defense of *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie goes out of his way to claim universal, species-wide relevance for his book, whose subject matter appears to obtain the generality of a "world theme" (Thomsen 2008, 138), thereby postulating its status as world literature. In accordance with this, Sadik Jalal Azm has described *The Satanic Verses* as a "multicultural, multinational world-novel *par excellence*":

> So many cross-cultural themes, topics, activities, world-views, characters, politics and so on, are fused in it and interwoven into its fabric and texture that you can alternatively describe it, as the supra-national novelistic synthesis of the fin-de-siècle (or fin-de-millenaire) globalizing condition that is currently taking hold of humanity. (Azm 2000, 47)

Prominent amongst those "themes, topics, activities, world-views, characters, politics" are, for Azm, the dimensions of "economic, commercial, scientific, colonial, anticolonial, political, ideological, religious, cultural, artistic, personal, sexual" transactions across national, ethnic, religious and linguistic boundaries, so that cultural resources and impulses from all conceivable points of origin mesh and interpenetrate at all levels. The text, therefore, appears to represent and simultaneously enact a confluence of multitudinous "transnational cultural flows" that conjoin in the metropolitan space of late-twentieth-century London, rendering the British capital city a node of what Arjun Appadurai, in one of the most persuasive descriptions

of cultural globalization, has termed "the cosmopolitan cultural forms of the contemporary world" (Appadurai 1996, 49). With its focus on the hotchpotch intermingling of these transnational flows, Rushdie's text celebrates the very mobility and capacity to circulate that Damrosch, as we have seen, identifies as the hallmark of world literature today. Rushdie's text thus seems to ideally exemplify *that* as well as *how* postcolonial writing may 'become' world literature as "one of the first novels to introduce postcolonial literature to this new terrain. The text simultaneously refutes the autonomy of the nation-state and the metropole while exploring the possibility of global travel as an emerging site of political subjectivity" (Kalliney 2002, 51).

Heath's borrowing his formula for world literature from Rushdie does not only indicate the proximity of postcolonial and world literature but also that between literature (whether postcolonial or 'world') and theory. And in fact, hardly any other literary text in the postcolonial canon has perforated the dividing line between 'theory' and 'literature' as thoroughly as *The Satanic Verses*, causing the eminent critic Gayatri Spivak to recognize herself "as part of Rushdie's text" (1993, 223) in one of the novel's minor characters, Swatilekha, who indeed appears to function primarily as a mouthpiece for complex deconstructivist politics:

> She offered her theory. Society was orchestrated by what she called *grand narratives*: history, economics, ethics. In India, the development of a corrupt and closed state apparatus had "excluded the masses of the people from the ethical project." As a result, they sought ethical satisfactions in the oldest of the grand narratives, that is, religious faith. "But these narratives are being manipulated by the theocracy and various political elements in an entirely retrogressive way." (537)

But if postcolonial theory thus invades the novel, the intrusive movement is also reciprocal: segments of *The Satanic Verses* resurface at prominent junctures of postcolonial theory, especially in Homi Bhabha's essays on "dissemination" (Bhabha 1991, esp. 317–20) and on "cultural translation" (Bhabha 1994, 223–29), where Rushdie, famously labelling himself as a "translated man," appears to be Bhabha's prompter, supplying him with the semantic armature for the expounding of his influential theory of an interstitial cultural translation that is intimately bound to the experience of migrancy:

> The migrant's survival depends, as Rushdie puts it, on discovering 'how newness enters the world.' The focus is on making the linkages through the unstable elements of literature and life – the dangerous tryst with the 'untranslatable' – rather than arriving at ready-made names. The 'newness' of migrant or minority discourse [...] is not part of the 'progressivist' division between past and present, or the archaic and the modern; nor is it a 'newness' that can be contained in the mimesis of 'original and copy.' (Bhabha 1994, 227)

Bhabha's crucial term and concept in this passage is clearly 'newness' – a problem that overcodes Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* as a pressing question right from the start:

> How does newness come into the world? How is it born? Of what fusions, translations, conjoinings is it made? How does it survive, extreme and dangerous as it is? What compromises, what deals, what betrayals of its secret nature must it make to stave off the wrecking crew, the exterminating angel, the guillotine? (8)

Obviously, then, for Bhabha as for Rushdie (and a host of followers) newness enters the world by the genuinely postcolonial impulses of mass migration and cross-cultural intermixtures that render the world a multitude of entangled contact zones.

How Newness Comes into World Literature

In this understanding, the postcolonial condition is not restricted to the former overseas possessions of modern Europe's empires. Instead, the world is inherently postcolonial in its entirety. This entails nothing less than a principal revision of the notion of 'world' as such – a revision that militates against the residual Eurocentrism that "takes the world for granted" (Cheah 2016, 37) and instead urges for a rigorous rethinking of the notion of 'world.' In this perspective, the 'world,' far from being a given fact, is constantly in the making through ever intensifying and multiplying processes of global connection and integration but also conflict, exclusion and policing. This, obviously, must have heavy consequences for the discussion of world literature, too, where a residual Eurocentrism keeps reproducing a notion of "the *world* [that] is studiously neutral and requires no further qualification: it is the twenty-first-century ghost of nineteenth-century aestheticism" (Hitchcock 2010, 5). Postcolonial criticism has repeatedly debunked this ostensible neutrality by pointing out that and how the contemporary world – whether conceived in terms of cosmopolitan conviviality or neoliberal globalization – cannot be conceived without recourse to the worldly event of Europe's colonial expansion.

Most prominently, Edward Said had proposed that the unified world requires to be traced back to the unifying (and of course, heavily coercive and violent) impacts of imperialism:

> so vast and yet so detailed is imperialism as an experience with crucial cultural dimensions, that we must speak of overlapping territories, intertwined histories common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and on the peripheries, past as well as present and future; these territories and histories can only be seen from the perspective of the whole of secular human history. (Said 1994, 72)

From this perspective it is therefore problematic to simply speak of 'the world' without referring to its violent genealogy in the imperial project of Europe. Likewise, "the 'world' in world literature is disingenuous and therefore naively – or deliberately – disconnects literature from its own Euro-colonial historicity" (Helgesson 2014, 485). Importantly, however, these rejoinders – for some critics "the boldest statements on the *world* in world literature" (Hitchcock 2010, 35) – do not come from some imagined outsider position but very consciously from the perspective of the immersed participant: In an always already postcolonial world, the postcolonial writer is inside world literature by default. World literature, in short, is by implication postcolonial world literature. It is on this premise that Rushdie can claim, as we have seen, that his text offers 'a metaphor for all humanity.' More generally put: postcolonial literature is with necessity world literature, and by the same token, all world literature now must be rethought as postcolonial.

In addition to the emphasis on open-ended processes of migrancy, crossculturalism and hybridity advocated by Rushdie and Bhabha, a rethinking of the 'world' in a postcolonial way implies at least two further moves that, even if substantially different in thrust, have in common that they question the equation of 'the world' with neoliberal 'globalization.'

The first of these moves is the ecological and ecocritical turn in postcolonial thought and practice, which seeks to reimagine the 'planet' in its materiality and Otherness. Exemplarily, Gayatri Spivak's later works are premised on a severe critique of globalization as "the imposition of the same system of exchange every-

where," which results in the radical abstraction of a world transmuted into "the globe": "The globe is on our computers. No one lives there" (Spivak 2004, 72). Not as an antithesis but as a coexistent, mostly muted alternative, Spivak evokes "the planet" (see above) as the material ground from which humanity emerges without ever transcending it as "planetary creatures rather than global entities" (2012, 451). In this vein, she specifies the relation between world literature and planetarity by insisting on the nexus between text-related ethics and a responsible environmentalism that maintains that ecological and postcolonial (social) justice are inseparable (see ch. 11).

If this first move towards a revision of the 'world' in world literature refers to the undivided space of the planet as materiality, the second move strives towards a (re)politicization of the world. It focuses on the political differentiation and hierarchical division of the space of the planet. Without abandoning the emphasis on the open-ended processes of world-making that Bhabha and Rushdie celebrate, the stress now falls on the inherent antagonisms, frictions and tensions that underwrite an ineluctably *political* world conceived as "a limitless field of conflicting forces that are brought into relation and that flow into each other without return" (Cheah 2016, 211). A world that is increasingly integrated and unified by global capitalist subsumption is in this perspective also a world that constantly spawns energies that contest this very same world made by globalization.

To be sure, these energies do not necessarily get articulated in the progressive and rational forms of, say, the street politics of the Occupy movements, the Arab Spring, the Turkish or US-American pro-democracy movements or the South European anti-austerity protests; they can also get distorted into retrogressive resentment-ridden xenophobia, racism, heterosexism and the like. A literature that is truly a literature of the world – and hence world literature – will not occlude the conflicted condition of the world but will to the contrary make this conflictuality imaginable without constructing it as the 'clash' of allegedly incompatible and irreconcilable 'civilizations.' It will instead offer "alternative cartographies" that "explore the negotiations between humane social development (or lack thereof) and global inflows of money and capital [...] in order to craft new stories of world-belonging" (Cheah 2016, 213–14).

Walcott's *Omeros* ends on the note of such an 'alternative cartography' that reimagines a 'globe' constitutively bifurcated *and* stitched together by a history of colonialism and decolonization. Like in Said, imperialism divides and unifies the world. It operates as what Jacques Derrida has discussed as the *pharmakon*: simultaneously poison and medicine, injury and remedy (see Derrida 2000, 97). Walcott's text is replete with images in which wound and cure coincide – from the healing of the festering scars that afflict the neo-Homeric character Philoctete to the volcanic fissures that rip open the very surface of St Lucia only to enable the rejuvenating "process, the proof of a self-healing island" (249). While thus clearly pivoting on the 'planetary' materiality of the human body or the physical land, the ambiguity of injury and cure is at the same time intensely invested with the political history of the genocides perpetrated by the *conquistadores*, the atrocities of the Atlantic slave trade, and the displacements of colonial and postcolonial rule. The infliction of wounds and their healing thus epitomizes "a wider sense of renewal and creativity in the aftermath of empire, which is what motivates Walcott to reveal how the individual stories of St Lucians and of the island embody an 'epical splendour' of survival and re-creation" (Woodcock 2001, 554).

One of the main symbols of this work of "re-creation" is the sea-swift, a migratory (!) bird that crosses the Atlantic Ocean and thereby stitches together the 'two worlds,' Old and New, that imperialism has created as two distinct and incompatible spheres:

I followed a sea-swift to both sides of this text;
her hyphen stitched its seam, like the interlocking
basins of a globe in which one half fits the next

into an equator, both shores neatly clicking
into a globe; except that its meridian
was not North and South but East and West. One the New

World, made exactly like the Old, halves of one brain,
or the beat of both hands rowing that bear the two
vessels of the heart with balance, weight, and design. (319)

Stitching, of course, involves both violence (the piercing of the text/ile) and healing (the suturing of what is disparate). This ambivalent movement is enacted here on the globe as well as the human body, whose hands, brain and heart are all held together in (spite of) their essential duality by the stitching swift. More than that, as 'hyphen' the bird becomes a metatextual conceit that crosses not only the Ocean but also the text, where it indeed serves as the constant leitmotif of a connecting mediator between worlds. *Omeros* thus ends on a self-referential note in which this prominent piece of postcolonial world literature reflects upon its own status as a text whose "language carries its own cure, its radiant affliction" (323), and thereby has the force to participate in the crafting of "new stories of world-belonging" (Cheah 2016, 214).

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4 *Interlude:* Language

Language is a key concern in postcolonial literary studies. This pertains particularly to the difficult relation between the (literary) use of languages of the colonizers (e. g., English, French, etc.) and Indigenous languages (Yoruba, Punjabi, etc.). Should postcolonial literature employ the language of the colonizer at all, and if so, how? And how does language use interrelate with the social and political arena in postcolonial projects?

The first question powerfully arose in the context of various independence movements from the second quarter of the 20th century until the early 1980s. As Gregorio Firmino writes, "language loyalties," and in some cases disloyalties, "are symbolic manifestations of other grievances on a political, economic or social level" (2011, 114). Writers and thinkers like Frantz Fanon and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argued against writing in the colonizer's language. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon argued that language loyalties matter because by using the language of the colonizer, one could no longer relate to one's countrymen or oneself through culture, as the writer "betrays himself in his speech" (1986, 13). Thiong'o expanded on these ideas in *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. To him, language was instrumental in either enriching or damaging the psyche, for it is through language that we create symbolic value for knowledge systems, economic systems, and cultures (Thiong'o 1981). Thiong'o decided to abandon the language of the colonizer in 1978 (after having published four highly successful novels in English) and to continue writing in his native Kenyan language of Gĩkũyũ (even though he continued to translate his own work).

Others like James Baldwin, Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie and Edouard Glissant defended the use of the language of the colonizer. James Baldwin argued that language could be challenged and transformed to encompass colonial trauma: "Perhaps the language was not my own because I had never attempted to use it, had only learned to imitate it. If this were so, then it might be made to bear the burden of my experience if I could find the stamina to challenge it, and me, to such a test" (Baldwin 2010, 55). Achebe took a similar stance, but realized that in order to bear the burden of his specifically African experience, his version of English would have to be adapted to its rhythms, flows, imagery and diction, emphasizing that languages could embrace various cultural contexts (1965, 18).

Achebe, like Salman Rushdie, also emphasized the practicality of using colonizer languages, especially in countries like Achebe's native Nigeria or Rushdie's India, in each of which hundreds of different local languages are spoken. By using localized versions of English, much larger audiences could be reached (Innes 2007). Fanon, too, adjusted his position when he saw the nation-building possibilities that a language like French could provide to the colonized (Gibson 1996).

Since the 1980s, the focus on local language use has shifted to "show[ing] a balanced picture of the extent of colonial contact; how it changed not only the colonised regions but also how it is influencing or affecting the coloniser regions" (Anchimbe 2011, 12). The focus here is often on language variation through cultural contact, and the emergence of pidgin (first generation) and of creole (second generation) versions of English or other colonial languages. Barbadian poet and critic Eduard Kamau Brathwaite created the term "Nation Language" in order to describe

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the phenomena of languages, specifically referring to the Caribbean, which do not seek to recover "lost origins," but rather "demonstrate the vigorous success of linguistic variation" (Ashcroft et al. 1995, 284) in worldmaking processes. Chantal Zabus uses the image of a palimpsest (a piece of writing superimposed on previous faded writings) to describe what she calls "relexification": "language practices of a region [that] may be built up through a range of linguistic strategies" (see Ashcroft et al. 1995, 284). It is in the linguistic contact zones of the everyday, but also in the literary creations of postcolonial poets, playwrights, novelists, and musicians that the transformative power of language finds expression.

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5 Border Epistemologies

Borders are key conceptual entities in postcolonial studies. They are never just there; they are never fully established or easily accessible. Borders are always man-made entities, even if, when we talk about territorial borders, they are sometimes supported by certain geographical features such as mountain ranges, forests, rivers or oceans. They are always constructions installed by people who wish to delineate an inside from an outside, self from other, locals from strangers, and who have the power to install and patrol such separations. More recent approaches in critical border studies have established that these delineations are hardly straightforward, either, but fraught with complexities which often undercut any logic of clear separation.

The older 'line in the sand'-model of borders neatly separating territories is challenged by the notion of a plurality of border *practices* which suggest that borders are not at all fixed, but that they instead rely on a set of iterations, rituals and performances to be able to 'exist' in the first place. In the case of borders between sovereign nation-states, for instance, this involves rituals such as passport controls, security scans, formalized confessions on airplanes, etc. What is more, the sites where these rituals are acted out are rarely identical with the sites where the imagined 'line in the sand' on a territorial map actually is, making the border a much more fluid and messy entity than the metaphor of the 'line' would suggest. Entire groups of people – based on the arbiters of class, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, or health – have been policed and deterred from borders that are geographically far distant, and not only as a consequence of more recent refugee phenomena, but persistently so in the long histories of colonialism. Others have been forced across distant borders on the basis of the same arbiters, often by means of sheer violence.

Yet of course, borders have always been challenged, too. They have been challenged by a range of counter-practices which undercut their binary logic, not least by practices and crossings which sidetrack the official ritual frameworks and policing activities set into place by those in power. Most insistently, perhaps, they have been challenged by those who continue to 'dwell' on and across borders, and thus perform modes of being which explode the logic of inside / outside, self / other, or local / stranger in the first place. Borders are not only theatrical sites, then, in the sense of highly fluid stages where socio-political actors of all different kinds perform ritualized practices. They are also performative in the sense that they bring forth complex subject positions, and establish, uphold or challenge concrete socio-political realities (cf. Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2012, 729). Let us illustrate these dynamics by briefly turning to the concrete example.

Constructing and Challenging Borders: Ursula Biemann, *Performing the Border* (1999)

In 1999, Swiss director Ursula Biemann released her video essay *Performing the Border*, which was filmed in the Mexican city of Ciudad Juárez on the border to the US. Biemann's documentary zooms in on the increasingly feminized workforce who

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are precariously employed in the *maquiladoras* (literally, 'golden mills'). These are cheap labor assembly plants, mostly for electronic devices and digital components, that various US and multinational companies have built in close vicinity of the frontier on the Mexican side. In the process, as the newly industrialized border zone attracted masses of workers from the arid tablelands further south, the area was transformed into a "cultural corridor" of internal migration, "an uncharted territory inhabited by millions of people who vacillate between rural and urban, between a world of street vendors on streets of sand and a world of high-tech production for the information industry" (voiceover narrative, 6:28–6:42). The demarcation line between the two nation-states thus gets blurred as production and reproduction are increasingly organized as border-crossing processes. However, the fact that products and goods easily travel across does not mean that the border has ceased to exist. Far from it: While the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) organizes precisely the smooth passage of capital and goods, it "maintains the situation where the crossing of people is absolutely forbidden" (34:01). This interdiction, of course, applies not to all people but is dependent on the cause and status of the passage. In a poignant interview sequence, Mexican feminist journalist Berta Jottar describes how the border acts as a powerful inquisitive agency that virtually asks the itinerant:

> What are you crossing for? Are you crossing in English, in Spanish, in Spanglish? With a US passport? As a tourist, as a migrant worker, as a middle-class woman, as a domestic? There's all those different ways of crossing and that's how the border gets again rearticulated through the power relationships that the crossing produces. (9:32–9:56)

At the conceptual level, Biemann's video emphasizes repeatedly that there is nothing natural about the border. Instead, the border is a highly constructed place that gets reconstituted and reproduced through the legal and illegal, public and clandestine, crossing of people. The border, in this sense, is not a given but rather the result of a range of repetitive practices. As Berta Jottar, again, succinctly puts it: "Without a crossing there is no border, right? Then it's just an imaginary line, or a river, or a wall. You need the crossing of bodies to produce the discursive space of the nation-state, but also to produce this type of a real place, the border. So it's highly performative" (6:44 – 6:57).

Due to its functionality for economic value extraction, the border is therefore both porous (for the flow of goods, labor and capital) and at the same time heavily policed as a fortification of the national US territory against the free movement of migrants. The border zone is a lethal space for those who are not entitled to do the crossing.

It is also a fundamentally gendered space in which the mostly female *maquiladora* labor force is subjected to a virtually Dickensian sweatshop regime. In a concluding voice-over, Biemann directly addresses her ostensibly White European audience, stating that "the reality of the border zone is that it's young Mexican women who have assembled your digital technology, that their time and their bodies, down to the monthly cycle, are strictly controlled by the white male management." The film does not fail to mention in an earlier passage that the massive recruitment of young Mexican women into the *maquiladora* system has to some extent led to an increase of these women's spending power and hence to a certain degree of independence from traditional constraints; and yet the fact remains that the imposed "border culture" ultimately engenders

the robotic repetitive process of assembly work, the intimate implication of the body with these technological functions, and the association of this process with the gendered racialized body. Her body is fragmented, dehumanized and turned into a disposable, exchangeable and marketable component. (22:09–22:24)

"Border culture" with its commodification of the female body thus produces a broad nexus in which economic exploitation and Fordist alienation immediately spill over into prostitution and sexual violence. In fact, many of Biemann's interview partners are not only factory workers in one of the many 'golden mills' that dot the southern hem of the borderline; they also act as weekend sex workers in order to increase the meagre salary they receive in the *maquiladora*.

However, the most disturbing and yet entirely consistent aspect of 'border culture' is the sinister series of killings that have haunted the Ciudad Juárez area for the past ten years or more, in which more than 140 girls and women got abducted, raped, killed and disposed. In a chilling commentary, Biemann suggests that serial killing is a continuation of the seriality inherent to the mode of production of industrial capitalism: Not only, however, is there "a connection between repetitive sexual violence and the form of production of a high-tech culture" such as that of the border system that fragments the workers' bodies by reducing them to the bearers of strictly measured segmentive movements; there is also a nexus "between the technologies of identification [i. e. the surveillance and policing measures that characterize the political border], and the psychological disposition of a serial killer" (21:45–21:56).

Biemann's meditation of the border as a site of capitalist and sexual exploitation is somber for sure; yet the insistence that there is nothing 'natural' (in the sense of inertly given) about the border makes it also a site that is open to change. In some of their narratives, Biemann's interlocutors allow for glimpses of a sphere of women's self-help and solidarity in a predatory environment. Thus one middle-aged sex worker proudly shows the 'present' she got from a young destitute and heroin-addicted colleague: her baby. In another sequence one of Biemann's interview partners relates the story of Anna, a young woman who "has a way with the border and gets away with every kind of crossing," including the trafficking of 'embarrassed' (read: pregnant) women into Texas for the delivery of a child that will then by virtue of her place of birth be a US citizen. The performing of the border may, then, also enact its undoing.

Border Regimes of Knowledge

In this chapter, however, we are not primarily interested in exploring the border regimes between sovereign nation-states or territories, even if these inevitably come into play. What we are interested in first and foremost are border regimes of knowledge; we are interested in how certain epistemologies, that is, ways of knowing the world, are entangled with socio-political border practices. This is what we call, in this chapter's title, border epistemologies. Colonialisms, for one, have not only imposed territorial borders – most notoriously so, for instance, during the Berlin Conference in 1884/1885, when the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck invited the leaders of all European imperial powers, the US and the Ottoman Empire to Berlin to divide up the African continent among themselves like a cake, drawing artificial

borders right across ethnic groups and previous political entities which still haunt the continent. Colonialisms have also installed border regimes of knowledge. Colonialisms have also decreed which knowledges are valid and acceptable in the global marketplace of ideas, and which are not.

The forces set in place to patrol these borders do not wear uniforms. They have been and continue to be, in many ways, people like us: Academics in the research and teaching institutions of the western or westernized educational industries. They are philosophers and historians, sociologists and anthropologists, literary and cultural studies scholars, political scientists and economists, natural historians and natural scientists. They also delineate borders: borders between what should be seen, heard, and discussed inside the "teaching machine" (to use Gayatri Spivak's term), and what should remain outside. Knowledge, following Michel Foucault, is ultimately a function of institutional power, and the universities and schools in which we teach or study today are still shaped by the deeply entangled projects of the Enlightenment and colonialism (see ch. 7). One of the most dramatic legacies of this entanglement is that it has set a hegemonic world standard of knowledge, and that it has displaced, or disavowed, other, subaltern knowledges across the globe. These other knowledges, then, are subject to a process of bordering which attempts to manage, police, or destroy them.

Indian Subaltern Studies

One of the first schools of thought which began to systematically challenge this world standard of knowledge created by colonial border epistemologies in the field of history in particular is the Indian subaltern studies group. They take the term 'subaltern' from the *Prison Notebooks* of the Italian Marxist intellectual Antonio Gramsci, who expanded on the original meaning of 'subaltern' as a soldier of inferior rank in the army to refer more generally to persons or groups of people who are subordinated by socio-political and socio-economic structures of power at a given historical moment, be it in terms of class, race, gender, religion, or any other criteria of discrimination. Gramsci's writings travelled to India with the Bengali historian Susobhan Sarkar in the 1950s, who in turn taught Ranajit Guha at Presidency College in Calcutta. Guha became the founding figure of the subaltern studies group which at different times included scholars as diverse as Partha Chatterjee, Gyan Prakash, Sumit Sarkar, Gayatri Spivak, Dipesh Chakrabarty and others. Their writings have become instrumental in challenging Eurocentric histories of Indian colonization and the postcolonial political condition of the subcontinent. In different ways, and mindful of the contradictions and pitfalls of their project, they foregrounded the need for a 'history from below' which gives a voice to the subaltern castes, classes and genders which have been set aside in official historiographies, and which emphasizes the role of subaltern subjects in shaping and changing political landscapes.

In this process, the group has struggled with its indebtedness to European traditions of knowledge and worldmaking, and their simultaneous critique from a postcolonial perspective. Especially the early writings of the subaltern studies group have been strongly influenced by the Marxism of British new social and labor histories by the likes of Eric Hobsbawm or E. P. Thompson; yet they also critiqued their knowledge production as Eurocentric. Dipesh Chakrabarty, for instance, tackles this

problem at its roots in a dissident critique of the writings of Karl Marx himself in his important book *Provincializing Europe*.

Chakrabarty particularly grapples, like other members of the group, with the 'stagism' of Marx's world historical model, which posits that all societies undergo a necessary progression of stages from barbarism to feudalism to capitalism, the excesses of which shall eventually lead to a communist world society. In this logic, only the colonization of India lifted the subcontinent onto the world historical stage, by forcibly pushing it up the ladder from barbarity and feudalism to capitalist accumulation and modes of production. Orthodox Marxists, Chakrabarty complains, thus conflate a plurality of subaltern histories and temporalities in their own right into an indistinct prehistory, "posited by capital itself as its precondition" (Chakrabarty 2000, 63). Against this teleological logic, Chakrabarty foregrounds how Marx himself undercuts the singularity of his historical model by positing that there are elements of cultural production which may exist alongside and within the dominant narrative of a capitalism (which Chakrabarty refers to as "History 1"), yet still "do not lend themselves to the reproduction of the logic of capital" (2000, 64). Chakrabarty advocates that subaltern scholars attend to precisely such pasts and narratives ("History 2") which productively interrupt the "totalizing thrusts" of the "universal themes of the European Enlightenment" (2000, 66) which prescribe, for instance, that knowledge must inherently be bound to an autonomous subject (rather than for instance be communal), or that it must be owned as private property (rather than for example be shared and collective). Such dissident readings, he argues, "make room, in Marx's own analysis of capital, for the politics of human belonging and diversity" and "giv[e] us a ground on which to situate our thoughts about multiple ways of being human" (Chakrabarty 2000, 67).

A related mode of self-reflexive, double-edged critique has been extended, too, to a later generation of European philosophers like Michel Foucault or Gilles Deleuze. In her landmark essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), Gayatri Spivak acknowledges the debt of postcolonial studies to these thinkers, yet she also critiques their failure to critically reflect their own (privileged) position of speaking. In implicitly presuming to write 'with' subaltern groups like European workers or the non-European Other, Spivak posits that they really write 'for' and monologically in place of the subaltern, and thus repeat, rather than challenge, the original silencing of subaltern voices. She extends her criticism into a fundamental critique of postcolonial scholarship from the centers of knowledge production, using as her key example the practice of "sati," or widow-burning, in India. Spivak uncovers a legacy from colonial to postcolonial discourses on sati which belie the 'post' in postcolonial, by perpetuating a discursive practice which Spivak distils to the famous formula "white man saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak 1988, 296).

Her solution to the dilemma of postcolonial scholarship from the institutional centers of knowledge production, however, is not silence, a relativist refusal to speak at all across differences of race, class or gender; rather, she calls for modes of critical listening and speaking which are grounded in the systematic "unlearning" (Spivak 1988, 295) of privilege. What we take from Spivak and postcolonial feminist scholarship more generally (see ch. 15) is thus the importance of a sense of humbleness in the face of the Other and other knowledges; a need for honest self-positioning, and for an academic practice which persistently questions the seemingly 'given' orders of knowledge and the institutional structures in which we study, work and write. Such a practice seeks to analyze and critique colonial border epistemol-

ogies while attempting to find alternative ways of negotiating across the fault lines of differing and asymmetrically positioned traditions of knowledge.

African and Latin American Subaltern Studies

The ideas of the Indian subaltern studies group have travelled and met with related ideas and decolonial traditions in other parts of the world. One of the groundbreaking works investigating the border epistemologies on the African continent is *The Invention of Africa* (1988) by the Congolese philosopher Valentin-Yves Mudimbe. Mudimbe investigates how Europeans and Africans alike have from the time of the Ancient Greeks produced images of Africa that are ultimately framed by paradigms rooted in the West – from missionary paradigms to the taxonomic ordering functions of the colonial sciences, from the Marxist rhetoric of Black nationalist discourses to postcolonial African philosophies. In correlation with Edward Said's seminal concept of Orientalism (see ch. 6), Mudimbe coins the term *Africanism* to refer to the discourse formations 'inventing' Africa; yet unlike Said, Mudimbe also takes an interest in the ways in which Africans themselves have been both complicit in the histories of Africanism, and yet how they also challenge them on their own terms. He notes that

> today Africans themselves read, challenge, rewrite, these discourses as a way of explicating and defining their culture, history, and being. It is obvious since its inception, Africanism has been providing its own motives as well as its objects and fundamentally commenting upon its own being while systematically promoting a *gnosis*. (Mudimbe 1988, xi)

Mudimbe takes recourse to the concept of "gnosis," here, to retrieve dimensions of 'knowing' which have been foreclosed by the secularist and scientific reductions of modernity. The Greek *gnosko*, "to know," writes Mudimbe, may simultaneously denote "seeking to know, inquiry, methods of knowing, investigation, and even acquaintance with someone. Often the word is used in a more specialized sense, that of higher and esoteric knowledge" (ix). As such, it allows to comprise and comprehend both hegemonic orders of colonial knowledge, thus colonial border epistemologies, and diverse subaltern forms and practices of knowing the world, which intersect, fuse or clash in contemporary (re)inventions of Africa. Such a renegotiation of various regimes of knowledge produces border epistemologies of a different, and potentially decolonial, kind.

In Latin America, Mudimbe's concept of subaltern "gnosis" has been picked up by the Argentinian decolonial thinker Walter Mignolo. Mignolo, together with other thinkers from the Americas, dissociated himself from a Latin American subaltern studies group founded on the Indian model, arguing that they still remain too Eurocentric in their critique of Eurocentrism. Building on the world-system theory of Immanuel Wallerstein and a range of postcolonial thinkers from across the globe, most notably, perhaps, Enrique Dussel and Edouard Glissant, Mignolo traces how during European colonialism, local European trajectories of knowledge in diverse fields of inquiry have acquired the status of "global designs" that were progressively declared valid for the entire globe.

In his works *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* and *Local Histories/Global Designs*, Mignolo argues that while many postcolonial scholars concentrate on colonial pro-

cesses that took place during the European Enlightenment, there is a significant earlier phase of European (predominantly Spanish and Portuguese) colonization of the Americas that needs to be theorized more thoroughly. He claims that during these earlier phases of Southern European imperial domination, the difference of colonial Others and their knowledges, for instance of the Indigenous population of the Americas, was still recognized (even though it was considered barbarous, as it existed outside the legitimation of Christianity), yet that this changed with the dominance of France, Britain and, in terms of ideas, Germany, in the 18th century. In collation with the ideals of the Enlightenment which declared universal laws and values that apply to all men irrespective of cultural differences, colonial powers began to reject the idea that there are any sites of legitimate knowledge production beyond Europe. They either denied subaltern knowledges, or set them in dependency to the knowledge systems of the center. Mignolo notes that "[t]he simultaneous logic of disavowal and dependency of all possible loci of enunciation (from religious to economic, from legal to political, from ethical to erotic) is the hidden logic of modernity" (Mignolo 2003, 441–42).

The job of the decolonial critic, for Mignolo, is therefore to attempt to "de-link" local histories and their subaltern knowledges in diverse parts of the world from the global designs of the modern world system. De-linking, he writes, "brings to the foreground other epistemologies, principles of knowledge and understanding and, consequently, other economies, other politics, other ethics" (Mignolo 2007, 453). Such de-linking crucially demands what Mignolo calls a "pluritopic hermeneutics," a way of thinking which straddles the colonial difference between two or more sites or loci of knowledge production. Only a mode of critical "border thinking" may adequately deal with processes of "colonial semiosis" marked by

> the conflict between two local histories and knowledges, one responding to the movement forward of a global design that intended to impose itself and those local histories and knowledges that are forced to accommodate themselves to such new realities. Thus, colonial semiosis requires a pluritopic hermeneutics since in the conflict, in the cracks and fissures where the conflict originates, a description of one side of the epistemological divide won't do. (Mignolo 2000, 17)

In this way, Mignolo, like Spivak and Mudimbe, acknowledges and critiques colonial border epistemologies while envisioning alternative practices of negotiating border regimes of knowledge, thus of creating decolonial border epistemologies. In the following, we wish to exemplarily analyze and interpret two key texts which illustrate the complexities of border epistemologies and respective decolonial reading practices – yet further illustration may also be found in other chapters of this book, most notably, perhaps, in our reading of Tupaia's Map (see ch. 10). The texts we picked for this chapter explicitly deal with geographical and political borders which are persistently crossed.

In the case of the novel *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) by the Indo-Trinidadian writer Sam Selvon, these are both the official border between England and its Caribbean colonies, and the less official borders of race and class within post-WWII London. In the case of the "autohistoria" *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) by Chicana writer and activist Gloria Anzaldúa, we return again to both the official US-Mexican border and the less official scripts of race and gender which are policed across the frontier.

We are most interested in the ways in which both Selvon and Anzaldúa challenge concomitant dispositions of knowing and being in the world across these borders,

and how they foreground "alternative hermeneutics" (Gikandi 1992, 96) which undercut and challenge what Chakrabarty would call "History 1," or Mignolo would call "global designs." We wish to show how the texts draw on diverse "Histories 2" (Chakrabarty) or "local histories" (Mignolo) to perform and create new identities, subject positions, new communities, and how they devise new languages to support them. Our readings of these texts are inspired by critical approaches to border epistemologies from India, Africa, the Americas, and elsewhere.

Readers should be aware in this context that some scholars following the decolonial paradigm developed by Latin American scholars in particular have more recently tended to take (strategically) essentialist positions in the field, emphasizing the incompatibility of their understanding of decolonial thought with other subaltern studies traditions (such as the Indian school) or (a rather narrow understanding of) postcolonial studies more generally (see the introduction to this book). First and foremost among these voices is Walter Mignolo himself, whose more recent interventions have, in our view, lost much of the academic generosity and nuance of his important work of the 1990s and early 2000s, which we still find inspiring and vital. We are critical of the sectarian tendencies within post- and decolonial studies, and take little interest in the power games of policing institutional borders. Instead we firmly believe in bringing out the convergences and productive frictions between different schools of thought, and their joint potential in overcoming a monoscopic vision of the world.

Carnivalizing the Novel: Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (1956)

The historical moment of *The Lonely Londoners* marks a decisive period in Britain's imperial past and postcolonial future. Published in 1956, the novel looks back on the first years of mass migration from the colonies since the arrival of the first group of immigrants from the West Indies landing on 22 June 1948 at Tilbury on the MV Empire Windrush, the ship which came to provide the name for an entire generation. Even though *The Lonely Londoners* focuses on the local struggles of colonial migrants in London and thus on a distinctly limited geographic setting, it is really embedded in the much larger politics of post-War reconstruction and, not least, the demise of the British Empire.

The 1948 Nationality Act passed by the Attlee government, which established a new definition of UK citizenship that also included all residents of Empire born in the colonies, needs to be understood in the complex interplay of these contexts. Ashley Dawson (2007) elaborates that the Act's primary interest was indeed not in the creation of legal equity among all subjects of Empire, and least of all in the encouragement of migration to the motherland, but that it was much rather motivated by the 'loss' of India in August 1947. As such, the Act mainly served as "a powerful symbolic reaffirmation of the imperial system" in order to "defuse anticolonial nationalist movements" (Dawson 2007, 10). The Attlee government never lobbied for colonial migrants to rebuild the country, but instead actively recruited continental Europeans – White foreigners rather than Black nationals – to settle in the UK; it really wished to forge a system where "imperial subjects were to be formally equal but geographically separate" (Dawson 2007, 10).

It is hardly surprising, then, that the Windrush generation neither encountered the equality nor the hospitality they associated with the Nationality Act in their everyday experiences in the metropolitan heart of Empire. What they mostly found was systemic discrimination, most dramatically so on the housing and job markets, and aggravated by the institutional racism of political parties, agencies, trade unions and especially the metropolitan police. The lonely Londoners in Selvon's fiction are caught up in a system of classed and racial segregation at a historical moment when the inbuilt schizophrenia of Empire – the desire to remake the globe in one's own image, yet without surrendering the privilege of difference – hit home, quite literally, with a vengeance.

The Lonely Londoners tackles this schizophrenia in a narrative mode which does not follow a conventional plot or narrative structure. Instead, it inflects the literary tradition of Western episodic narrative models with a calypsonian mode of storytelling, modelled on Trinidadian calypso music, in various registers of creolized English. The narrative is told in third-person mode, by a narrator using a mix of zero and fixed internal focalization to offer insight into a large cast of Black Londoners, some only recently off the boat, some veterans of the earliest Windrush days, all coping differently with the challenges of the city and adopting different strategies of dealing with its opportunities and depravations over a course of roughly three years. It is this narrator, most of all, who holds the loosely related episodes of the novel together, primarily through a specific quality of voice, a voice which steps out from the page by means of a carefully crafted 'aurality.' The narrator's various registers of creole encompass the voices of all central characters, giving the narration a distinctly collective feel. Still, it is anchored on one primary focalizing character whose life and thoughts it is closest to, and who provides the gravitational center of storytelling: Moses Aloetta, who has been in London longer than any of the other characters.

The narrative of *The Lonely Londoners* follows its many characters through the drags, bitterness and pleasures of migrant life in London. The diverse episodes are full of satire, which is counteracted, however, by the warmth and humor of the narrative voice which is ultimately compassionate with all characters, irrespective of their follies and fancies. It is this collectivizing voice, too, which counters the isolation and alienation which all characters feel, even if listeners get different degrees of insight into characters' emotions. The tension between isolating introspection and an integrating chorus of collective experiences in *The Lonely Londoners* is maintained especially through passages of free indirect discourse. Thus, the very heart of the novel around which all ballads and episodes are framed consists of an extended stream-of-consciousness passage using free indirect discourse and no punctuation with Moses as focalizer. Nodding both to modernist literary models and to the solo improvisations of Afro-Caribbean musical styles, the sequence is framed around a summer night in Hyde Park which triggers an almost unstopping flow of observations, associations, fantasies and memories, most of which revolve around all kinds of sexual encounters. Let us focus for a moment on the intersections of race and gender in this passage in particular, in order to illustrate some of the problems of reading *The Lonely Londoners* in particular, and postcolonial literatures more generally, with a singular, Eurocentric critical lens.

Few other concerns have troubled the critical reception of *The Lonely Londoners* as much as its take on White women and the seemingly unreflective "propagation of triumphalising forms of Black male heterosexual behaviour" (Houlden 2012, 24).

At the center of debates is usually the extended stream-of-consciousness passage mentioned above and its intoxicating flow of loosely related observations, associations and memories induced by a hot summer night in the park, most of which revolve around sex: sex with other precarious Londoners such as ex-junkies (105), prostitutes "from the country districts whom come to see the big life in London" (107) or European domestic workers who "think like the newspapers say about the Jamaicans that the streets of London paved with gold" (103); yet also sex across the barriers of class, as, in the narrator's ironic phrase, "it ain't have no discrimination when it come to that park in the summer" (104).

Selvon's focalizer Moses clearly frames those exchanges as more twisted: old White voyeurs, rich women "who want you to live up to the films and stories they hear about black people living primitive" (108), husbands who get a kick out of hustling their wives to Black men. Irrespective of the intersectional take on gender and class, however, none of the prostitutes or lovers or girlfriends is given a voice in *The Lonely Londoners*. They are picked up and dropped, pretty much like objects, and Moses' associated ramblings are full of bravado: "to talk of all the episodes that Moses had with woman in London would take bags of ballad Moses move through all the nationalities in the world and then he start the circle again" (102–03). That swagger, moreover, is clearly directed at the conquest of White women only, while Black women are presented as sexually undesirable: "As far as spades hitting spades it ain't have nothing like that for a spade wouldn't hit a spade when it have so much other talent on parade" (107).

The 'slackness' of *The Lonely Londoners* flies in the face of English contemporary discourses about West Indian migration, by deliberately fuelling, rather than attempting to appease, a moral panic revolving around images of Black criminality, sexual licentiousness and fears of miscegenation. As Paul Gilroy remarks: "Concern about the criminal behaviour of black settlers in the late 1940s and 1950s assumed a different form, clustering around a distinct range of anxieties and images in which sexuality and miscegenation were often uppermost" (Gilroy 1992, 79). Selvon's take on the intersections of gender and race (and class) has accordingly provoked a range of critical responses and attempts at explanation.

At its worst, these responses entirely neglect the novel's performative dimensions and plural frames of reference. A case in point is Lewis MacLeod, who chooses to take the narrative at face value when arguing that "the light-hearted attitude about sex cannot disguise the pathology that underlies it" (2005, 164). He draws on critical masculinity studies to propose that in the absence of crucial attributions of 'real' manhood, the role of sexual potency expands to clinical proportions for the novel's Black male protagonists. Heavily (mis)using the theories of the Martinican psychoanalyst and revolutionary Frantz Fanon, MacLeod accordingly proposes that the perpetual desire to conquer White women in *The Lonely Londoners* really only displaces the Black men's desire for White masculinity. Sam Selvon's boys are all "mimic men" (MacLeod 2005, 160), pathologically trying to screw themselves into the place of the English White male.

The most pressing problem of such a reading is that it entirely ignores the fact that *The Lonely Londoners* is not a realist text in the Western tradition, as it is triggered by its creole 'aurality': It misses out on the fact that, as John Thieme has elaborated, *The Lonely Londoners* is a "carnival text in that it subverts the norms of the dominant tradition of Western fiction by instating the oral over the literary" (Thieme 2003, 62). If one accepts the primacy of Caribbean orature, then this also

calls for different modes of critique; it calls for an "alternative hermeneutics" (Gikandi) which draws on the histories and conventions of the written page as much as on the Trinidadian carnival tent with its intricate communicative rituals and local histories of "parody, subversion and irony as a source of renewal" (Thieme 2003, 62).

One of the most profound interventions into the debates of gender and race in *The Lonely Londoners* building on this insight is Kate Houlden's (2012), who argues that the novel's often noted recourse to calypsonian models matters not only as an aesthetic structuring device, but is also foundational for its racial and sexual politics. Following Simon Gikandi's seminal argument that popular cultural styles of performance like calypso are "important because they challenge the very foundations of Eurocentric cultural codes and suggest and alternative hermeneutics" (Houlden 1992, 96), Houlden traces the parallels between the narrative performance of the novel and performances of hyperbolic Black masculinity in calypso (a form of expression originating in the creole experience of slavery and the profanating mimicry of the White masters' discourse). Drawing on the Mighty Sparrow's controversial song "Congo Man" as an example, in which Sparrow sings about White women being attacked and eaten by African men (riffing on contemporary reports from the Belgian Congo), she traces how the calypsonian deliberately expropriates White fantasies of Black savagery, using hyperbolic laughter and inversion as a satirical weapon to confront and to dismantle limiting stereotypes of Blackness (see Holden 1992, 34–35).

Surely, the calypsonian model is hardly emancipatory in and by itself. This concerns less Western critics on whom the Caribbean generic dimensions of performance are lost and who see their prejudices confirmed in seeming social and psychological realisms. It rather concerns the detrimental side effects of "a real carnival slackness" (99) on the politics of representing Black women against Eurocentric stereotypes, within a West Indian "alternative hermeneutics" that is translated into the Western form of the novel. Still, Sam Selvon's fusion of Caribbean and European epistemic models is remarkable for its politics of *créolité* long before this concept was theorized, especially in francophone Caribbean discourses. In their *In Praise of Creoleness*, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant and Jean Bernabé lay out a literary program which could be modelled on *The Lonely Londoners*, by asserting the continuing relevance of oral epistemologies in the modern world system: "In short, we shall create a literature," they write, "which will obey all the demands of modern writing while taking roots in the traditional configurations of our orality" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant 1993, 98).

It is remarkable in this context that Selvon did not originally intend a novel entirely in creole. He commented on the genesis of the novel:

> I had difficulty starting the novel in straight English. The people I wanted to describe were entertaining people indeed, but I could not really move. At that stage, I had written the narrative in English and most of the dialogues in dialect. Then I started both narrative and dialogue in dialect and the novel just shot along. (Selvon qtd. in Fabre 1988, 66)

The reason why the novel would have "shot along" in this new approach is that it no longer allowed for what Catherine Belsey terms a "hierarchy of discourses" that is typical of the "illusionism" of realist fiction, featuring an authorial voice which establishes and vouches for "the truth of the story" (Belsey 1980, 70). To install a narrator/performer speaking the same literary creole as his characters was thus

much more than merely an aesthetic move: It was also a key ideological move which challenges dominant philosophies of subjectivity. The narrative subject in *The Lonely Londoners* undercuts the notion of the bounded, autonomous subjectivity installed by the European Enlightenment (see ch. 7). Instead, the authorial self is inherently relational and collective, extending into and blending in with the performed voices of characters, refraining from judgement or a drive toward closure. As Gordon Rohlehr, the doyen of calypso criticism, writes: "In *The Lonely Londoners* it is the group that has a full self, that faces the wilderness and survives" (Rohlehr 1988, 41).

It is vital to note in this context that Selvon's approach to narrative voice does not simply displace the liberalist traditions of European authorial narration by a purportedly 'authentic' Caribbean orality. Selvon is outspoken about the fact that his discourse is, in the best sense, "artificial and fabricated." He remarks: "I did not pick the Jamaican way of talking in London. I only tried to produce what I believed was thought of as a Caribbean dialect. The modified version in which I write my dialect may be a manner of extending the language" (Selvon qtd. in Fabre 1988, 67). Selvon's policy of "extending the language" for his literary purposes shuns simplistic notions of tradition or authenticity played out against trajectories of the modern. Rather, it is inclusive in its approach to *créolité*, along the lines outlined by Chamoiseau, Confiant and Bernabé: It is inclusive in the more profane sense of catering to a plural range of readerships, be they European, West Indian or situated elsewhere (see also ch. 4). Yet in a more profound sense it is inclusive in not rejecting, but adopting and syncretizing Western literary traditions within the alternative epistemologies of West Indian styles. Kathy Birat puts this most elegantly when she insists that Selvon was "increasing the capacity of the language to become a dimension of the narrative, to express more than just a Caribbean reality." Selvon, she holds, "was ultimately creating what Bakhtin would call an 'image' of the language, thus bringing it into dialogic tension with the other languages of the English novel. This was Selvon's stroke of genius" (Birat 2009, 3).

The Lonely Londoners does thus not subvert, or write back (see ch. 18) in anger to the tradition of the English novel. Rather, it generously endows an ossified tradition with new aesthetic and ideological possibilities. Most fundamentally, it explores ways of writing beyond the endemic loneliness not only of its characters, but of the modern condition. Distinctly geared against what Michael Taussig frames as a "self-enclosed and somewhat paranoid, possessive, individualized sense of self [which] ideally incorporates [...] wealth, property, citizenship" (Taussig 1993, 97), the novel programmatically draws on what Paul Gilroy called the "ethics of antiphony" inherent in Black Atlantic epistemologies, an ethics that is deeply rooted in "the experience of performance with which to focus the pivotal relationship between performer and crowd, participant and community" (Gilroy 1993, 203).

The Lonely Londoners is in this sense a novel that is not only to be read, but also to be carefully listened to, as its ballads call for a communal response. That response is triggered, first and foremost, by the artful musicalization and seemingly effortless flow of language. Selvon himself emphasizes that he spent hours on perfecting the sound of his writing: "I experimented with the language as it is used by Caribbean people. I found a chord, it was like music, and I sat like a passenger in a bus and let the language do the writing" (Selvon 1995, 60). The result is a classic example of what we have called "border epistemology" in a decolonial mode: A text which translates the Trinidadian carnival tent onto the readerly page; a text which

models its collectivizing authorial voice on the figure of the calypsonian and his "fierce commitment to the life of the reveller, the man who has not yet been sophisticated into shame and respectability" (Rohlehr qtd. in Houlden 2012, 33), an 'aural' text which sustains the tragic-comic spirit of the calypsonian ballad with all its "subversive irony, the melodramatic exaggeration of farcical anecdotes, racial stereotyping, repetition for dramatic effect and the inclusion of topical political material" (Nasta 2002, 57) in a carnivalesque performance which ultimately explodes the petty boundaries of race, class and nation (for an extended discussion of Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*, see Eckstein 2017).

Decolonizing the Border: Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987)

Our second close reading focuses on what has become a central text of border studies and a nexus for the ideas and agendas of the Chicano movement, Chicana feminism, queer studies, postcolonial studies, and various other movements and approaches. Beginning with the physical US/Mexican border discussed above, Anzaldúa both critiques colonial border epistemologies and proposes alternative epistemologies of linguistic, artistic, and cultural borders, as well as borders of gender and sexual orientation. Right from its mixed-language title and the slash that indicates connection and partition, *Borderlands/La Frontera* questions closed systems of knowledge and classification as established by Western modernity and male power. The text draws on various languages and registers, such as standard and informal English, Castilian Spanish, Mexican Spanish, TexMex and other forms of local dialect and slang, as well as words and concepts taken from Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs. Writing in a genre she calls "autohistoria," Anzaldúa presents, in the words of Sonia Saldívar-Hull, "history as a serpentine cycle rather than a linear narrative" (2). *Borderlands* traces Anzaldúa's personal story and the history of her Chicano homeland and culture by combining autobiographical prose writing with poetry, theory with excerpts from popular music, quotes from historical records with Mexican sayings and folk tales. Alejandro Solomianski has argued that in its combination of orality and writing, *Borderlands* "removes the solidness of the category 'book'" (2003, 60). As various critics agree, the form and language of *Borderlands* simultaneously express the fragmentation and violence experienced by the Chicanx community, undermine and deconstruct standard Western epistemology, and create new, plural forms of knowledge, subjectivity, and language.

Anzaldúa begins her project by describing the history and geopolitical terrain of the borderland between Mexico and the United States. She evokes the Indigenous Aztec empire, its conquest and colonization by the Spaniards from the 16th century onwards, the eventual independence of Mexico from Spain, the migration of American settlers into Texas (at that time a part of Mexico), and the US-American war against Mexico in 1846. This war ended in Mexico's massive cession of territory – today's Texas (already annexed by the US in 1845), California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Wyoming – to the US in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo of 1848. Focusing on her native Texas but implying the wider 'Southwest,' Anzaldúa describes how Mexicans living in these territories suddenly found themselves under the sovereignty of the United States and were often vio-

lently deprived of the land they had farmed and owned. No longer Mexican citizens, but second-class US-American citizens at best, the people of the Southwest became 'Chicanos,' and the disputed area itself became a borderland. Anzaldúa's borderland, thus, is not simply the current border between the US and Mexico, but includes the areas formerly Mexican and now US-American, as well as the border areas in Mexico that are economically controlled and exploited by US companies and interests (Orozco-Mendoza 2008, 25).

The way Anzaldúa narrates her personal and cultural history is exemplary for her strategy of setting things adrift. On the one hand, like the Chicano slogan "I didn't cross the border, the border crossed me," which serves to point out that U.S/Mexican border issues are not simply about migration, Anzaldúa herself has highlighted that she belongs to the seventh generation of her family living in Texas. This is an effective way of enforcing the legitimacy and priority of Chicano habitation in the Southwest, a space often called Aztlán in evocation of the Aztec designation of the area. In this version of history, the 'migrants' are US-American: "in the 1800s," Anzaldúa writes, "Anglos migrated illegally into Texas, which was then part of Mexico" (28). On the other hand, Anzaldúa's autohistoria also emphasizes her own, and her people's, movement. As a child, she herself moved through Texas with her parents, who were migrant workers. In addition, her narrative of multiple layers of colonization (of the Southwest by the Aztecs, of the Aztecs by the Spaniards, of the Mexicans by the US-Americans) abounds with the motif of migration. Anzaldúa explains how Indigenous people first "migrated across the Bering Straits and walked south across the continent" and points to the archaeological traces of the "Indians who migrated through, or permanently occupied, the Southwest, Aztlán." She relates how "The Aztecs (the Nahuatl word for people of Aztlán) left the Southwest in 1168 A. D.," famously migrating south to found Tenochtitlán, present-day Mexico City (26–27). As *mestizo* (mixed-race) descendants of Indigenous and Spanish ancestry, the Mexicans, in Anzaldúa's narration, are heir to the history of these multiple migrations.

Anzaldúa includes into this history the exploratory movements of the Spanish colonizers, who travelled north from their established colonies into the area that is today's borderland in search of gold and other riches in the 16th century. However, she gives this history a decisive twist:

> Our Spanish, Indian, and *mestizo* ancestors explored and settled parts of the U. S. Southwest as early as the sixteenth century. For every gold-hungry *conquistador* and soul-hungry missionary who came north from Mexico, ten to twenty Indians and *mestizos* went along as porters or in other capacities. [...] For the Indians, this constituted a return to the place of origin, Aztlán, thus making Chicanos originally and secondarily indigenous to the Southwest. (27)

In Anzaldúa's narrative, people moving north from Mexico into Aztlán have a long history, and for those of Indigenous and *mestizo* origin, this migration is a return home to the mythological Aztec homeland which the Aztecs had left to found Tenochtitlán. This conception of home is also extended to present-day Mexicans who migrate to the US. Explaining how US-American economic influence contributes to the poverty in Mexico that pushes Mexicans to pursue a life in the United States, she writes: "North Americans call this return to the homeland the silent invasion" (32). In a parody of US foundational mythology, Anzaldúa describes this "tradition of migration, a tradition of long walks" as "*El retorno* to the promised land" (33). She

thus undermines US border epistemologies and sets them adrift as the borderland takes on multiple dimensions: It is the original homeland of the Aztecs before they migrated south; it is a Mexican space annexed by the US, producing Chicanos as a people neither fully Mexican nor fully American; it is a Chicano homeland and a site of struggle against racism and dispossession.

In her work on Anzaldúa's border epistemologies, Elva Orozco-Mendoza singles out a passage in which Anzaldúa describes the US immigration police deporting workers they deem illegal. The passage in *Borderlands* runs:

> In the fields, *la migra*. My aunt saying, "*No corran*, don't run. They'll think you're *del otro lao*." In the confusion, Pedro ran, terrified of being caught. He couldn't speak English, couldn't tell them he was fifth generation American. *Sin papeles* – he did not carry his birth certificate to work in the fields. *La migra* took him away while we watched. [...] They deported him to Guadalajara by plane. [...] Pedro walked all the way to the valley. *Se lo llevaron sin un centavo al pobre. Se vino andando desde Guadalajara*. (26)

In Orozco-Mendoza's reading, Pedro's arrest is an example of the racialization of border control, since his Mexican 'look' is taken as evidence of his illegal status (2008, 35). Pedro's status as "fifth generation American" and his "birth certificate," on the other hand, narratively affirm the Chicano claim to presence. In addition, Pedro's return north on foot is placed in the tradition of migration elaborated by Anzaldúa in her telling of the history of the Southwest.

In the poems included in *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa consistently extends the legitimacy of the Chicano claim to presence in the Southwest to all Mexicans and anchors illegal practices firmly in the Anglo-American mainstream. The aptly named poem "*El sonavabitche*" features a US-American employer who knowingly hires undocumented Mexican workers only to betray them to *la migra* before having to pay their wages. In a dramatic ending, the poem enacts a moment of overlap between the undocumented Mexican workers who have fled the police and a Chicana, who confronts the employer and forces him to give her the workers' wages with the words: "Sweat money, mister, blood money, / not my sweat, but same blood" (150). The Chicana's identification with the workers is undermined by the suspicions of the employer: "You want to keep it for yourself?" he asks, attempting to sever the connection between the documented and undocumented, the Chicana and the Mexicans, but also pointing to the Chicana's comparative position of privilege. The Chicana upholds the identification by explaining her interference as an act of prevention in a larger political frame that looks to the future: "If I ever hear that you got illegals on your land / even a single one, I'm going to come here / in broad daylight and have you / hung by your balls" (150).

Fashioning a layered narrative of positions and counter-positions that complicate easy slogans and solutions, Anzaldúa has the Chicana speaker prohibit the US-American employer from bringing in undocumented workers. Her threat effectively reverses the threat of lynching, a violation that Anglos have historically used against Mexicans, as Anzaldúa graphically describes in some of her poems. But while the Chicana's position is aimed at preventing abuse, her prohibition cannot but enforce the workers' absence. In the end, the workers have still been driven away, and even the Chicana's act of justice cannot easily restore them to the land.

In the same way that these histories constantly shift perspectives, Anzaldúa's description of the borderland emphasizes both the dynamicism of this space and the stasis of being locked in or locked out, which creates the borderland as a "war zone"

and "shock culture, a third country, a closed country" (33). Critics agree that *Borderlands* hinges on this double description of the border as a creative space of change and a stifling space of marginalization and dispossession (see, for example, Goulart Almeida 2000, 35; Perales 2013, 164; Saldívar 2007, 359). In Anzaldúa's words:

> The US-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country – a border culture. Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. [...] *Los atravesados* live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the "normal." Gringos in the U. S. Southwest consider the inhabitants of the borderlands transgressors, aliens – whether they possess documents or not, whether they're Chicanos, Indians or Blacks. Do not enter, trespassers will be raped, maimed, strangled, gassed, shot. (25)

The images of the open wound, of incessant bleeding and murderous assault, emphasize the violence of the borderland, a violence committed in the creation of borders as well as the daily violence against those who dwell in the borderland. Elsewhere, Anzaldúa describes the border as a "thin edge of barbwire" tearing a people apart, but also cutting open the speaker's own body (24–25). The border itself splits the world into *us* and *them*, enforcing the power of this gesture by explicitly punishing those who fall between established categories of race, behavior, or sexual orientation. Those in-between are seen by the mainstream as both vulnerable and troublesome, which is expressed in the aggressive and derogatory terms used to describe them. However, the distinction between border (the 'line in the sand' or 'barbwire') and border*land* points to the fact that such divisions cannot hold – there will always be those who are in-between the clear-cut divisions. The passage also suggests that the borderland is both a physical space and a site of violently competing worldviews. According to Ana Cruz García, Anzaldúa's rendering of the borderland is a historical, but also an epistemological response to Western imperialism: "*Borderlands* represents [...] a constant reminder of the impossibility to separate the celebrated hybridity that today constitutes the border and its subjects from its imperial origins as it is this imperial attitude that still remains in today's reality despite its numerous disguises" (n. pag., 2008).

In this reading, the book becomes a critique not simply of geopolitical borders or imperialist history, but of colonial border epistemologies, the systems of knowledge and classification installed by imperialism and still active today. Anzaldúa herself has pointed out that while the history she is retelling is grounded in the specificity of the Southwest, it also explores "[t]he psychological borderlands, the sexual borderlands and the spiritual borderlands" on a more general scale (19). In this version, the border as line becomes the borderland as an in-between space that, in turn, is extended to the plural of borderlands in a more general sense.

Some critics have thus argued that *Borderlands* must be read as a universal theory of the transnational, the deterritorialized, or the in-between. Others have cautioned that Anzaldúa's work indeed shifts from the geographical to the epistemological borderlands, but must nevertheless be contextualized, since it critiques ways of knowing the world that are linked to the colonial and imperialist history of the Southwest. In such a reading, the borderland describes a historical and cultural

position *from which* to speak. As Cruz García points out by paraphrasing Walter Mignolo's reading of *Borderlands* in his book *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, the borderland becomes "an in-between personal location from where to think the past and the present rather than a hybrid space to talk about" (Cruz García n. pag., 2008). Anzaldúa's text thus becomes the site of border thinking, a critical engagement with colonial epistemologies and a re-envisioning of different and plural ways of knowing the world.

For Anzaldúa, this critical engagement means thinking differently about identity and subjectivity. While *Borderlands* is no easy celebration of hybridity, Anzaldúa nevertheless takes advantage of the "constant state of transition" in the borderland to develop a new conception of the subject. In the process, she critiques White racism and class discrimination, but also attacks the sexism and homophobia inherent not only in Anglo cultures, but in Chicano and Aztec cultures. By challenging (White) heterosexual privilege, Anzaldúa is an early example of a queer of color scholar who contributes to shaping intersectionality within Chicana feminism (see ch. 15). This is achieved by rejecting binaries in order to rethink categories of difference. Identifying as a queer woman of color, Anzaldúa looks to mythical female figures of Aztec and Chicano culture as models for new subject positions, but explains that these figures need to be freed from sexist interpretations that tend to split women into a mother/whore dichotomy. Her re-appropriation of female Aztec deities and her re-reading of the *mestiza* Virgen de Guadalupe begin by showing how these figures have been used to bolster male and imperialist power via strategies of division (good mother/bad rebellious woman) and mixing (the *mestiza* figure as an instrument of the Catholic church, used to missionize and control the Mexican population). Against this instrumentalization, Anzaldúa re-constructs figures like Coatlicue, the Serpent Goddess, who combines male and female attributes and powers but never appears predictable, stable, and controllable. While some critics have taken Anzaldúa to task for her own, potentially dehistoricizing appropriation of Indigenous myths and figures, others argue that her use of these figures is non-essentialist, producing not the historical or contemporary 'truth' of Indigenous culture but rather pluralist subjects in a clearly experimental mode (see Yarbro-Bejarano 1994, 11 and Kauffmann 2013, 65).

In several chapters of *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa traces the psychological process of decolonization. Her speaker, who is often anguished, isolated, and terrified by life in the borderland, struggles to face the structures of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia that are the legacy of the colonial history of the Southwest. Out of this painful process, she develops a new subject position: the "new mestiza." In a chapter titled "*La conciencia de la mestiza*," Anzaldúa builds on the Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos's (1882–1959) theory of *mestizaje*, a genetic mixing that Vasconcelos saw as characteristic of the colonial history of the Iberian colonies in the Americas. In Vasconcelos' vision, *mestizaje* would ultimately produce a global race, *la raza cósmica*, encompassing elements of all the world's populations and thereby contributing to cultural diversity, peace, and brotherhood.

Contemporary readers have found many objections against such a position: even while it is meant to attack White racism's attempt to preserve an imagined racial 'purity,' the idea of *mestizaje* nevertheless is itself a brand of racial thinking and can arguably serve to glorify the violence of rape and abuse that often lay at its heart in the Americas. In addition, as critics have argued, the idea that 'everyone is mixed' may even serve to obscure persisting hierarchies of skin color and, in the context of

the Americas, tends to ignore the ongoing oppression or marginalization of Indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, Anzaldúa celebrates the idea of "racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollinization" as the basis for the emergence of what she calls "a new *mestiza* consciousness, *una conciencia de mujer*. It is a consciousness of the Borderlands" (99). Anzaldúa describes this consciousness as a discarding of rigid categories and boundaries, a development of tolerance for ambiguity, a process of learning to operate "in a pluralistic mode." The new mestiza "learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, she learns to be a Mexican from an Anglo point of view. [...] Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else" (101).

Anzaldúa's concept of the new mestiza is itself full of contradictions: while she grounds it in the experiences of queer people, women, and *mestizo/as*, she nevertheless argues that such consciousness must not be specific to race, gender, or sexual orientation. While she claims that the new mestiza turns ambivalence into something new, this 'something' is nevertheless not an easy synthesis or balancing (101). While the new mestiza consciousness is part of the resistance against Anglo imperialism, White racism, and Chicano sexism and speaks back to a universalizing White feminism, it is nevertheless more than a "counterstance" (100). Rather, as an epistemological challenge, Anzaldúa propagates a "massive uprooting of dualistic thinking" (102) and the embracing of identities that are never finished, but always changing. While she connects this work with consciousness, she nevertheless includes the project of reviving suppressed inner voices and combatting unconscious patterns of prejudice.

In his description of what he calls Anzaldúa's "queer methodology," Ian Barnard argues that her text "presents a fundamental critique and reformulation of the very notion of identity, albeit – crucially – from a politicized Chicana lesbian perspective" (1997, 46). As in the discussion of the borderland, which is rooted in a specific history and location but nevertheless becomes a space from which to know the larger world, identity is fashioned from specific experiences but becomes a dynamic position from which to think and speak about the world in general.

One of the ways in which such dynamic forms of speaking and knowing are exemplified in *Borderlands* is the use of language (see ch. 4). This pertains both to what Anzaldúa says about language and to the language of the text itself. In the chapter "How to Tame a Wild Tongue," she argues that language is used as a tool of social marginalization and domination. Like many other writers who have experienced colonialism, Anzaldúa points out that alienating a people from their language can lead to individual and cultural dissolution. In the borderland, the implicit hierarchy posits English as the language of power and culture. She recounts how she was beaten at school for speaking Spanish, how her own mother encouraged her to speak English without an accent in order to get a good job, and how her university career began with an English pronunciation class mandatory for all Chicanx students. Not only did this establish English as the proper language of knowledge and power; in the process, Spanish was marginalized and often lost. In Anzaldúa's words: "*El Anglo con cara de inocente nos arrancó la lengua*" (76). But while English dominated Spanish, Spanish was likewise a colonial language that sought to erase Nahuatl and other Indigenous languages. Again, Anzaldúa attempts both to address the erasure and to retain traces of the colonized language. Some of her central concepts are expressed in Nahuatl and are attempts to creatively re-envision Aztec conceptions of knowledge. A striking example is her description of the new

mestiza as being "in a state of constant mental nepantlism, an Aztec word meaning torn between ways" (100).

Contemporary Chicanos, Anzaldúa observes, are caught between American English and a form of Spanish that both bespeaks the place of origin of the Spanish colonizers and the subtle traces left by Nahuatl. From this, Chicanos developed a new language which expressed their experience of the borderland, "a language with terms neither *español ni inglés*, but both. We speak a patois, a forked tongue, a variation of two languages" (77). The serpent imagery reappears in this quote, carrying both the connotations of empowerment and the outside view of dishonesty. This latter connotation becomes clear when Anzaldúa explains that Spanish speakers from Spain and Latin America frequently chide Chicano Spanish as impure, a betrayal of Spanish via its incorporation of English elements. Against such criticism, Anzaldúa posits the necessity of language as an ever-evolving form of expression which, in turn, can serve as a tool of social transformation. But she also records how her own Chicano Spanish, and the wider culture in which she grew up, carries the legacy of homophobia, racism, and sexism. Addressing these legacies, according to Anzaldúa, must be a part of keeping Chicano speech alive and evolving.

Some critics have argued that Anzaldúa's transgressive use of language still does not go far enough. Marlene Hansen Esplin acknowledges that *Borderlands* resists

> both the notion of a monolingual literary text and the idea of a static linguistic community by code-switching, creating calques (writing in one language in a way that recalls another language), providing both literal and nonliteral translations, or by recurring to other transgressive or nonnormative linguistic strategies. (2016, 176)

According to Hansen Esplin, these strategies also force readers to negotiate the difficult linguistic experience of the borderlands. Nevertheless, she argues that the text sets up its own implicit hierarchy by constantly providing explanations and contextualization for the English reader: "Insomuch as she compensates for potential unknowns in Spanish by explaining more in English, Spanish is figured as an Other language marked by italics and accounted for by parentheses, footnotes, repetition, context, or other strategies of translation" (Hansen Esplin 2016, 182).

In contrast, Walter Mignolo argues that Anzaldúa's text is an example of what he calls "languaging," a "moving away from the idea that language is a fact (e. g., a system of syntactic, semantic, and phonetic rules) toward the idea that speaking and writing are moves that orient and manipulate social domains of interaction" (Mignolo 1996, 188). In Mignolo's reading, the "linguistic cartography" of Anzaldúa's borderlands thus implies "a reordering of epistemology" (Mignolo 1996, 196). In Anzaldúa's own words: "I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet" (103).

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6 *Interlude:* Orientalism

Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* (1978) is often taken to be the starting point as well as one of the foundational texts for postcolonial studies. Drawing on the theories of Michel Foucault regarding the relationship between power and knowledge, and on Antonio Gramsci's conception of cultural hegemony, Said describes the three dimensions of Orientalism which feature in his text as follows. First, Orientalism is an academic field. Second, it is also "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (Said 1991, 2). This dichotomy has been employed by the West as a way of defining itself against its Other as well as internalized and reproduced by numerous writers, musicians, administrators, philosophers etc. Collectively, they participate in what Foucault calls a discourse – a set of signifying practices which in concert constitute what can and cannot be thought and said, in this case, about the Orient. Such discourses become hegemonic in the Gramscian sense when not only their subjects but also their objects (in this context people from the 'Orient') internalize them. The regulative power of discourses also manifests itself in institutions. Therefore, thirdly, Said defines Orientalism as "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient" (Said 1991, 3), a material domination enabled and maintained by discourse and enacted through the military, education, bureaucrats.

Considering Orientalism as an academic discipline, it is remarkable that in the late 18th century, a new branch of the humanities started to flourish in many European countries – Orientalism (now rather called Oriental Studies), with the Orientalist as its expert. Said's book is a revision of the body of texts produced by numerous predominantly British and French Orientalists, who studied the languages, religions, architecture or cultures of the East. It is no coincidence that Orientalism became prominent at this specific point in time, as Napoleon's successful campaign in Egypt, starting in 1798, triggered a new geopolitical interest in the East, which resulted in colonization and a violent subjugation, also by way of textual representation. Orientalism was supported in this endeavour by other disciplines like anthropology, history, philosophy, literature and archaeology because knowledge about the Orient ensured the maintenance of colonial power.

Said argues that the West invents the Orient as 'Other,' but it does so chiefly in order to define *itself*. For this reason, Orientalism reveals more of the will, desires, interests and tendencies of the West and the identity of Europe (and later the US) than it does of those of the East. The Orient is described as *lacking*, a civilization in decline, but, in order to justify the civilizing mission, it is also read as the forbidden and desirable place. Taking the Western self as the norm and rendering the 'Other' as an object of knowledge, the relationship between the two is, in a homogenizing and essentializing move, always described by means of binaries, such as civilized vs. barbaric, rational vs. irrational, dynamic vs. static. These dichotomizing descriptions are, of course, not value-free but create hierarchies, as the term in the binary considered positive is always ascribed to the West. Furthermore, the vast diversity of peoples and cultures in the 'Orient' is homogenized to create an imaginative geography that was translated into (French and British) colonial policy. Said underlines the prominence of culture in this respect as it sustained the imperialist project.

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Said's analysis also accounts for a specific set of changes on the surface of Orientalist discourse, as *latent* Orientalism serves as the relatively constant blueprint of fears and anxieties, but also dreams and fantasies about the Other, while *manifest* Orientalism designates the knowledge produced at different points in history. What made Said's notion of Orientalism so successful is, however, the fact that his observations were based on an analysis of discourse which opened up a completely new field of inquiry with regard to the cultural forms of colonial ideologies – colonial discourse analysis. It was, therefore, not Said's aim to compare the findings of the various Orientalists with the 'real' Orient, but to point out that the construction of the Orient is a discursive practice that constitutes what 'reality' is perceived to be in the first place.

Despite its influence, *Orientalism* has also been critiqued and reworked from various vantage points. Thus, Dennis Porter (1993) pointed out the homogenizing, ahistorical treatment of Western discourse by Said, which neither allowed for counter-hegemonic thought nor for more dynamic binaries. Aijaz Ahmad (1992) criticized the overt textuality of Said's endeavour, which allegedly neither addresses the interdependency of Orientalism and the development of capitalism, nor takes the actual material realities into account. Homi Bhabha (1994), on the other hand, highlights Said's mistaken belief in the uniformity of colonialist discourse and instead emphasizes its ambivalence and heterogeneity. Furthermore, feminist scholars, such as Reina Lewis (1995), Meyda Yeğenoğlu (1998), and Malini Johar Schueller (1998) have made major contributions to the study of Orientalism by articulating the ways in which sexual difference is a key component in the constructions of East and West and by focusing on the tensions between discourses of colonialism and gender.

Said himself has addressed some of the criticisms levelled against him in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). Here, he provides contrapuntal readings of Western and non-Western cultural productions, which trace the influence of Western mainstream culture on colonialism and imperialism but also highlight strategies of postcolonial resistance.

Orientalism is still a productive concept in postcolonial studies. Not only do Orientalist images persist in the present (as, for example, particularly visible in representations of Islam but also in Hollywood film productions with their misleading stereotypes and parodies of 'Eastern' languages), they are also still used to justify imperialism and military invention as a means of 'saving' the 'oppressed.' Furthermore, the concept has been fruitfully applied to other geopolitical regions historically designated as Other, peripheral or barbaric (an example for this is Valentin Mudimbe's *The Invention of Africa* [1988], which shows similar discursive operations at work in the creation of what he calls Africanism).

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7 Postcolonial Enlightenments

It has frequently been pointed out that Anglophone postcolonial theory traditionally has a highly critical if not outright hostile attitude towards the European Enlightenment. Recently, however, this critical stance has itself been severely interrogated from within the field of postcolonial studies (see Wiemann and Meyer 2016, 165–67). David Scott, for instance, observes that postcolonial "attacks on what is called 'the Enlightenment Project' often depend on a demonological reification of the idea of the Enlightenment" (Scott 2004, 178). Such 'demonologies,' according to Scott, tend to simplify the Enlightenment to an ideological trailblazer and stooge of European imperialism, Eurocentrism, and racism. They are, according to Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa, the outcome of an at best superficial engagement with the Enlightenment, most poignantly a refusal to actually read the material itself first hand: It is this "reluctance to engage with Enlightenment texts [that] leads to an unthinking replication of the Romantic and nineteenth-century repudiation of the Enlightenment" (Carey and Festa 2009, 15).

It is true that numerous influential texts of the postcolonial canon, especially from the 1980s and 1990s, are highly critical of the Enlightenment. Whether or not this occurs in the facile fashion that Scott, Carey and Festa, among others, complain about is a moot point. To engage this contentious issue, we will first revisit the major points of grievance that have been raised against the legacy of the Enlightenment in postcolonial theory as well as postcolonial literature. We will discuss how both critical and literary postcolonial writers have

a) put the Enlightenment to task for its Eurocentric myopia and absolutism; or
b) relativized the universalist tendencies inherent in much of European Enlightenment claims; or
c) proposed various modes of appropriating and modifying the legacy of the Enlightenment for postcolonial purposes.

In the concluding section we will suggest that the very notion of 'the Enlightenment' requires to be rigorously decentered, pluralized and democratized in global terms: Instead of one singular, capitalized Enlightenment lodged with 18th-century Europe, we argue that periods of largely region-specific forms of enlightenment have surfaced and been submerged again all through human history in all corners of the planet, not only in the agora of ancient Athens but also in the libraries of Timbuktu, or the madrassas and synagogues of Cairo or Baghdad.

Nor is enlightenment merely a matter of theory but also of practiced emancipation and democratization: It occurs through disputation as much as through direct intervention, and certainly not least in the persistent struggles of the enslaved, the marginalized and the discriminated for liberation and for recognition of their humanity. Postcolonial literature and theory alike have served as vehicles for both the critique of the limits of the Enlightenment, its past corruptions and shortcomings, as well as its as yet untapped potentials whose realization is still to come. What thus comes into view is a highly ambivalent appraisal rather than a superficial dismissal of the Enlightenment by postcolonial thought. In order to establish a perspective on these ambivalences, we will visit and revisit all through this chapter one exemplary literary work from the postcolonial corpus – David Dabydeen's novel *A Harlot's*

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Progress (2000) – that addresses the achievements and flaws of enlightenment in a particularly succinct and yet complex fashion

The Violence of Representation: David Dabydeen, *A Harlot's Progress* (2000)

Dabydeen's novel is set in late-18th-century England. The semi-fictional character Thomas Pringle, "generically named after the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society from 1827 to 1834" (Thomas 2001, 180), has tracked down Mungo, a former plantation slave and now "the oldest African inhabitant of London" (3), whose life story he tries to evince for emancipatory purposes: He wishes to edit Mungo's memoirs in the form of a 'slave narrative,' a popular 18th and 19th-century autobiographical genre in which former slaves recollected their suffering as well as their individual liberation in terms of an emancipation that was conventionally encoded as religious conversion. Even if this pattern of gradual or sudden endorsement of Christianity appears an indispensable story element in the slave narrative (see Carey 2005; Gould 2007), it would be one-sided to sweepingly claim that "[a]ll slave, or ex-slave, narratives are at bottom spiritual autobiographies" (Hinds 1998, 637) modelled on the Puritan tradition of 'true' accounts of conversion from sinner to believer. To the contrary, it is important to note that the genre of the slave narrative does not simply replicate this Puritan formula but that there is a veritable "countermovement in black autobiography [that] urged a more restrictively empirical narrative orientation" (Andrews 1988, 62) in which the actual experience of captivity, displacement and the atrocities of the Middle Passage and the plantation regime get registered in testimonial fashion: a testimony therefore not only of the convert's inner 'progress' but also of the appalling violence to which the author and his/her fellows are systematically and often also gratuitously exposed (see also our discussion of Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* in ch. 9).

The slave narrative is therefore both a spiritual confession and an empirical account. In both functions, its force hinges on the reader's agreement with the autobiographical pact that the text proposes; namely, that there is "*identity of name* between the author (such as s/he figures, by name, on the cover), the narrator of the story and the character who is being talked about" (Lejeune 1989, 12). This is the reason why, in the frame narrative of Dabydeen's novel, Mr Pringle is so eager to procure Mungo's information as raw material for "a book purporting to be a record of the Negro's own words" (3). Yet what is intended to pass for "Mungo's portrait in the first person narrative" (3) will in fact be Mr Pringle's text, a "novel story" (275) that will process and domesticate Mungo's unkempt experience into the mould of a well-shaped teleological narrative structure complete with "a beginning, a middle, an end" (275).

Historical analysis of the anti-slavery movement has demonstrated how the abolitionist "discourse of the spirit" (Thomas 2000, 29) productively conjoined traditions of radical Protestant dissent with the secularism and universalism of Enlightenment reason, engendering a "fusion of spiritual and liberationist discourse" (Thomas 2000, 36). In this view, the notion of an inalienable liberty and equality of all humans was grounded in Christian doctrine ('all men *created* equal') as much as in the proto-anthropological assumption of a shared 'human nature' common to one

and all. This shared humanity consisted not primarily in the faculty of reason but sympathetic fellow feeling: "The implicit egalitarianism of the sentimental belief that all humans felt deeply was a powerful influence in the formation of the moral conscience of the abolition movement" (Ellis 1996, 83). This "new philosophical school of 'benevolism'" (Marren 1993, 97) forms one of the major pillars of the general "Enlightenment ideology" (Davis 1966, passim) that energizes the poetics and politics of anti-slavery movements in Britain, Europe and the United States alike. The narrative and the readership that Pringle envisages are exactly consonant with this 'benevolist' Enlightenment agenda. The implied reader of the projected slave narrative will be the 'enlightened citizen' whose capacity and responsibility it is to deploy public reasoning in the service of society's and humanity's improvement: "He wants a sober testimony that will appeal to the Christian charity of an enlightened citizenry who will, on perusing my tale of undeserved woe, campaign in the Houses of Parliament for my emancipation and that of millions of my brethren" (5).

Yet Mungo turns out to be a highly reluctant informant and an extremely unreliable narrator, too, so that Pringle's well-meant endeavor gets as frustrated as the novel reader's narrative desire. Why is the former slave so full of contempt for the representative of the anti-slavery movement, and what is it that makes him refuse to collaborate in the laudable project of mobilizing public support for the abolitionist cause?

The major grievance that Mungo holds against Mr Pringle and polite enlightened British society in general is that they continue to objectify the African. Even if abolitionist practice stands in sharp contrast to the brutally literal reification that is slavery, it remains steeped in an ideology that categorically denies agentive subjectivity to the African, whether slave or free. While it would have been "the logical extension of the anti-slavery argument to champion African self-determination," it is exactly this idea of potential Black agency that British abolitionism soon abandoned; instead, it conventionalized a set of stereotypical images, story elements and *topoi* that constantly depicted Black people as "silent victims who depended upon outside intervention" (Ferguson 1992, 257; for a notable exception, see Earle 2005). On these grounds, Dabydeen's Mungo has good reason the be wary of Mr Pringle's advances: He will, the narrator suspects, "replicate [...] me in lies" and "chain me to the old firmament of stars, making me familiar [...] in my Christian distress at the sexual sin" (275). In short, Mr Pringle will construct a conventionalized and distorting representation in which the represented has no say. Enlightened abolitionism thus shades off into racism:

> He is utterly consternated at my words. He cannot believe me capable of speech as polished as my teeth once were. No, nigger does munch and crunch the English, nigger does jape and jackass the language, for he is of low brow and ape resemblances. No, I am not uncouth, I can write the story myself. (5)

Dabydeen's novel is thus to a large extent about the (im)possibility of the (former) slave producing his own narrative, the object of representation representing himself in a discursive field dominated by the forceful paradigm of "England's universality" (187), hence also the ironic reproduction of racist terminology as in the quote above. In this scenario, the Black subject is structurally disarticulated so that Mungo, even though 'not uncouth,' can*not* 'write his story himself but remains condemned to the status of the object of representation, either at the hand of Mr Pringle, or of the sneaking 'Mr Hogarth,' another semi-fictional character based on the canonical

18th-century painter and caricaturist William Hogarth, whose six-piece series of engravings, *A Harlot's Progress* (1732), gives Dabydeen's novel its title.

As we will see later, in his art-historical studies from the late 1980s, Dabydeen profiles the actual Hogarth as an ideal precursor of antiracist and emancipatory ideas who is exceptional in his determination and capacity to represent Black people not as caricatures but dignified individuals. All the more astonishing is it that the novel version of Hogarth appears as the precise opposite of this progressive politics of representation; as Mungo complains, "as to me, Mr Hogarth lied too. I wanted him to make me ordinary, for that is what a Negro is, ordinary man and woman" (273). This fictional and fictitious protest of the model against his representation points towards that which Hogarth's rendition of Mungo forecloses: the status of the Black person as 'man and woman.' What Hogarth withholds is the Black man's humanity. Instead, Mungo suggests, Hogarth collaborates in a mode of representation that produces its object as "*almost the same but not quite*," "*almost the same but not white*," as a figure defined as "the black semblance of the white presence" (Bhabha 1994, 89, 90).

Enlightenment on Trial

This interrogation of European Enlightenment claims to the monopoly on representation and to universal validity motivates and energizes many postcolonial interventions. These include, among others, the critique of conceptual universalism; the deconstruction of the linear teleology of history as progress; the questioning of an abstract and disembodied notion of the subject as *cogito*; and the exposure of the concomitant epistemic violence (see ch. 14) with which all alternative world views and forms of knowledge production were systematically degraded as immaturity, superstition and benightedness. In her influential *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (1998), Leela Gandhi suggests that beginning with "Descartes' philosophy of identity" the Enlightenment is "sustained through a violent and coercive relationship with its omitted Other [...] and has also endeavoured violently to repress all symptoms of cultural alterity" (Gandhi 1998, 40) – hence Mungo's suspicion that Mr Pringle is out to 'make him familiar.' In this perspective, Kant's *sapere aude* ('dare to know') functions as an ideological smokescreen that barely conceals the underlying will to power/knowledge which "concedes mastery as the single motivation for knowing the world" (Gandhi 1998, 41).

Thus, as "the Enlightenment perpetuated, along with its progressive 'overside,' an imperialist, competitive and hierarchical underside" (Shohat and Stam 1994, 87), the "male (white, Western) subject" gets universalized and "the Other excluded" (Yegenoglu 1998, 106). The ensuing scenarios of domination range from "epistemic violence" (Spivak 1988, 281; see ch. 14) to racist degradation and "colonial genocides" (Hulme 2005, 51). The discursive formation of Orientalism (see ch. 6) is intimately related to, and to some extent a subset of, the Enlightenment:

> Orientalism's enormous appetite for forms of knowledge – scientific, historical, geographic, linguistic, artistic, anthropological – derives in part from its location within the period of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment's universalising will to knowledge (for better or worse) feeds Orientalism's will to power. (Williams and Chrisman 1993, 8)

What Edward Said so minutely dissected for Orientalism – namely its status as a purely "textual universe" (Said 1978, 52), a self-enclosed system of specialists' and artists' cross-references – has also been attributed to the Enlightenment at large: In the same self-reproducing circularity that Said describes for Orientalism, the discourse of Enlightenment is structured by a dynamics of references and authorizations through which a plethora of objects of knowledge are constructed in a both systematic and systematizing manner. Reconstructing the emergence of 'race' as an object of systematic knowledge, Emmanuel Eze pointedly delineates how Enlightenment circularity operates like an echo chamber:

> we notice that Kant borrows historical perspectives from Buffon, but relies upon Hume for 'proofs' of specific opinions about the Negro. Blumenbach, meanwhile, relies upon the authority of Kant, in addition to Buffon and Linné, while Buffon, whom Kant cites, relied for evidence on Barrere, Littré, and Winslow. These last three authors were the main authorities cited in Diderot's *Encyclopédie* in the entry, 'Nègre.' Cuvier appealed to Blumenbach, who cited Kant, who cited Hume, while Thomas Jefferson refers to Hume and borrows from the *Encyclopédie*, and so forth. (Eze 1997, 6–7)

This virtually interminable referential web engenders not only a purely textual universe but also manifest material results – in the context of Eze's analyses, the Atlantic slave trade; in other contexts, land grabbing, conquest and displacement. Postcolonial theory responds to this nexus by insisting that the manifold historical structures and formations of modern European imperialist violence and domination are an immediate outgrowth of the 'darker side of the Enlightenment' (Hentges 1999).

If such a nexus can only be maintained on the condition of a hostile, one-sided and simplistic construction of the Enlightenment (as, e. g., Scott, Carey and Fest insinuate), then the same charge of simplification could be raised against these critics of postcolonial theory, which at a second glance can hardly be reduced to some kind of vulgar anti-Enlightenment *ressentiment* – just like the Enlightenment cannot seriously be boiled down to a mere imperialist ruse. Proceeding from this insight, Aamir Mufti identifies a twofold task for the budding projects of postcolonial revaluation and re-appropriation of the Enlightenment:

> to reconsider the [Frankfurt School's] critique of Enlightenment from the perspective of subject positions that cannot be subsumed within the narrative of seamless universalization of modern Western culture, [...] and to nudge away [postcolonial critique] from an undialectical rejection of Enlightenment as colonial domination. (Mufti 2007, 5)

Postcolonial engagements with the Enlightenment are therefore lodged with a subject, and ensue from a speaking position, that is eccentric to the modern West ("cannot be subsumed within the narrative of seamless universalization of modern Western culture") but for all that by no means outside of modernity.

Paradoxically, from a postcolonial perspective, modernity can only be universal to the extent that, and inasmuch as, it enables the postcolonial subject to articulate a deviant, different and particular modernity *through the application of universal reason*: "if there is any universal or universally acceptable definition of modernity, it is this: that by teaching us to employ the methods of reason, universal modernity enables us to identify the forms of our own particular modernity" (Chatterjee 1997, 270). Herewith, the Enlightenment is tossed into a maelstrom of potentially interminable strong rewritings that generate a multitude of locally specific variants, hybrids and mutations in which the alleged 'original' (now reconceived as just one among

many enlightenments) gets constantly modified and re-appropriated. Before we briefly discuss, in the following sections, three major strategies of such postcolonial appropriations – provincializing, tropicalizing, and decolonizing – we will turn back to David Dabydeen's critique of the Enlightenment's representation of the non-Western Other.

The Darker Side of Public Reasoning: David Dabydeen, *A Harlot's Progress* (2000)

The major mis-representer in Dabydeen's novel is not the hapless Mr Pringle but another historical figure: the painter and engraver William Hogarth, from whose six-piece series of engravings, *A Harlot's Progress* (1732), the book borrows its title. Widely canonized as the leading visual artist of the English Enlightenment (Paulson 2003, 145), Hogarth has often been seen as instrumental in the 'education' of an audience into that general public on whose uninhibited reasoning the Enlightenment project, according to thinkers from Kant to Habermas, pivots: "Hogarth quite purposively put the techniques of realism in the service of organising an audience's perceptions with a view to its developing independent critical standards" (Bender 2001, 54): *sapere aude*! It is important to note that public reasoning is not simply an abstract concept but a concrete social practice that as such depends on social institutions. In 18th-century England, the most important of these institutions was clearly the coffee house, which according to Jürgen Habermas provided a relatively "informal" (Habermas 1991, 31) space of untrammelled discussion among private individuals engaged in the public use of their reason. Coffee houses (of which by the middle of the 18th century some 3000 were registered in London alone) enabled

> a kind of social intercourse that, far from presupposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether. The tendency replaced the celebration of rank with a tact befitting equals. […] Not that this idea of the public was actually realized in earnest in the coffee houses […]; but as an idea it had become institutionalized and thereby stated as an objective claim. If not realized, it was at least consequential. (Habermas 1991, 36)

Against Habermas' assertion that the coffee house as an institution was relatively 'egalitarian' in terms of both class and gender, critics have argued that "those coffee-houses most akin to Habermas' model […] were relatively elite affairs wherein education, if not class or status *per se*, was a necessary accoutrement for attending" (Laurier and Philo 2007, 274). More than that, however, it is striking how even Habermas' critics mostly share his indifference towards the mundane circumstance that the English coffee house as a central institution of the emergent Enlightenment public sphere was materially dependent on the trans-Atlantic slave economy:

> In all the debate about the English coffee house perhaps the most curious fact of all is generally overlooked: here was an extraordinarily important institution […] which depended for its very existence on produce from the tropics. What made coffee palatable to Europeans was the addition of sugar. And the invisible ingredient which placed these exotic goods on tables throughout the western world was the toil of black slaves. (Walvin 1994, 4)

It is this inextricable nexus between public reasoning and 'produce from the tropics,' in short: between Enlightenment and slavery, that Dabydeen highlights in his novel.

A crucial episode in Mungo's testimony (or is it Pringle's fabrication?) is set in a London coffee house, which, however, is a far cry from the ideal public institution projected by Habermas. For where Habermas envisages a rational conviviality in which "the authority of the better argument could assert itself against that of social hierarchy" (Habermas 1991, 36), Mungo recalls "a scene as infernal as the slave-ship's hold":

> a pandemonium of voices: the agitation of card-players; excited babble about the prices of indigo and saltpetre; loud conversations about mortgages and tithes; the trading in wit and epigram by a table of scholars; aspiring politicians in full throat on the issues of excise and window-tax and the crisis in Calais. (163)

In this location, where everything from poetry to politics is debated in terms of commerce, the young Mungo too is transformed into a commodity and checked for his exchange value. For the coffee house is also an auction hall where Mungo, stripped of his coat and shirt, is put on display for bidding, exposed "to a room pack with men with red faces and wild looks as if they come to eat me, a fattened calf or suckling pig" (173). Dabydeen thus suggests another, more sinister transformation of the public sphere: not into the locus of rational deliberation but cannibalistic greed. Mungo's grotesque rendition of this domain is reminiscent of the "visual disorder," "formal anarchy" and "graphic excess" (Ogée and Meslay, 2006, 27) that characterizes Hogarth's satirical depictions of out-of-control London mobs composed of distorted and debased types rather than individuals, preferably prostitutes, drunkards male and female, and rogues and rowdies of all sorts.

Is Hogarth, like his contemporary Jonathan Swift, driven by a "misanthropic vision" (Bennett and Royle 2016, 301) that advocates the pessimistic notion of some essential bestiality inherent to humanity? Or does he, precisely by exaggerating the grotesque and abject, in fact point to the structural violence of which a distorted humanity is only the effect? How else could one make sense of the underlying tension between the pliantly organic and the rigidly geometrical that is conspicuous in so many of Hogarth's compositions? Here, dense crowds appear claustrophobically pressed into all too narrow rooms, lanes or squares so that "architectural formulae [...] do in fact contract, change and destroy Hogarth's people. The rectangular boxes of frames and rooms emphasise a grid that is artificially imposed on experience by society" (Paulson 1971, 88). As a consequence, society's most concise spatial image, in Hogarth's oeuvre, is not the coffee house (even though he shows that, too) but the prison or workhouse where the Enlightenment exercises its newly developed disciplinary techniques on the docile bodies of the governed, whether at home or in the colonies.

As historians from Michel Foucault to Timothy Mitchell have argued, the rapid modernization of disciplinary techniques in 18th- and 19th-century Europe was, like the advent of the coffee house, essentially dependent on colonial expansion; for it was in the colonies that many of the new forms of drill and regularization were first tested and refined before they were introduced in Europe. Through this "boomerang effect [of] colonial practice," a "whole series of colonial models was brought back to the West, and the result was that the West could practice something resembling colonization, or internal colonialism, on itself" (Foucault 2003, 103). From a postcolonial perspective, these "colonial models" are the dark flipside of "Enlightenment rationalism and the metanarratives of progress" (Chakrabarty 1998, 91) that require to be 'provincialized' in the name of the actual diversity of ways of being human.

Putting the Enlightenment in Its Place

Dipesh Chakrabarty's programmatic call to "provincialize Europe" (Chakrabarty 2000a) serves as a central leitmotif for Daniel Carey und Lynn Festa's collection of essays, *Postcolonial Enlightenment*. The heading of the first subchapter, "Provincializing Enlightenment," not only establishes a cross-reference to Chakrabarty's text right from the outset but also underscores how postcolonial theory, like Orientalism or the Enlightenment itself, tends to generate a "textual universe" of circular cross-hatchings between multiple texts and authors.

The central question of Carey and Festa's book is whether Enlightenment's universalism could possibly be reconciled with the recognition of difference and plurality that postcolonial projects principally advocate; in other words, whether the Enlightenment and its heirs have the capability to "accommodate diversity" (Festa and Carey 2009, 31). If this question appears to enable a thorough re-assessment of the Enlightenment (e. g. by focusing on the discourses of religious tolerance so typical of 18th-century European thought; see Carey and Trakulhun 2009, 240–80), then it needs to be added that nothing is particularly new about this 'revaluation' as far as the field of postcolonial studies is concerned, as a cursory glance at a few protagonists of 1990s postcolonialism will easily illustrate. Robert Young, one of the sharpest detractors of "the Enlightenment mainstream" (Young 1990, 165) and of the Eurocentric myth of progress and racial supremacy, yet concedes that "the Enlightenment's universalism and espousal of sameness had brought with it a doctrine of human equality" (Young 1995, 92).

In his immensely influential study, *The Black* Atlantic (1993), Paul Gilroy reconstructs how a specific Black modernity emerged from the oppositional appropriation of the impulses of imperialism (including the Enlightenment) to which it stands in an "antagonistic indebtedness" (Gilroy 1993, 191):

> The intellectual and cultural achievements of the Black Atlantic populations exist partly inside and not always against the grand narrative of Enlightenment and its operational principles. [...] These modern black political formations stand simultaneously both inside and outside the western culture which has been their peculiar step-parent. (Gilroy 1993, 48–49)

More recently, also Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak warns against a one-sided *tout court* rejection of the Enlightenment in "a bad faith position of the Enlightenment defined as a time in history when bourgeois capitalism began to rule the world. Or what is worse, Europeans trying to rule the world [...] in the name of Kant" (Spivak in Gallop 2004, 189). Her alternative project of a postcolonial "revision of Kant in today's world" (189) and more generally, a critical re-appropriation of the Enlightenment at large gets clearly signposted by the resonances of Kant and Schiller in the titles of some of her major works, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999) and *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (2012).

By no means does Spivak deny the Enlightenment's historical and systematic complicity with imperialism; yet she rejects the 'nativist' assumption that the "Prospero of Enlightenment" (Spivak 1999, 37) could be countered with a Caliban revolt from a position *outside* the force field of the Enlightenment. Instead she advocates, in the spirit of deconstructionist strategies of *bricolage*, to "ab-use" the Enlightenment in a process of affirmative sabotage or resistant appropriation (Spivak 2012, 4). Like Gilroy, who places the Black Atlantic in an 'antagonistic indebtedness' to the Enlightenment, Spivak articulates a complex and aporetic perspective, in which

Enlightenment and imperialism are inextricably interdependent genealogically: "The Enlightenment came, to colonizer and colonized alike, through colonialism" (4); moreover, as flipsides of each other, they function as "enabling violations" which Spivak drastically illustrates with the analogy to rape:

> My generation in India, born before Independence, realizes only too well that many officials of the civilizing mission of imperialism were well-meaning. The point here is not personal accusations. And in fact what these functionaries gave was often what I call an enabling violation – a rape that produces a healthy child whose existence cannot be advanced as a justification for the rape. Imperialism cannot be justified by the fact that India has railways and I speak English well. (Spivak 1999, 371)

Dipesh Chakrabarty's reflections of the conditions of the possibility of a postcolonial critique of Enlightenment rationalism and universalism also conclude in the assertion of an ineluctable obligation, however antagonistic and dissident, to the European Enlightenment. To some extent this is due to the immense discursive power that the Enlightenment has historically obtained, so that as a consequence any legitimized (and hence, effective) critique of the Enlightenment "can be produced only through a performative contradiction, i. e. by staying strictly within the procedures of such a rationalist tradition itself" (Chakrabarty 2000b, 278).

No doubt this scenario is deeply influenced by classic postmodern denunciations of Enlightenment reason, such as, e. g., Derrida's claustrophobic assertion that

> the unsurpassable, unique, and imperial grandeur of the order of reason, that which makes it not just another actual order or structure (a determined historical structure, one structure among other possible ones), is that one cannot speak out against it except by being for it, that one can protest it only from within it. (Derrida 2005, 43)

Similarly, for Chakrabarty, the obligation to comply with the referential frame and the procedural regulatives of the Enlightenment forms the *conditio sine qua non* for social intelligibility and thus the subject's linguistic and performative agency. Beyond this severe critique of rationalist epistemic monoculture, however, Chakrabarty conceives of the Enlightenment as a legacy of potentialities, first and foremost the "promise of an abstract, universal but never-to-be-realized humanity" (Chakrabarty 2000a, 254). This promise, for Chakrabarty, enables the persistent effort for the realization of human equality and social justice, but it can only become productive for the present when it is supplemented by the – apparently incompatible – acknowledgment of difference and plurality, of the "diverse ways of being human" (Chakrabarty 2000a, 254); when, in other words, the local and the particular constantly puts the universal and the general into its place and thus provincializes it. In such a framework, the postcolonial critic can acknowledge the legacy of Enlightenment as "a gift to us all" that should be accepted "in an anticolonial spirit of gratitude" (Chakrabarty 2000a, 255).

Orientalizing / Tropicalizing the Enlightenment

Such conciliatory assessments are underpinned by the notion that 'Europe' itself is not one homogeneous formation, and that the Enlightenment is not only an aggressively universalist and imperialistic ideology. In the wake of Gilroy, Spivak and Chakrabarty, this assumption has prompted a couple of important historical revi-

sions that, from a postcolonial perspective, attempt to unearth a lost counter-tradition within the European Enlightenment itself. This is the agenda of Sankar Muthu's 2003 study in historical political theory, *Enlightenment Against Empire*, which proceeds from the assumption that for a short moment in the second half of the eighteenth century, European Enlightenment radicalized itself into a 'truly anti-imperialist political philosophy.' Muthu frames this phenomenon as 'anomalous' precisely because it failed to take root in dominant European thought:

> While imperialist arguments surface frequently in eighteenth-century political debates, this period is anomalous in the history of modern political philosophy in that it includes a significant anti-imperialist strand [...]. In this respect the nineteenth-century European political and philosophical discourse on empire marked a return to pre-Enlightenment political thought. [...] It is perhaps by reading popular nineteenth-century political views of progress, nationality and empire back into the eighteenth century that 'the Enlightenment' as a whole has been characterized as a project that ultimately attempted to efface or marginalize difference, a characterization that has hidden from view the anti-imperialist strand of Enlightenment-era political thought. (Muthu 2003, 5–6)

It is Muthu's aim to recuperate this submerged anti-imperialist anomaly at the very heart of European Enlightenment – his key objects of study are Burke, Diderot and Kant.

In a similar fashion, the literary historian Srinivas Aravamudan contributes to a revision of the Enlightenment by exploring another suppressed and forgotten anomaly that, for him, goes by the name of *Enlightenment Orientalism*. Aravamudan's is a fragmentary counter-narrative to the tendency in literary history to elevate the novel to the central and dominant form of literary modernity. It is also a critique of a postcolonial orthodoxy grounded in Edward Said's construction of Orientalism as a corporate institution whose aim it was to not only control and exploit but actually to *invent* the non-European Other (in Said's scope, the 'Orient'). Aravamudan takes issue with this homogenization of Europe as imperialist center and, like Muthu, he identifies an anomaly in that formation: in the first half of the 18th century, in the era that Said calls the times of a 'freewheeling Orientalism,' Aravamudan detects a period of equilibrium in which Europe and the 'Orient' were (still) considered as peers and in which China, Japan, Persia, Turkey or India were often perceived and imagined as representing alternative versions of being human. Interest in the East, for a couple of decades, was not governed by the principle of 'translation' (i. e. the appropriation of the Other in the terms of the self), but 'transculturation' – an almost libidinal desire for the other which is "also a hope for an outside, which, however commodified or stereotypical remains utopian":

> Translation in the service of bureaucratic imperial rule is the debased version we know as Saidian Orientalism, whereas transculturation in cross-cultural mixture goes by the name of traveling theory, a xenophilia that stands as a placeholder for a 'positive Orientalism.' (Aravamudan 2012, 253)

As a literary historian, Aravamudan focuses especially on the politics of genre, with the aim to show how in the European Enlightenment – i. e., exactly in the period that ever since Ian Watt has been canonized as the 'rise of the novel' – a wide range of alternative narrative formats was available. He is most alert to the impact of the 'Oriental Tale' in the wake of the *Arabian Nights* craze subsequent to the first English translations of Antoine Galland's French renditions, published

from 1704 through 1717, of the Arabic *kitāb 'alf layla wa-layla*. Earlier critics like Rana Kabbani or Ros Ballaster had emphasized how the European and British appropriation and adoption of the Oriental Tale pattern is based not on a mere translation; it actually follows from an act of in(ter)vention that transforms the Arabic story cycle, of which "there was no definitive text" but a multitude of diverse variants (Kabbani 2008, 49), into a set text that caters more to European fantasies than it recalls the 'original.' But this is precisely the hallmark of what Aravamudan calls 'Enlightenment Orientalism': its anti-empiricist, fantasy-obsessed and desire-driven approach to the East. In this context, the Oriental Tale genre functions as a form that enables the kind of transculturation typical of Enlightenment Orientalism:

> The restricted geography of nineteenth-century Orientalism [as described by Said and his followers] made the 'Orient' a function of space, whereas forms of Orientalism extant until the late eighteenth century invoked a broader comparative perspective that was neoclassical in its *inclusion* of Oriental cultures, religions, practices and politics within a general transcultural framework. [...] Enlightenment Orientalism is a universalism that is not about a separate sphere – whether geographical, ethnocultural or religious – as it became later. (Aravamudan 2012, 202–03)

In its denial of binary self/other oppositions and its libidinal fascination with cultural difference, Enlightenment Orientalism (as constructed by Aravamudan) is highly germane to other postcolonial projects that work towards a collapse of the conceptual dichotomies that the Enlightenment itself has so powerfully erected. In an earlier work focusing on the productive appropriation of Enlightenment impulses in Europe's 18th- and early-19th-century colonies, Aravamudan has suggested the term 'tropicalization' (borrowed from Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*) as a name for processes of anticolonial emancipation that draw on ideas of the European Enlightenment but are impatiently ahead of these ideas and their endemic provincial limitations.

The tropicopolitan subject is in this perspective the colonized-as-agent, that is the "subject who exists both as fictive construct of colonial tropology *and* actual resident of tropical space, object of representation *and* agent of resistance" (Aravamudan 1999, 4). The labor of the historical tropicopolitan agent is first and foremost the unforeseen appropriation of the emancipatory discourses emanating from the metropolitan center: "Tropicopolitans thus transgress their prescribed function and reanimate cultural discourses in response to different contexts and intentions" (Aravamudan 1999, 5). This labor, however, is not only a historical datum or object to be retrieved and reconstructed by the contemporary reader; rather, tropicopolitanization results from a tropicalizing mode of reading in the here-now: it is a strategy to initiate "retroactive change" (Aravamudan 1999, 10) by retracing the "postcolonial genealogies of the Enlightenment" (Aravamudan 1999, 292) that then gets legible as a hybrid of European and tropical resources and impulses. In this perspective, "the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century [...] was not the intellectual monopoly of Europeans. It needs to be understood as a result of the transnational co-production of knowledge by many contributors around the world" (Conrad 2012, 1017). Aravamudan's central historical example for such a "global co-production of Enlightenment" (Conrad 2012, 1022) is the Haitian Revolution, where what began as a "slave insurrection [...] tropicalized the French Revolution into a Haitian Revolution" (Aravamudan 1999, 306). Aravamudan is far from alone with this assessment:

As early as 1938, the pioneer of postcolonial historiography, C. L. R. James, had reconstructed how this successful self-liberation of plantation slaves, while indebted to some of the vocabulary of the radical European Enlightenment, was in fact the first attempt to put this set of ideas into practice (James 1989, esp. 84–117). In this light, "Haiti indeed stands at the vanguard of the history of modernity. The Haitian experience was not a modern phenomenon, *too*, but *first*" (Buck-Morss 2009, 137–38).

That revolution's protagonist, the 'Black Jacobin' leader Toussaint Louverture, embodies precisely that hybrid transgressiveness that characterizes tropicopolitanism: His "revolutionary consciousness [...] must have been generated from available discourses and practices, whether these be the locutions of the metropolitan encyclopedia or the rites of voodoo" (Aravamudan 1999, 313). Such *métissage* enables the tropicopolitan subject to assemble the impulses of the Enlightenment with its alleged Other ('the rites of voodoo') without obliging him/her to slavishly reproduce the discourses of the metropolis. For the present-day reader, who actively co-produces this tropicalization as 'retroactive change,' a new perspective opens up on a potential alternative enlightenment that "pluralizes global history into the multihistoricality of simultaneous local emergences. In this new Enlightenment, global theorists give way to local intellectuals, [...] and cosmopolitans yield to tropicopolitans" (Aravamudan 1999, 331).

Fraternization in Dissidence: David Dabydeen's Hogarth

This anticolonial yet conciliatory spirit speaks very clearly from Dabydeen's art-historical statements on William Hogarth, whom he expressly singles out as an epitome of progressive aesthetic politics, and more specifically, as an exceptionally sensitive and sympathetic commentator on the existence of Black people and other exploited groups in eighteenth-century Britain. In the visual arts of the time, Black people were usually represented either as animalistic 'savages' or, more frequently, as exotic accessories "whose utter dependency and devotion [...] reinforce the display of power, grandeur and beauty of the white owner" (Eckstein 2006, 142). In sharp contrast to these proto-racist conventions, Dabydeen's Hogarth elevates the Black subject to dignity and, more crucially in aesthetic terms, beauty.

According to Hogarth's own aesthetic agenda as formulated in *The Analysis of Beauty*, it is 'variety,' not neo-classicist symmetry, that distinguishes the beautiful object: so much so that "the art of composing well is the art of varying well" (Hogarth 1997, 43). According to Dabydeen, Hogarth endows especially Black people with precisely that quality: "at least one artist – Hogarth – had recognised 'variety' in the black man, in terms of the texture of his skin, its absorption and reflection of light, and its shades of colour" (Dabydeen 1987a, 44). More importantly, in the 1732 series of engravings, *A Harlot's Progress*, Hogarth's representation of the fate of Black people and White working-class people, including sex workers, approaches an intersectional analysis of the interplay of different but synergetic axes of exclusion and marginalization (see ch. 15). According to Dabydeen, Hogarth thus "reveals a deep sense of communalism of suffering and pleasure between lower-class white and black slave-servants" (Dabydeen 1987a, 131). Therefore Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress*

> makes seminal connections between race, class and gender; Hogarth gropes towards an understanding of the female (black and white) experience of subjugation, he senses a solidarity between blacks and lower-class whites which overrides racial division, a solidarity of peoples victimised by an economic system controlled by the moneyed class. (Dabydeen 1987a, 131–32)

If Dabydeen chooses to adopt the title of Hogarth's print series for his own novel, then we do not necessarily have to think of this gesture as a polemical act of writing back (see ch. 18) so typical of postcolonial takes on the Western canon, but more probably as a token of fraternization that the postcolonial writer extends to the Enlightenment artist.

At least the Hogarth that emerges from Dabydeen's scholarly analyses figures as a veritable predecessor for the compassion that drives Dabydeen's novel: Both works of art that now go by the name of *A Harlot's Progress* are underwritten by a spirit of intersectional solidarity across race and gender divisions that appears to be grounded ultimately in shared class experiences and aspirations. In both works, Black slaves and White prostitutes in particular serve as emblematic epitomes of this solidarity derived from the "suffering of the commoner at the hands of 'the great'" (Dabydeen 1987b, 97) in a "brutally commercial society in which the 'great' feed off then discard the common people" (Dabydeen 1987b, 109). Dabydeen makes out a critique of this cannibalistic system in Hogarth's prints just as he himself voices it in his novel, where Mungo, in the pandemonium of the coffee house, is exposed to the bidders' greedy gaze. Such a society engenders an "overwhelming feeling of 'enslavement'" (Dabydeen 1987b, 108) so that slavery itself serves as a metonymy of a more general social nexus of ruthless exploitation. To the extent that the commodity status is their ontology, it is in fact the slave and the prostitute that literally embody commodification; in response, the aesthetic restoration of their humanity appears now as the common project that Dabydeen wishes the historical Hogarth to share with him. In the process, Hogarth gets identified as a dissident who upholds Enlightenment principles against their corrupt actualization. As such, he becomes an embodiment of an enlightenment yet to come.

Seeing Through the Enlightenment – Seeing the Enlightenment Through

In the introduction to her edited collection of essays titled *Decolonizing Enlightenment*, Nikita Dhawan voices the suspicion that postcolonial interventions against a one-sided 'demonization' of the Enlightenment might themselves run the risk of being one-sided in their tendency to over-generously idealize select positive aspects of the Enlightenment. As a result, Dhawan argues, "there is the danger of presenting a distorted picture that silences the deeply racist, sexist and imperialist aspects of eighteenth-century European political thought" (Dhawan 2014, 45). Instead, she advocates a perspective that is capable of holding together the dual (or duplicitous) traits of the Enlightenment as "at once imperialist and anti-imperialist" (45). This conception of a constitutively Janus-faced Enlightenment harks back to the nuanced ambiguities encountered in Gilroy ('antagonistic indebtedness'), Spivak ('enabling violation'), and Chakrabarty ('anticolonial gratitude').

More than that, however, a postcolonial project of 'seeing through the Enlightenment' (whether in an interrogative or a redemptive fashion) could be transformed

into a project that Dabydeen's Hogarth would engage in: a project of 'seeing the Enlightenment through' by working towards its emancipation from its own self-imposed immaturity. Such a strategy would strive to liberate the potentialities inherent to the Enlightenment from their compromising realization in actual history. The Indian historian Javeed Alam has suggested that modernity at large can be described as "the historically embodied form of the Enlightenment," adding that

> what we normally term "modern" is only one of the possible forms but the one that became entrenched in conjunction with capitalism; hence I shall use *entrenched modernity* [...] to suggest that all that is imaginable under the term "modern" is not exhausted by what we have as the embodied form. (Alam 2000, 405)

An unrealized "untapped surplus" (Alam 2000, 423) is thus inscribed into materialized modernity, into actualized Enlightenment as latent potentiality. A theory and praxis of making this surplus productive must, for Alam, be articulated from the position of postcoloniality and not "from within the western traditions of thought because these do not seem to have a theory of resistance to one's own traditions" (Alam 2000, 423). It is therefore at the margins of modernity – in an antagonistic indebtedness to the Enlightenment legacy – that dissident participants in the Enlightenment may find inroads to those submerged, historically betrayed surplus resources that entrenched modernity has effectively silenced and suppressed. These dissident participants – tropicopolitan postcolonial subjects, Hogarthian metropolitans – act from a speaking position that is informed by the fact that, as Spivak insists, "the Enlightenment came, to colonizer and colonized alike, through colonialism," (Spivak 2012, 4) but that the colonized were recruited into modernity in particularly brutal ways.

From this position of self-knowledge (that is, of knowing one's own status as a coerced conscript of the Enlightenment), David Scott projects his vision of a self-critical, sceptical decolonization of the Enlightenment. Scott's interpretation of C. L. R. James' account of the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins*, results in a revision of that event as a tragedy in the classical Sophoclean (and Hegelian) sense of an irreconcilable conflict between two principles: human agency and contingency; sympathy and indifference; freedom and determinedness. This tension, according to Scott, is what the postcolonial impulse can bring to the Enlightenment legacy. It enables a self-reflection of the Enlightenment that then can put itself into place and begin to acknowledge its own inherent tendency to absolutism. It would then begin to productively oppose itself, from within like Dabydeen's Hogarth, so that decolonized enlightenment thinking "sustains and even celebrates enlightenment virtues while at the same time opposing enlightenment hubris and the enlightenment drive to normalize and discipline the very subjects that it seeks to emancipate and empower" (Scott 2004, 188). If Scott opts for the term 'tragic' in order to give a name to this particular form of reflexivity, then he is surely not arguing in a defeatist spirit of general futility. Rather he advocates an insight into the radical openness of a history in which "nothing guarantees freedom but the political commitment to its founding" (Scott 2004, 220). This struggle will always also have to be a struggle of the Enlightenment against itself, more precisely, against its respective actualization in the world, in yet other words, against its always incomplete exit from self-imposed immaturity.

A Thousand and One Enlightenments Now!

As soon as this self-limitation will have been overcome, it will become obvious even to Europeans that the historical event that is even today singled out as '*the* Enlightenment' is in fact only one among many conjunctures at which the strife for intellectual freedom, secularism and tolerance, and the claim to autonomy and democratic deliberation were on the ascendancy or even dominant, however short-lived. It may not be overly counterintuitive for the European reader to encounter the notion that ancient Athens was the node of "the Age of Enlightenment in Greece" (Guthrie 1969, 48), which had its zenith in the fifth century BCE: a period in Greek culture characterized by Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy, the heyday of Attic tragedy from Aeschylus to Euripides, a heliocentric cosmology, and the exercise of the democracy of the *polis*, however exclusive (see Goldhill 1986, 199–212).

By contrast, the idea of an "Islamic enlightenment" will be far more challenging given that Western early-21st-century islamophobia constantly reiterates the demagogic stock phrase of Islam's alleged incompatibility with, or incapacity to, enlightenment: an allegation that is premised on the brazen denial of the rich historical evidence of centuries of "Islamic secularism and rationalism" (Akkach 2007, 3) from Timbuktu to Granada, from Cairo and Baghdad to Tehran and Mughal Delhi: all these sites of veritable enlightenments whose archives testify to vibrant debates on "issues such as tolerance in Islam, the rights of women and children, the rights of orphans, the rights of works, and human rights in general" (Haidara 2008, 266). Yet in a cultural climate in which already the "juxtaposition of the two words may look strange," it is surely laudable (though certainly not far-reaching enough) to claim "that an Islamic Enlightenment did indeed take place, under the influence of the West, but finding its own form. […] we can speak about a modern 'Islamic' Enlightenment and not expect it to follow the same path as its European or American equivalent" (de Bellaigue 2017, 11).

No doubt one can speak with the same legitimacy of an "Aboriginal enlightenment" (Morissette 2006, 38); an "Indian enlightenment" (Nanda 2001, 2553), a "Chinese enlightenment" (Schwarcz 1986, 11 and passim), and certainly a multitude of "Afro-enlightenments" (Ukadike 1994, 221; Taylor 2000, 143), and many more. What follows from this tentative and by no means comprehensive enumeration of non-European enlightenments is not, to be sure, an uninterrupted developmental line of historical progress but rather a set of possible constellations in which apparently disparate and unconnected enlightenments relate to each other in often unforeseen configurations. It is crucial for the notion of 'many enlightenments' to abandon the residual assumption that the European Enlightenment has the status of an original which supplied the rest of the world with a modular form to be copied. For even in the postcolonial camp,

> the self-promotion of the European case as singular and paradigmatic has led many to believe it must be. Hence the search everywhere for instances of the radically new sense of history that typified European modernity, of its sense of skepticism, its individualism – the search for the Indian Vico, the Chinese Descartes, the Arab Montaigne. (Pollock 2007, 382)

Instead of scanning the archives of the non-West for what is similar to the European case, the postcolonial approach to multiple enlightenments will conceive of enlightenment no longer as a European prerogative but rather an anthropological planetary fact that re-occurs, albeit unpredictably, in multiple concretisations yet invariably as

the collective effort to transcend, in theory and practice, the status quo on the plane of immanence. Regardless of its respective historical location, enlightenment can thus be defined as the "ethos appropriate to the critical ontology of ourselves as a historico-practical test of the limits that we may go beyond, and thus as work carried out by ourselves upon ourselves as free beings" (Foucault 1984, 47). Like all emancipation movements, it will be rare as diamonds, as one of the last proponents of Europe's radical enlightenment legacy has succinctly put it: "For a thousand wars there are not even ten revolutions. So difficult is walking upright" (Bloch 1995, 475). And still, by the same token, like revolution and the struggle for liberation, enlightenment is iterative: As a strife for a self-emancipation that is always also a self-overcoming, it "has emerged again and again through history (and therefore seems to be irrepressible)" (Balibar 2002, 173).

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8 *Interlude:* Diaspora

Diaspora is derived from the Greek meaning 'to disperse, to scatter.' Traditionally, the term describes the voluntary or involuntary relocation of peoples from their established homelands into new regions. In Greek antiquity *diaspora* denoted the establishment of settlements in conquered territory (see ch. 16). Therefore, the term has always been historically connected to colonization. The classical meaning and use of the term diaspora developed with the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek. In the so called Septuaginta, the first Greek rendition of the Old Testament, the semantic meaning of the term became linked to being the result of exile, specifically referring to the situation of Jews living outside of Palestine. The exile of the Israelites is one of the most prominent accounts of a diaspora in the Bible, which also explains why the term Diaspora (with a capital D) refers specifically to the dispersal of Jews (Cohen 2008).

In the postcolonial context there are various approaches to what the concept implies. The first notion, popular in the 1960s and 1970s, was that diaspora referred especially to peoples who due to colonialism had been moved or had to move from their ancestral homelands whilst maintaining the wish to return one day. The African diaspora, caused by the transatlantic slave trade, and Asian diasporas, the results of indentured labor, form some of the largest diasporic groups. Additionally to the dispersion and the nostalgic yearning of communities to return to some kind of homeland, the semantic definition of the term was connected to the historical experience of victimhood.

From the 1980s onwards the terminology evolved into a metaphoric designation that described different categories of people including expatriates, political refugees, immigrants, etc. Amongst others, displaced communities from Armenia, Cuba, Greece and China were regarded as diasporic groups, leading to a more varied understanding of the term. In the 1990s a debate between William Safran and James Clifford regarding the interpretation of diaspora led to the realization that the homeward-looking understanding of diaspora is by no means universally applicable, since the aspect of return and the concept of 'home' is not prominent in all diasporic communities, especially not among large parts of the African diaspora. Key theorists like Stuart Hall (1993) and Paul Gilroy (1993) had already formulated related ideas before, arguing that diasporas are characterized more by dispersion and fragmentation than by notions of imaginary homelands.

Some critical interventions in the later 1990s, affected by the repercussions of poststructuralist theory and a wide-spread cosmopolitan euphoria, challenged the nostalgic, homeward-looking, involuntary and painful characteristic of diasporic communities more generally as outdated. Instead, they preferred to read diaspora as an "emblem of transnationalism" (Tölölyan 1996), and to conceive of diasporic communities as the harbingers of a future beyond nationalism and border politics (see ch. 5). Modern diaspora, in such readings, represents identities that due to their mobility and flexibility are deterritorialized and constructed or deconstructed in ever more flexible and situational ways. Instead of a nostalgic mourning for a homeland or a better past, diaspora became associated with a celebration of heterogeneity and plurality.

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Today, not much of this pre-millennial euphoria is left, and the "transnational moment" (Tölölyan 1996) has arguably passed (see ch. 2). All sorts of petty nationalisms and chauvinisms are on the rise again across the planet, the industrialized nations of the global North erect walls and fences and militarize the seas to prevent migration, while more human beings than ever before are fleeing old or new homelands from war, hunger or ecological depravation. While diasporic existences become ever more the norm rather than an exception, a world of cosmopolitan solidarity becomes ever more a utopian dream of the past. Postcolonial studies will have to align their notions of diaspora accordingly.

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9 Postcolonial Oceans

In the Western literary imagination, oceans are overwhelmingly the space of White male endeavor. From William Shakespeare's Prospero to Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, from Herman Melville's Captain Ahab to Joseph Conrad's Charles Marlowe, the heroes and anti-heroes of canonic seafaring narratives, be they aristocrats or traders, captains, sailors or castaways, figure as the core agents of Western globalization. Even if increasingly haunted by the darker sides of the modern world system that they help to create, they all pass through global waters without much restriction to explore, to exchange, to exploit, and to conquer. The oceans they cross are the figurative domain in which the Western bourgeois subject ultimately asserts itself as the supreme moral and economic standard of world history. And in a world in which landed territories are relentlessly enclosed and entrenched, bounded and privatized in the processes of colonization and (neo)liberal globalization, the boundlessness of the oceans turns into a spurious literary trope of freedom, mobility and global connectedness.

The ticket on which the heroes of canonical ocean tales travel so freely across the seven seas is hardly ever questioned in the narratives themselves: Yet it is of course their unmarked masculinity, their social standing as liberal middle and upper class subjects, and not least their White bodies which underwrite their right of passage. Their privilege only transpires when contrasted to other, less privileged characters peopling the tales, for, as Suvendrini Perera notes, "at the edges of these heroic navigations, often only partly visibilised, though their motivating force, are other shadowy, dark bodies: fellow seafarers willing and unwilling, fettered and free" (2013, 60). Take the African youth Xury with whom Defoe's Robinson Crusoe coasts south along the African continent in a small boat after they jointly escaped from Arabic slavery: When a Portuguese ship eventually takes them up and brings them to Brazil, Crusoe simply turns his companion into a piece of property and sells him to the captain to buy starting capital for a slave plantation. In the remaining bulk of the narrative and especially in the famous castaway episodes, Xury is then largely forgotten, just as the Western literary tradition at large has overwhelmingly preferred to forget about the fates of the millions of enslaved men, women and children who crossed oceans in shackles.

For these multitudes, just as for countless indentured laborers, convicts, or refugees, oceans have never figured as spaces of freedom, exchange and connectedness, but of unfreedom, objectification, and separation from family and homelands. If Xury exemplifies the volatility of the subaltern subjects of the ocean, falling from fellow seaman to disposable commodity simply on account of his skin color, at the other end of the spectrum there are characters like the Pacific Islander Queequeg in Melville's *Moby Dick*, who retain their liberty and standing on Western ships. Yet even Queequeg, who is given a secure place in the cosmopolitan microcosm of the *Pequod*, is not spared the authorial racism that reduces the achievements of his Oceanic culture to a quintessential cannibalism.

Postcolonial narratives have been instrumental in voicing the gaps, the silences, and often the bitter ironies of Eurocentric renderings of ocean space, precisely by foregrounding those "shadowy, dark bodies" that are more often than not reduced to the status of mere backdrop or obstacle, object or symbol of alterity profiling

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White male struggle and achievement. The 'post' in postcolonial, as we have repeatedly argued, does not imply a temporal marker indicating that such texts have necessarily emerged 'after' the period of colonialism which, in its neocolonial and neoliberal transformations, arguably continues to this day. What is vital, rather, is that they have engendered a crucial shift of perspective beyond the dominant scripts of Eurocentric (neo)liberal globalization, and thus have helped to constitute, in Paul Gilroy's famous phrase, vital "counter-culture[s] of modernity" (1993, 16). Such texts do not project worlds beyond or outside of the "global designs" of Western modernity; yet they enrich, challenge, supplement and complicate such designs by accounting for and giving voice to a plurality of "local histories" (Mignolo 2000) of the seas. This chapter therefore exemplarily addresses select postcolonial narratives which facilitate such important re-conceptualizations of the modern world by offering alternative ways of writing and knowing the ocean. We will successively address such reconfigurations in view of the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the Indian Ocean respectively, yet wish to also eventually carve out the transareal connectedness of Indian Ocean, Atlantic, and Pacific discourses.

Pacific Studies

We will begin with the Pacific, the ocean which has by comparison received the least attention in postcolonial studies to date, even though Pacific studies have had great currency over the past years especially in the United States, due to seminal work produced by scholars in the field of Native Pacific studies. This turn, however, is also the result of a sustained geopolitical (re)orientation to the Pacific circuit under Barack Obama, often called 'America's first Pacific president.' From a postcolonial perspective, this geopolitical turn has been far from unproblematic, especially because it has tended to obliterate, rather than foreground, the ongoing decolonial political struggles and the cultural renaissance of Pacific Islander peoples. The widespread metaphor of the 'Pacific rim' is a case in point: In his landmark essay "Our Sea of Islands," the Tongan-Fijian anthropologist and historian Epeli Hau'ofa poignantly critiqued the rim metaphor for conceiving of the ocean as a virtually empty space criss-crossed by politically significant flows of capital, goods and agents in the Americas, Asia, and Australia alone (1993, 13). It thus obliterates centuries and millennia of migration, trading and purposeful interaction across and between the Pacific archipelagos from the Solomons to Rapa Nui, and from Aotearoa/New Zealand to Hawai'i. These interactions shaped a world that belies the belittling conception of "islands in a far sea," argues Hau'ofa: Rather, the Pacific should be reconceived as a "sea of islands" (1993, 3–7), extending into an even larger Oceanic world which after colonialism also includes the diasporic communities of the 'rim' in a complex web of cross-oceanic connections. Hau'ofa emphatically promotes the term 'Oceania' for the region, as it emphasizes the integral role of the sea in Pacific history, a term which we, too, will adopt in the following.

In our first case study, we will read a historical map which shows and conceptualizes precisely this "sea of islands," drawn by a Pacific Islander during James Cook's first circumnavigation of the world. The map is not, of course, a literary text in the strict sense; yet we will show that it unfolds a complex narrative which intricately combines European and Oceanic worldmaking capacities and practices, and

only becomes legible when the reader steps outside of habituated Eurocentric orientations. It set the demand for a decolonial reading practice which also informs the other close readings in this chapter, and in fact this book at large.

Envisioning a Sea of Islands: Tupaia's Map (1769–1770)

Who, then, was Tupaia? Tupaia was an *arioi* priest from a Ra'iātean family of master navigators in the Society Islands, born around 1725 and trained at *Taputapu-atea marae*, the most important center for sacred knowledge and navigational learning in eastern Oceania. The *marae* would have preserved the oral legends and sailing instructions from Polynesian exploration voyages of the past 800 years which extended as far as to Hawai'i in the North, Aotearoa/New Zealand in the South and Rapa Nui in the East. Around 1760, Ra'iātea was invaded by warriors from the neighboring island of Porapora, and Tupaia had to flee to Tahiti, where he soon became a man of social standing. When the first Europeans, Captain Wallis and the crew of the *Dolphin*, set foot on Tahiti in 1767, Tupaia acted as chief diplomat. And two years later, after Captain James Cook spent three months in Tahiti on his first circumnavigation of the globe, Tupaia decided to join the crew of the *Endeavour* on their return voyage to Europe.

That Cook respected and trusted Tupaia is evidenced by the fact that for an entire month, he let Tupaia navigate his precious ship through the archipelago of the Society Islands, and on southward across open waters to Rurutu in the Austral Group. Tupaia turned out to be an invaluable linguistic and cultural translator for the crew, especially so in Aotearoa/New Zealand, where Cook landed next. Only when the *Endeavour* reached Australia did Tupaia's powers to communicate fail; he eventually fell ill and tragically died in Batavia, today's Jakarta in Indonesia.

When Cook and his crew first met Tupaia, their geographical knowledge of the South Pacific was very limited. On Tahiti, however, Tupaia shared with Cook and the ship master, Robert Molyneux, extended narratives of islands, both near and remote: Cook remarks that "he at one time gave us an Account of near 130" (1955, 293–94). It is easy to imagine how excited the Europeans must have been about all these islands, and how keen they were to learn their exact location. Cook, Molyneux, and Molyneux's mate, Richard Pickersgill, must therefore have convinced Tupaia to embark on a joint project: A chart of the Pacific Ocean in which Tupaia could locate all the islands he claimed he knew.

Unfortunately, none of the original draft versions of the chart drawn "by Tupaia's own hands" (1955, 293), as Cook insists in his diaries, have survived. But two quite different copies are still available in the archives. From this we can reconstruct that the map initially evolved in two stages.

The first stage resulted in a first draft containing 58 islands. As it was incomplete and later revised in a second draft, a junior officer, Richard Pickersgill was allowed to keep it. Pickersgill later took the map along on Cook's second voyage to the Pacific on the *Resolution* (1772–1775), where he served as third lieutenant. There, he lent it to the German naturalist Johann Reinhold Forster and his son Georg. Georg Forster eventually included a copy (with slightly changed island names) of Tupaia's first draft map in a letter to his publisher in 1776, which is today archived in the city archive of Braunschweig (Fig. 9.1).

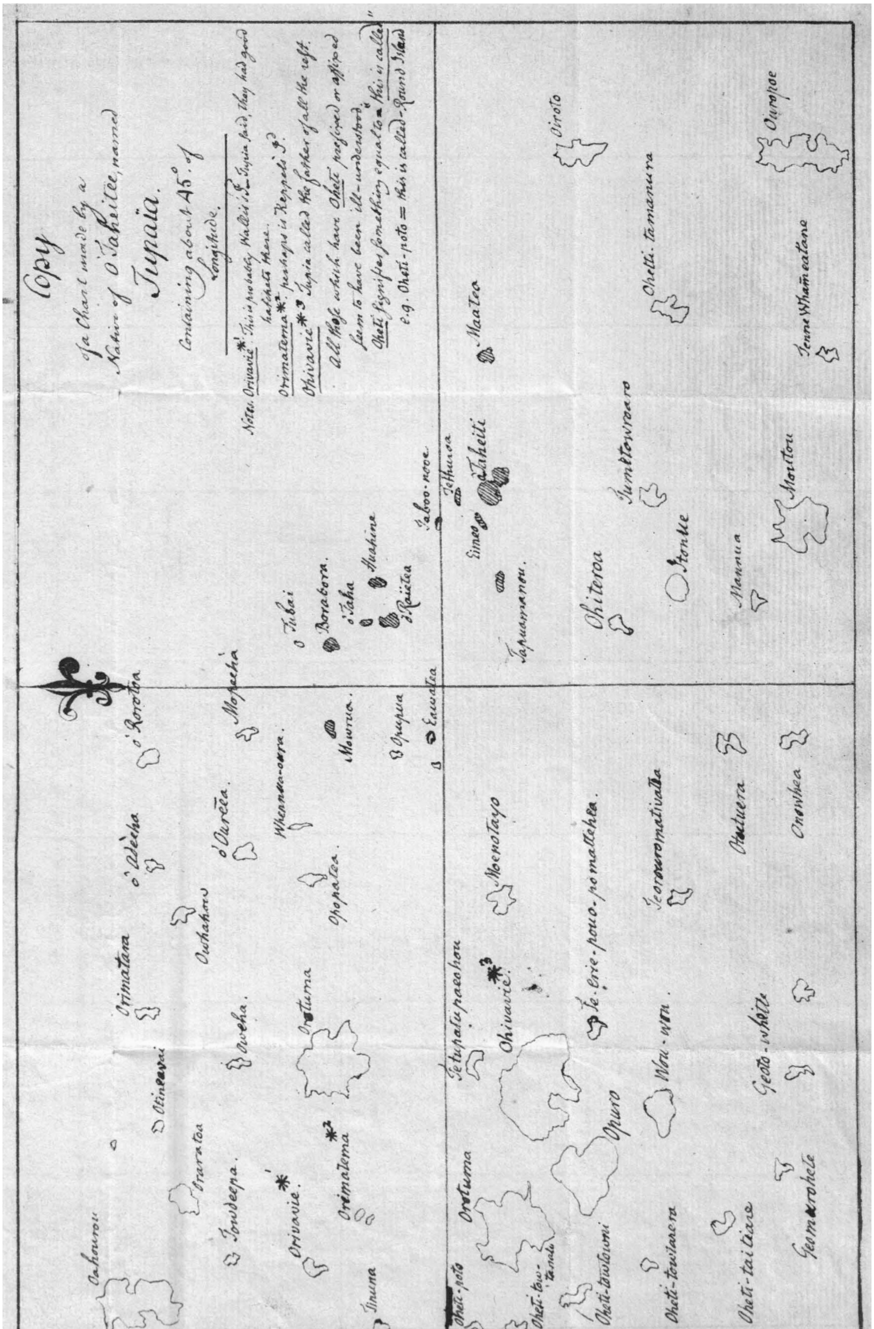

Fig. 9.1: “Copy of a Chart made by […] Tupaïa” by Georg Forster, 1776, Stadtarchiv Braunschweig, H III 16–87

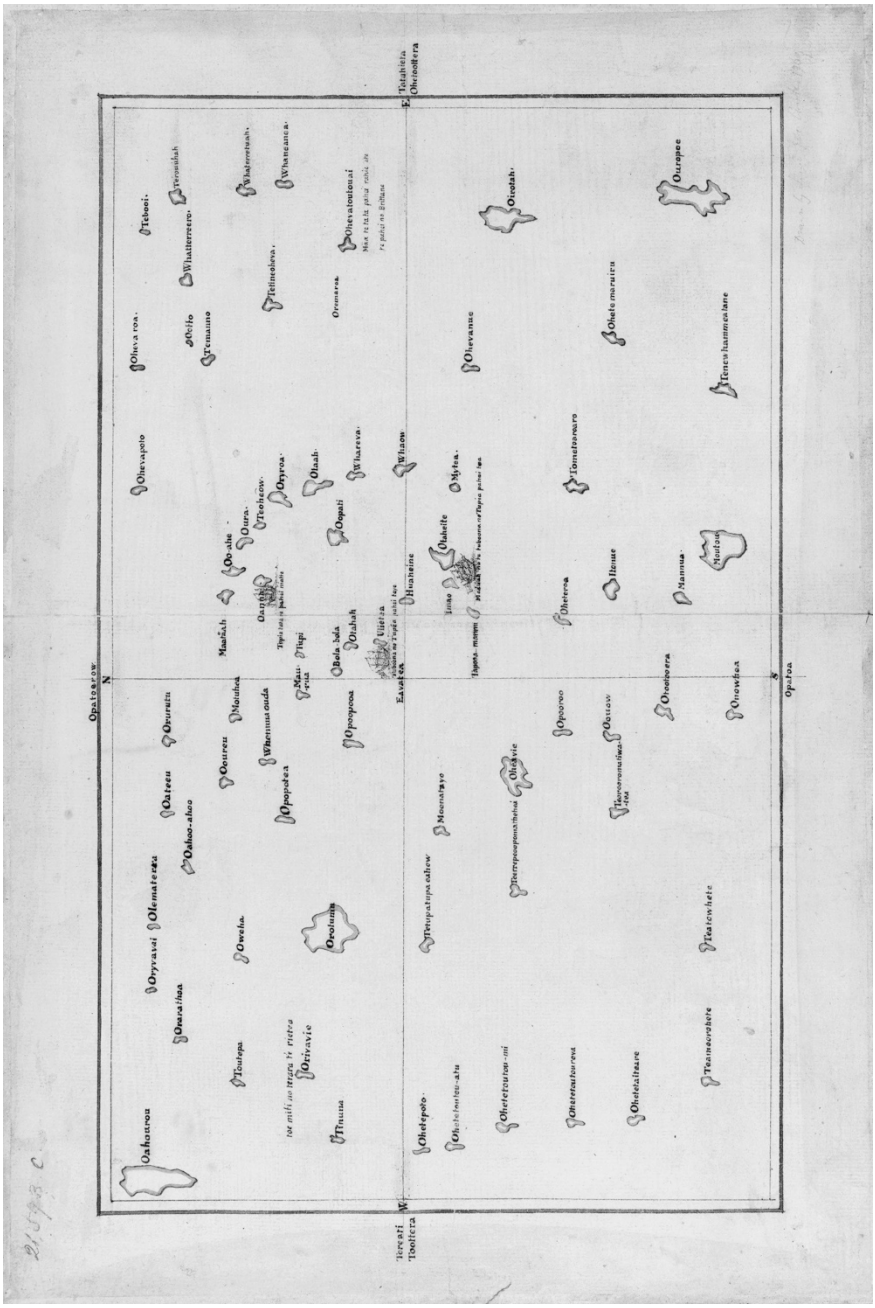

Fig. 9.2: Tupaia's Map, 1770, British Library, London, © British Library Board BL Add MS 21593.C

After the first draft was abandoned, Tupaia and his European collaborators started a new draft, presumably as part of the same drawing process in August 1769. Tupaia adjusted and corrected some elements, but basically took over all islands from the first draft, and added more (showing altogether 74). This map was kept by James Cook, who extensively describes it in his diaries. From archival evidence we cannot discuss here, it can be reconstructed that the second draft of Tupaia's Map lay dormant in Cook's papers for almost half a year, but that he worked with it again in the context of encounters with Māori people in Queen Charlotte Sound (Tōtaranui) in Aotearoa/New Zealand, in late January and early February 1770.

It is in this context also that the map was revised once more: The most significant addition at this third stage are annotations set down in Tahitian for five islands, which result from discussions between Tupaia, a local Māori chief called Topaa in European records, and Cook and his men. A major actor in this final draft stage must have been Cook's famous naturalist on the first voyage, the gentleman scientist Joseph Banks. While the original draft drawn by Tupaia is again lost, Banks commissioned a fair copy of the third and final draft for himself. This copy survived in Banks's papers in the British Museum in London (Fig. 9.2).

The history of Tupaia's Map, and the reconstruction of what it actually depicts, is extremely complex, and can only be puzzled together from a whole range of historical sources involving more charts, journal entries of diverse voyagers, records of island lists, and not least written and oral accounts of precolonial Oceanic wayfinding techniques and practices. Readers interested in the long story of Tupaia's Map are invited to read the detailed, step-by-step reconstruction of when, by whom, how, and in which order it was drawn, and which knowledges exactly where contributed by Tupaia, Māori people and European collaborators in a book-length essay by Lars Eckstein and Anja Schwarz (2019). What we can offer here is only a very short account of the ways in which Tupaia devised his map.

For almost 250 years, Tupaia's Map posed a riddle to historians, anthropologists and geographers of the Pacific alike. Until more recently, only a rather small number of islands on the map could be reliably identified. The British on Cook's ship knew little Tahitian, and their linguistic talent was limited. They wrote down what they heard Tupaia say when he named the islands he drew, in an often very corrupted English transcription. What is more, many of the Tahitian island names are no longer in use in the region. But the more foundational problem is that even those islands which could be identified are hardly where one would expect them according to the logic of a Western map. By the standards of maps in Mercator projection as Cook used and drew them, the islands seem to be all over the place: Islands thousands of kilometers apart appear right next to each other, islands which should be to the south of Tahiti appear in the northern quadrants, small islands can have very large outlines, etc.

Already Georg Forster doubted Tupaia's knowledge on this account during the *Resolution* voyage. He wrote:

> if his drawing had been exact, our ships must have sailed over a number of these islands which he [Tupaia] had set down. It is therefore very probable that the vanity of appearing more intelligent than he really was, had prompted him to produce this fancied chart of the South Sea, and perhaps to invent many of the names of islands in it. (Forster 1777, 398)

In the second half of the 20th century, the map became a token in a heated debate about whether Polynesians had settled the Pacific by means of purposeful naviga-

tion or by accident (in drift voyages or blown off course by storms). Most notoriously, it was New Zealand historian Andrew Sharp who in the 1950s and 60s used Tupaia's Map to back up a widely popular argument that Polynesians were incapable of purposeful long distance voyaging, and that their ancestral stories of migration are basically merely self-aggrandizing myth (Sharp 1956). How could anyone without a map or proper instruments such as compass and sextant find targets as small as most Polynesian islands in an ocean as vast as the Pacific? Not even Europeans, after all, could do this at the time, as their measurements of especially longitude (the vertical coordinate in the Cartesian system of Western geography) were very unreliable when at sea.

Tupaia's rehabilitation as master navigator only came with a sustained decolonial movement and cultural renaissance across the region which strove to recover Oceanic knowledges displaced by imperialism and missionary activities. One part of this renaissance was to recover the ancient technique of Oceanic wayfinding. In Hawai'i, for instance, Ben Finney and artist Herb Kane reconstructed and built a double-hulled sailing canoe, the Hokule'a, and found one of the last remaining Micronesian master navigators, Mau Piailug, who volunteered to train the Hawai'ian navigator Nainoa Thompson in ancient wayfinding techniques. In 1976, Thompson managed to sail the Hokule'a from Hawai'i to Tahiti without using Western instruments. The Hokule'a and similar projects threw new light on Tupaia's charts, as they foregrounded the fact that the crew of the *Endeavour* and Tupaia would have conceptualized maritime space in very different ways, and used very different techniques of navigational orientation.

Polynesian wayfinding in many ways inverted the globalized conception that travelers move in static, objectively surveyed and classified worlds. Rather, its core cognitive strategy has been to imagine the canoe as fixed in space, and to dynamise the world surrounding the traveler. Specific seasonal star, sun and wind positions provided situational and relational bearings for travel, memorized by master navigators with the help of long navigation chants. The resulting bearings on island-to-island voyages needed to be constantly reconfigured, to "the attribution of directionality to all the heterogeneous inputs from the sun, stars, winds, waves, reefs, birds, weather, landmarks, seamarks, and sealife." And additional techniques to 'fish up' islands from the horizon came into play, first and foremost strategies of "expanding the target [...] by looking for patterns of ocean swells, flights of birds, cloud formations, and reflections of the underside of clouds" (Turnbull 1997, 556).

Over the past 30 years, researchers on Tupaia's Map accordingly began to suspect that the chart combines Western mapping conventions with distinctly Oceanic modes of geographic orientation, and that this is the main reason why the map has remained inconclusive to modern readers (Di Piazza and Pearthree 2007; Finney 1991, 1998; Turnbull 1997, 1998). Our brief account of how Tupaia's Map was conceived draws on the continuation of this research by Eckstein and Schwarz (2019).

Georg Forster's copy of the first draft of the chart suggests that it was the Europeans who began by setting it up for Tupaia. They took an empty sheet, entered the two cardinal axes indicating the directions of north and south and east and west respectively, and then drew the islands that they had themselves seen around Tahiti on the voyage of the *Endeavour*: These are the islands in the Society Group which on Forster's copy appear as shaded, plus two more (Tupai, a small island in the north of the group, and Rurutu in the Austral Group south of Tahiti, labeled "Ohiteroa" on the chart). They drew these islands according to the way in which they

were trained and used to do maps. This involves imagining an abstracted, central bird-eye perspective on Oceanic space that is thus fixed and strategically covered by an invisible grid of lines demarking latitude and longitude. As Cook and his men had previously (approximately) measured the coordinate positions of all of these islands using compass and sextant, they could confidently locate them on the chart they had set up, in fixed relations of direction and distance from each other. Then they asked Tupaia to take over, and to draw the other islands he said he knew, surely assuming that he would follow their cartographic model.

Tupaia, however, chose not to. Not, presumably, because he did not understand how the Europeans did their maps. He chose not to because their model was not compatible with the way in which Polynesians navigated, how they conceived of the relation between the traveler and the world, how they found the smallest islands across the vast Pacific without instruments or maps, drawing on a sophisticated astronomy, deep knowledge of the ocean, and a profound ancestral connection in oral tradition. In order to still be able to share his knowledge of Oceania with Cook and his crew, Tupaia therefore designed a completely new cartographic model from scratch.

For these purposes, Tupaia requested a little word at the center of his chart, precisely where the cardinal axes cross: *e-avatea* ("Eawatea"), signifying "the noon" in Tahitian. To cut a much longer story short: In Tupaia's cartographic system, *avatea* marks a bearing to the north. It references the direction of the sun in its highest position at noontime (which south of the tropic of Capricorn, and most of the year south of the equator, points due north). Tupaia thus overrode the cardinal logic the Europeans set up for him: For the islands he subsequently drew, north would no longer be 'up,' east 'right,' south 'down,' west 'left.' North would from now on be in the center of the chart. What he thus also overrode is the logic of a singular, central perspective.

In Tupaia's logic, there is no singular orientation abstracted from the traveller. True to his wayfinding tradition, the center of observation is always the *va'a* (canoe). Rather than imaging an aloof bird-eye perspective, Tupaia must have invited his European collaborators to situate themselves *in* the chart, on a *va'a* at any of the islands he subsequently drew.

The final key to understanding the new cartographic logic Tupaia set up is that he drew traditional voyaging paths, for travel from island to island. Where these paths are placed in the overall composition of the chart matters little: A path can essentially begin anywhere on the map. What matters, rather, is the relational position of islands to each other on such a path, in the sequence in which they are travelled to. An important guide for adequately reading Tupaia's Map and to identifying the paths he drew is a list of islands Tupaia shared with Robert Molyneux already in Tahiti, and which Molyneux set down in his ship log in the order in which Tupaia recited them for him. It helps to understand which islands on the chart belong together on set routes, and which do not.

It is in this context, finally, that the little word *avatea*, for a northern bearing located in the center of the chart, comes into play: For Tupaia did not at all place his voyaging paths from island to island randomly. He translated his much more complex system of reckoning and wayfinding – an embodied practice using a whole range of variables from directional stars and constellations to seasonal winds, the angle of swell patterns to the hull, bird flight routes for island finding and many more – into something drastically less complex so Cook and his crew might under-

stand. He basically translated the bearings for purposeful island-to-island travel into the logic of Cook's compass.

This is how Tupaia's Map can be read: Viewers are invited to situate themselves in basically any one of the islands Tupaia drew, and to then trace two imaginary lines from their position. The first points to *avatea* (the sun at noon) marked on the chart by the crossing of the cardinal axes (basically the direction to which the needle of Cook's compass would point). The second imaginary line is toward the target island on a traditional voyaging route. The angle measured clockwise from the first to the second line, between the direction to *avatea* in the map's center and the target island *en route*, provides the right bearing to set the course. It can be expressed in degrees from 0° to 360°, and thus translated into the terms of the Western compass.

Let us very briefly illustrate this with the perhaps most spectacular example, marking the by far longest single voyage on the chart from the Marquesas Group (northeast of Tahiti) to Hawai'i (a voyage covering a distance of almost 4.000 km). The departure island is labeled *Te-fenua-tane* (spelled "Tenewhammeatane" by the European hand which took down the name next to the island shape Tupaia drew on the bottom right of the chart), "the land of men," a name for the Marquesan Islands still in use in the region. The target island in the upper left corner is *Oahu-roa*, distant O'ahu, the third largest island and political center of the Hawai'i Group (spelled Oahourou on the map). To get their bearings from the Marquesas to Hawai'i, readers of the chart need to situate themselves in the chart, at the island of departure. They then need to draw an imaginary line to their positional north, marked by *avatea* where the cardinal axes cross. They can then draw a second imaginary line from the island of departure to the target island. The clockwise angle between the two lines in this case is 335° on Georg Forster's copy of the first draft map. It is 338° on the fair copy of the third draft which Banks kept. The true bearings from the Marquesas to O'ahu as can be measured on a Western Mercator map of the Pacific Ocean are 330° NNE.

Tupaia's system works with amazing precision for each island-to-island path on almost all the voyaging routes he set down (with one exception, namely in the Tuāmotuan archipelago ranging from the north to the east and southeast from Tahiti, for reasons we cannot elaborate on here). It is through the consistency of Tupaia's cartographic system that eventually all islands on the map can be rather reliably identified, even where old names are no longer in use, or the English transcriptions are so corrupted that names can no longer be traced. Where there are deviations between true geographic bearings and the bearings in Tupaia's own cartographic model, these may even be explained by the fact that for practical navigation, it would have been important to factor in leeway and drift, especially for voyages to the north and south, as the trade winds rather consistently blow from the east for most of the year in the corridor of the South Pacific where Tupaia's islands (with the exception of O'ahu in the North Pacific) are placed.

The trade winds also explain why the distance between islands on the voyaging paths Tupaia drew is no reliable marker of true distance. Polynesians exclusively measured distance by the time it took to travel, not, as Cook would have and as his maps indicated, by the geographic space they traversed. Tupaia, for instance, told Cook that a voyage from Rurutu in the Austral Group to Tonga (about 2.500 km to the west) takes "10 or 12 days in going thither and 30 or more in coming back" (Cook 1769, 108), as the return voyage was against the prevailing winds, and could

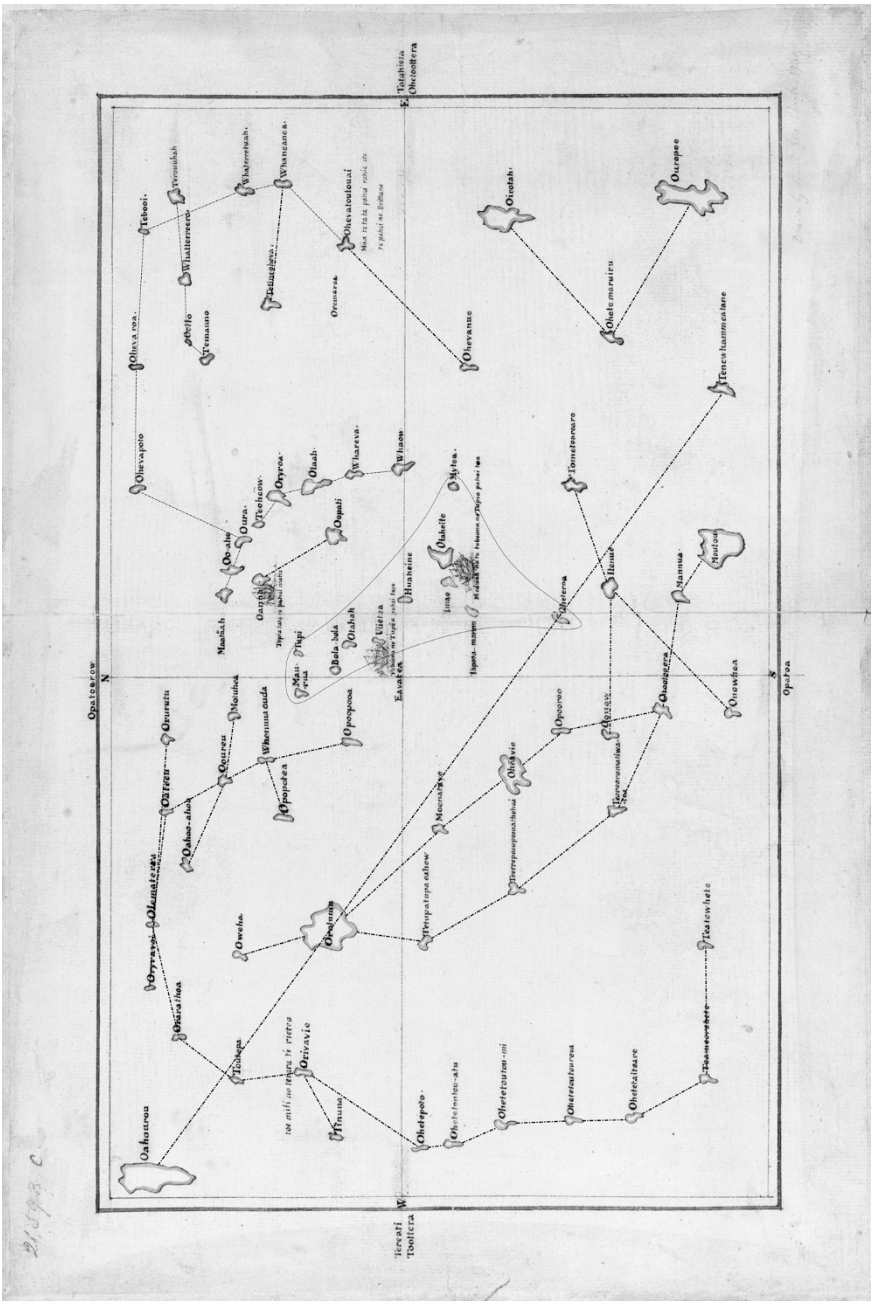

Fig. 9.3: Voyaging paths on Tupaia's Map; visualized on the British Library copy (see also Eckstein and Schwarz 2019)

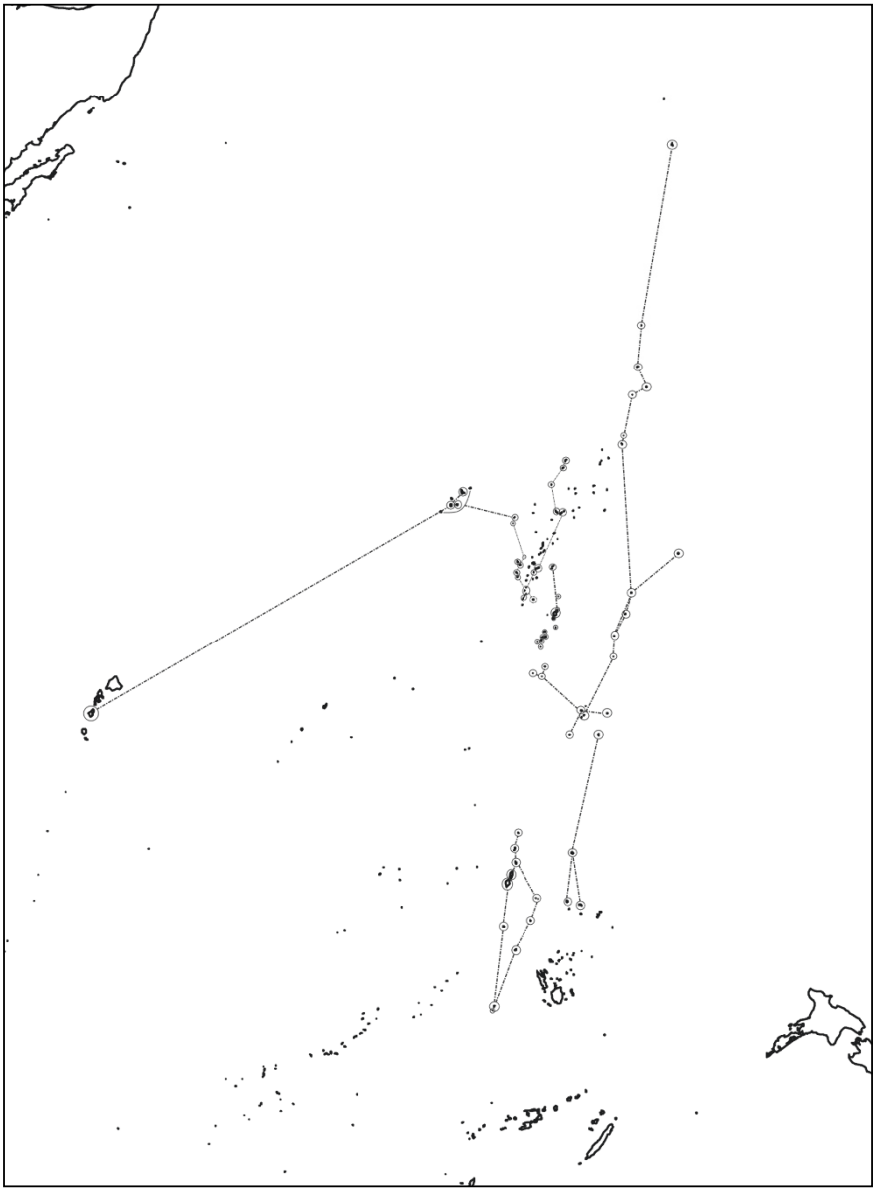

Fig. 9.4: Voyaging paths on Tupaia's Map; translated onto a Mercator Map of Oceania

only be done in a short period in summer when westerly winds occurred. As a function of time rather than space, and dependent on seasonal variation and direction of travel, distance was impossible to map for Tupaia, but would have been part of his oral commentary. In this spirit, the size of the island shapes on Tupaia's chart,

too, does not correlate with the true geographic size of islands (but occasionally with questions of ritual and genealogical importance).

Tupaia's Map is an absolute masterpiece of cross-cultural translation. Whereas the Europeans on Cook's expedition failed to understand any of the complexities of Polynesian navigational practice, Tupaia must have acquired a rather thorough understanding of Cook's navigational strategies. And he – who never saw or needed a map before he dealt with Cook and his crew – devised a cartographic system from scratch which allowed him to document the vast extent of Polynesian navigational knowledge in a Western representational form.

Basically, Tupaia's Map shows two composite voyaging routes, one extending from west to east, and one extending from south to north. In the far west, the paths commence with two options for voyaging from Rotuma (north of Fiji) to the Samoan chain. A second segment connects two Tongan island groups south of Samoa with Rarotonga in the Southern Cook Islands. From here, the paths continue via the Austral chain to Mangareva and the Pitcairn Group, all the way to Rapa Nui (Easter Islands). The composite voyage from west to east spans about a fifth of the circumference of the globe. The second major composite voyaging route leads from Tahiti via the northern Tuāmotus to the Marquesas Group, and from there, as already briefly illustrated, to distant Hawai'i (see Figs. 9.3 and 9.4).

250 years after it was drawn, it is clear that Tupaia's Map is not a result of failed cross-cultural communication, and not the phony work of someone who tried to appear "more intelligent than he really was" (Forster 1777, 398). The reason why it could not be received as a unique masterpiece and testimony to the profound navigational knowledge of Pacific Islanders was that critics in the Western academy only saw what they were conditioned to see when looking at a map, and for the longest time never questioned that there may be very different ways of conceiving and representing Oceanic space, based on very different ideas of being in and relating to the world.

Tupaia's Map is a foundational document for the postcolonial study of Oceanic literatures and cultures. It showcases how important it is to overcome the arrogations of Eurocentric knowledge systems, and to take seriously other epistemologies for the ways in which they productively refract, complement or question dominant representational models (see ch. 5). This especially holds true for Oceanic literatures in English: for the work of Albert Wendt and Sia Figiel (Samoa), of Epeli Hau'ofa and Konai Helu Thaman (Tonga), of Subramani and Pio Manoa (Fiji), of Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera (Aotearoa), of Craig Santos Perez (Guam), of Kauraka Kauraka (Cook Islands), of Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner (Marshall Islands, see ch. 11) and countless others. They all, like Tupaia, operate within European representational and generic forms, from novel to poem, short story to play. Yet like Tupaia, they have all explored ways of bending and breaking open these forms to make them compatible with local trajectories of knowledge, be it in the guise of genealogical tales, of artistic practices from tattooing and weaving to carving and bark painting, the embodied forms of dance, or ceremony and song. Postcolonial readings of Oceanic literatures, in turn, must find ways of acknowledging the plural epistemologies of such texts. Accounting for cultural and epistemic difference also means that we as postcolonial readers must reflect our own speaking position and our academic genealogies with a sense of humbleness; that we acknowledge both what we may, but also what we cannot know. This takes us from the Pacific Ocean to the unspeakable horrors of Atlantic slavery.

(Black) Atlantic Studies

Studies of the Atlantic world and of the transatlantic slave economies in particular have been foundational in postcolonial studies. One of the major achievements of now classical works in the fields of Atlantic history and sociology such as C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins* (1938), Fernando Ortiz's *Contrapunteo Cubano* (1940), Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death* (1982) or Sydney Mintz's *Sweetness and Power* (1985) has been to carve out the intimate entanglements between global capitalism and colonialism. Walter Mignolo, among others, insisted on these grounds that global modernity cannot be conceived without simultaneously attending to "coloniality" as its darker side and very "raison d'être" (2003, 456). Modernity, in this (Black) Atlantic perspective, did not primarily emerge in the centers of Early Modern Europe, but in the colonial laboratories of the Atlantic world: on trade, slave and convict ships, where people and things, systems of knowledge and world views first came into contact, often violently, and in very uneven relations of power.

Modern mass migration and the systematic disenfranchisement of workers are crucially prefigured by the Atlantic slavery and indenture circuits; they brought forth stock markets, insurance agencies, investment banks, and the first global financial crises. Sugar mills in the Americas were the first mass-industrial manufacturing plants, and the Atlantic slave revolts and revolutions – most notably in Haiti – marked the first systematic oppositions against the emerging capitalist world system. Atlantic studies have accordingly attempted to decenter Europe in the Atlantic world, and to recuperate and foreground the agency and contributions of its many *others* to multiple formations of the modern.

The work of Marcus Rediker (esp. 1987, 2000 with Peter Linebaugh), for instance, focuses on the proletarian, multiethnic, male and female world of ordinary sailors and pirates as an early modern counterculture to the progressively racialized, gendered and classist discourses of Atlantic elites. In *Specters of the Atlantic*, Ian Baucom reads the slave ship as constitutive of global capitalist futures (2005). And Paul Gilroy, in his path-breaking 1993 work, coined the concept of *The Black Atlantic*, pitched against the essentialist limitations of both Eurocentric *and* Afrocentric discourses, to denote a singular, if internally fractured formation that is neither African, American, nor European, but a syncretistic web of discourses which emerged from the shared experience of transatlantic slavery.

Modernity, thus, is intricately entangled with Atlantic slavery. Certainly, transatlantic slave trade is as old as modernity itself: John Hawkins, a privateer who embarked on a slaving expedition in a captured Portuguese ship as early as in 1562 was the first Englishman to profit from the so-called triangular trade consisting of three passages – the first taking weapons, but also goods considered as trifles by Europeans from Britain, France or Holland to the West African coast to buy slaves; the second, called the 'Middle Passage,' transporting slaves to the Americas; the third bringing sugar, tobacco, cotton and other produce back to Europe. The vast majority of slaves, however, were abducted and forcibly shipped to the Americas in the 18th century, a period during which the British dominated the trade. The slave trade was abolished in British colonies in 1807, after a long and very public campaign in the mother country where predominantly Christian societies rallied against the interests of British planters and their investors. Other nations in Europe and the Americas followed the British model soon after, yet illegal slave trading continued until around the end of the 19th century,

and the institution of slavery itself often lasted much longer than the official slave trade. In its long history, a total of an estimated twelve million Africans arrived and were sold in the new world. About the same number died somewhere on the way, either still in Africa, or during the Middle Passage (Walvin 2000, ix). By 1840, the population of sub-Saharan Africa was thus decimated to around 25 million, about half of what it would have been without the trade (Walvin 1994, 321).

The Atlantic slavery circuit is the hidden foundation on which global capitalism developed. The sheer numbers of its predominantly African victims alone, however, do not yet speak of the traumatic dimensions of enslavement, the Middle Passage and plantation slavery, and what the constitutive experiences of human commodification, exploitation, suffering and death on a mass scale meant for the formations of the modern world. Uncovering these meanings, and trying to access the brutal experiences of Atlantic slavery, has been a key project in postcolonial studies. Yet this project is confronted with a range of challenges: How may writers and scholars address Black Atlantic histories of mass suffering in an ethical way, without doing injustice to the victims? And how may such projects address the continuing injustices and material consequences of Atlantic slavery in a neoliberal and neocolonial present that has been manifestly shaped by it?

The foundational challenge, however, is a dramatic scarcity of historical evidence, and especially the glaring absence of historical accounts of the sites of trauma from the perspective of the victims. There is a rather substantial number of documents which provide insight into the perpetrators' point of view: Two of the most revealing testaments, for instance, are John Newton's *Journal of a Slave Trader, 1750–1754*, which in cold detail records the triangular trade from the point of view of a slave ship captain, or the 14.000 page diary of the planter Thomas Thistlewood, which intimately chronicles the life of a Jamaican plantation between 1750 and 1786, including Thistlewood's sexual exploitation of innumerable female slaves (Eckstein 2006, 128–33).

For the side of the victims, however, things are different. This crucially has to do with the fact that especially first generation slaves who experienced the Middle Passage in person were and remained illiterate with very few exceptions. Those who did learn to read and write, moreover, could often only obtain their education through select Christian organizations, and literacy thus invariably came at the cost of a thorough religious and ideological brainwash. The reliability of the small handful of surviving slave narratives which actually touch upon the experience of the Middle Passage from Africa to the Americas is therefore difficult to assess. There was always implicit or explicit editorial control exercised by the White abolitionists who often wrote down the stories for the slaves, controlled the publishing processes, or at least administered the finances. And the Africans, too, self-censored their writing in view of their dominant market, i. e. sympathetic White British buyers whose sympathy was not to be jeopardized with graphic accounts of sordid physical, sexual and psychological depravations.

"More hardships than I can now relate": Olaudah Equiano, *Interesting Narrative* (1789)

A relative exception in this sense is the autobiography published by Olaudah Equiano, one of the earliest slave narratives which laid the foundations of the genre. It was first published in 1789 under the title *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African*. Unlike other early slave narratives, Equiano could claim that his tale was not only "related," but "written by himself," and published without much White editorial interference. He must have chosen the African name, Olaudah Equiano, specifically for the publication of his memoirs, as until then he was exclusively known under the name Gustavus Vassa, the colonial name he was given by his first owner, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy. The *Interesting Narrative* was a bestseller in its day, went into nine editions, and was a key text for the abolitionist movement. It was largely forgotten again over the course of the 19th century; however, ever since 1967, when Paul Edwards published a newly edited version, it has been celebrated both as a unique African source of Black Atlantic history and as a foundational Black Atlantic literary achievement.

The uniqueness and importance of Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* has to do with the fact that it offers the only extended testimony of the horrors of the Middle Passage by an African writer. It came as a shock, therefore, when in the late 1990s, historical evidence was brought forth which contested the factuality of the first two of its twelve chapters. Whereas the account of Equiano's youth and adult life can be verified as minutely consistent with historical documents – from his time in the navy and schooling in England to his activities in the Caribbean and eventual manumission; from his time as plantation overseer in South America and member of an Arctic expedition to his abolitionist activism in England – there are no written records to back up his childhood in what is today Nigeria and his first Atlantic crossing in the belly of a slave ship. Instead, the scholar Vincent Carretta found a baptismal record and a ship's register identifying one Gustavus Vassa/Weston to be "born in Carolina" (1999, 102). Ever since, there has been heated debate over the question whether the first two chapters of Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* are largely 'fictional' or not.

We tend to side with Equiano in this debate, and with Adam Hochschild, who argues that in the long history of autobiography, texts are typically either largely fabricated or accurate, yet that it is rare and unlikely that "one crucial portion of a memoir [is] totally fabricated and the remainder scrupulously accurate" (2005, 372). However, we would also like to propose that this may not be the most important or interesting question to ask in the first place – that it may not matter, ultimately, whether Equiano based his account of the Middle Passage on firsthand experience, or rather on the intimate accounts of his African friends. We would argue that what really matters is the way in which Equiano managed to carve out a subject position for himself to be heard and read within Atlantic debates, and to have an impact. The task Equiano had to perform falls into relief if one considers that most White Britons at the time would have agreed with the towering philosophers of the Enlightenment period such as David Hume, Immanuel Kant or G. W. F. Hegel, who unanimously doubted that Africans have any intellectual capacities at all.

The strategies which Equiano employed to carve out his position as Black British subject and writer are as complex as plenty. They begin in the paratext – such as in the frontispiece, showing Equiano in gentlemanly English dress and hairstyle, with

an open bible on his lap; in the "written by himself" of the title; or in the subscription lists printed before the actual narrative, boasting the names of all (respectable White) persons who paid in advance for a copy (over 900 in the ninth edition). Yet they are crucial, too, in the technical choices of the narrative itself – in the recourse to the generic model of the spiritual autobiography, which prefigures plot stages from innocence to living in sin and repentance to rescue in faith; in the recourse to a plain style largely devoid of mannerisms modeled on writers like Daniel Defoe; and not least by establishing a productive tension between the young experiencing 'I' facing depravations and adventure, and the older narrating 'I' which comments from an intellectually and morally superior position (see Eckstein 2006, 24–34).

Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* thus does not provide uncomplicated access to the horrors of slavery. It is a performative text which bears the traces of creative self-fashioning and political aspiration as much as the traces of the historical events it narrates. It carefully balances what it can say and what it cannot, in order not to jeopardize the carefully crafted respectability of its authorial voice. Take the following characteristic passage from the second chapter describing life in the belly of a slave ship:

> Many a time we were near suffocation, from the want of fresh air, which we were often without for whole days altogether. This, and the stench from the necessary tubs, carried off many. During the passage I first saw flying fishes, which surprised me very much: they used frequently to fly across ship, and many of them fell on deck. I also now first saw the use of a quadrant. (59)

The casualness of such sudden switches from death and horror to the marvelous wonders of ocean travel and fascination with Western technology clearly marks a fracture in the discourse, a gap in need of explanation, yet evaded through silence. "In this manner," writes Equiano a little earlier, "we continued to undergo more hardships than I can now relate" (59).

The fractures, gaps and silences in Equiano's account are just as crucial as what he is willing to share with his readers. It is through them that some of the unspeakable horrors of the Atlantic slave trade become palpable; yet it is through them, too, that the full ambivalence of Equiano's text and identity transpires – the torn identity of someone who desperately wants to be respected as an Englishman, without entirely denying his African heritage and the horrific violence committed against Africans in the name of the British Crown.

More recent postcolonial literatures of the Black Atlantic attempting to reconfigure the dominant narratives of the past for readers today accordingly face a twofold impasse: Not only do they need to find ways of bridging the gaps and silences of the source material to be able to compellingly retell the horrors of the slave trade from the victim's perspective; they also need to counter Eurocentric ideologies on both sides – both in the White and Black accounts of Atlantic history. Different writers have chosen very different strategies in taking on this task: among them Toni Morrison and Charles Johnson (US), Fred D'Aguiar and David Dabydeen (UK/Guyana), Bernardine Evaristo (UK/Nigeria) and many others. We can only give space to one approach of many, here, taken by the British-Caribbean writer Caryl Phillips.

Re-Membering the Black Atlantic: Caryl Phillips, *Cambridge* (1991)

Caryl Phillips's creative response to the difficulties of turning transatlantic slavery into literature is generally marked by a hesitance to thoroughly fictionalize the past. Instead, in his novels, he often attempts to imaginatively recuperate and recreate distinctive historical voices. His most radical experiment in this fashion is his 1991 work *Cambridge*, a novel that for the largest part consists of two first person voices and narratives that are juxtaposed.

The first narrative is that of Emily Cartwright, who visits her father's Caribbean estate sometime in-between the abolition of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery in 1834. The journal she keeps on her trip makes up about two thirds of the novel, and dutifully records her observations of flora, fauna, and the English, Creole, and African population. While she initially sympathizes with anti-slavery campaigns, her journal gradually shifts toward the ingrained racism of the planters' society, and increasingly so when she begins an affair with the overseer of the plantation, Brown, a man she had initially detested. At one point, Emily briefly comes into contact with an educated, Christian slave called Cambridge; and it is this Cambridge who in the end kills Brown, whose child Emily expects.

Emily's story is confronted, however, with Cambridge's view of events. Cambridge's own narrative recounts his childhood in West Africa, how he is kidnapped, survives the Middle Passage, and immediately returns to England where he is baptized and marries a White servant. Freed after the death of his master, he tours England as an abolitionist until his wife and child die, yet on his way to become a missionary in Africa, Cambridge is robbed and once more sold into slavery. His third crossing of the Atlantic takes the staunch Christian to the Cartwright plantation, where he marries another outsider, the obeah-woman Christiania. Things get out of hand, finally, when Brown seduces Christiania and accuses Cambridge of stealing provisions, and the narrative ends with Cambridge's confession that he had killed Brown in a fight.

Each of the two fictional voices – Emily's and Cambridge's – has its own coherent tone and style, its own subtle uncertainties and crude convictions. Yet it is only in their juxtaposition that the vanities and delusions of each voice about the other party are exposed. The ingenious move of Phillips's novel, however, is that *Cambridge* not only sets two voices into dialogue, but two entire literary traditions which hide beneath the novel's surface. Each part, namely, is an elaborate montage of innumerable scraps and bits of historical texts that are masterfully puzzled together and adjusted to form a coherent new narrative and voice. Thus, the mutual exposition of ideological blindness extends beyond the fictional encounter of Emily and Cambridge, and dynamically pitches two entire historical discourses about slavery against each other which the novel lifts from the oblivion of the archives.

Emily's voice is composed in an elaborate montage of a large number of travelogues and historiographies from the late 18th and early 19th century such as Janet Schaw's *Journal of a Lady of Quality* (1770s), Mrs. Carmichael's *Domestic Manners and Social Conditions of the White, Coloured, and Negro Population of the West Indies* (1833), or 'Monk' Lewis's *Journal of a West India Proprietor* (1834). Cambridge's voice is evidently modeled on Equiano's, and builds upon other bits and pieces of early Black British writing, such as Ignatio Sancho's *Letters* (1782), the *Narrative* of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw (c. 1770), or Ottobah Cugoano's

Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery (1787). The following juxtaposition of Cambridge's (fictional) narrative with the historical source passages gives a good idea of Phillips's compositional technique (see also Eckstein 2006, 241–71):

***Cambridge*, 134–35**	**Source Material**
No longer was I to tarry in my Africa, where my father and my mother loved me with a sincere warmth. A storm broke about our dark heads and I, who can remember only my true Guinea name, Olumide, from amongst the many words of youth, **was washed towards the coast and away from my rich and fertile soil by Christian Providence, whose unlikely agents were those who drink strong liquors, which serve only to inflame their national madness, the slave trade. The Lord intended commerce to enable man to develop the friendly bent of his social affections. Finding his brothers in scattered locales it was hoped that man might forge the sweet blessed security of peace and friendship, while diffusing the goods and commodities of his native land. Such enterprise, with Christian religion as its true companion, would be of profound benefit to any shore fortunate enough to be rewarded with the arrival of traders with soldier-like fortitude, and honest values. It sours my blood** that in the Guinea of my youth it was not to the good fortune of my brethren to meet such men, for unfortunately our shores were visited by those whose eyes were blinded, and hearts stupefied, by the prospect of profit. These men imposed upon their own nation a heavy burden, both moral and financial, for the maintenance of their addiction to slavery. Worse still, they involved the good people of their country in the sorrowful guilt of upholding such a system, thus fusing prejudice into their souls and hardening their hearts.	In Africa, the poor wretched natives – blessed with the most fertile and luxuriant soil – are rendered so much the more miserable for what Providence meant as a blessing; – the Christians' abominable Traffic for slaves – and the horrid cruelty and treachery of the petty Kings – encouraged by their Christian customers – who carry them strong liquors, to enflame their national madness – and powder and bad fire arms, to furnish them with the hellish means of killing and kidnapping. (Sancho 1994, 138) Commerce was meant by the goodness of the Deity to diffuse the various goods of the earth in every part – to unite mankind in the blessed chains of brotherly love, society, and mutual dependence: – the enlightened Christian should diffuse the Riches of the Gospel of peace, with the commodities of his respective land – Commerce attended with strict honesty, and with Religion for its companion, would be a blessing to every shore it touched at. (Sancho 1994, 138) all these he can bear with soldier-like fortitude (Sancho 1994, 139) it is a subject that sours my blood (Sancho 1994, 138)
When I imagine myself to have been not yet fifteen years of age, I was apprehended by a band of brigands and bound by means of a chain to hand and foot. **I must confess, to shame of my fellow Guinea-men, that I was undoubtedly betrayed by those of my own hue.** But it remains true that without instruction and encouragement my native people would never have hardened their hearts and tainted the generous customs of their simple country. Shackled unceremoni-	But I must own, to the shame of my own countrymen, that I was first kid-napped and betrayed by some of my own complexion (Cugoano 1969, 12)

ously at both stern and bow, we unhappy *blacks* formed a most miserable traffic, stumbling with jangling resignation towards our doom. **About my neck I sported a decoration of gold placed there by my mother's own fair hand, and from my ears hung larger and less delicate gold pieces of shape, though mercifully not size, resembling the orange fruit.** These paragons of virtue who had possession of my body, if not my soul, soon divested me of these trappings, thus breaking off my tenderly formed links with my parents. **In addition to this loss, I was forced to endure pains the like of which I had never suffered.**

When I left my dear mother I had a large quantity of gold about me, as is the custom of our country, it was made into rings, and they were linked into one another, and formed a kind of chain, and so put round my neck, and arms and legs, and a large piece hanging at one ear almost in the shape of a pear. I found this all troublesome, and was glad when my new master took it from me. (Gronniosaw 1811, 34)

The next day proved a day of greater sorrow than I have yet experienced. (Equiano 1995, 48)

On the level of its form, the novel thus mirrors the "rhizomorphic, fractal structure of [...] the transcultural, international formation" which Paul Gilroy calls *The Black Atlantic* (1993, 4). Phillips's narrative technique triggers a breathtaking intertextual dynamic which allows modern readers to reencounter forgotten stories of the past in newly accessible ways. By juxtaposing a fictional slave narrative intricately 'containing' almost all voices of the early Black British literary tradition with a narrative crucially built upon some of the most characteristic White British voices about Atlantic slavery, Phillips unmasks the ideological ambivalences not only of Emily and Cambridge, but of two entire internally fractured discourse formations. Phillips's novel does not close the gaps and fissures in source material like the *Interesting Narrative* of Olaudah Equiano by directly telling the horrors of slavery indelibly built into the cultures of Atlantic modernity. Yet by setting into motion complex dialogues across the contradictory archive of the Black Atlantic, the silences still begin to speak loudly, and insistently demand to be filled by the readers themselves.

Indian Ocean Studies

Let us move on, then, to Indian Ocean discourses. Like the other oceans, the Indian Ocean, too, became a major theater of European expansion and colonization from the 17th century onwards; but unlike the Pacific and the Atlantic, it could never be misrepresented and treated as *mare nullius*. The early modern Portuguese, Dutch, French or British mariners who trafficked and traded in the Indian Ocean basin sailed along well established sea routes frequented by Arab, Ethiopian, Persian, Bengali and Chinese trading fleets, and instead of 'discovering' and claiming for their kings or queens 'new worlds,' they came upon powerful empires and immensely wealthy port cities whenever they hit land between the eastern coasts of Africa and the Sunda Straits.

Given the transnational connections that the states around the Indian Ocean seaboard entertained with each other as well as with Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, China, Japan and the Silk Road trade system, the newly arrived European traders could count themselves happy if they were granted the privilege of exporting dye or fabrics from the imperial ports of Persia or Arabia, or spices and sandalwood from one of the port cities that dotted the South Indian Malabar coast. Indeed, as Andre Gunder Frank somewhat

lyrically puts it, "we may visualize a necklace of port-city emporia strung around Asia" (1998, 84) from Aden via Hormuz, Cambay and Surat to Calicut, Kochi and Colombo, Madras, Malacca and Aceh. From the perspective of global history, the epicenter not only of commerce and trade but also of migration and cross-cultural interaction up to the period of the European Renaissance therefore was definitely not the Mediterranean, let alone the Atlantic, but the Indian Ocean, "that great 'highway' for the migration of peoples, for cultural diffusion, and for economic exchange" (Abu-Lughod 1989, 261). Long before the rise of Europe to global prominence, then, the "Indian Ocean world" (Forter 2016, 1330) comprised a dense and variegated transregional exchange network in which no individual sovereign power wielded hegemony over the others.

Proceeding from this historical diagnosis, postcolonial historiography, theory and fiction has frequently aimed to reconstruct and to some extent imaginatively 'produce' the period before European hegemony as a reference point for the claim that transnationalism, cosmopolitanism and indeed modernity are not European achievements but that they have flourished around the Indian Ocean long before the arrival of the Portuguese, the Dutch or the British.

It needs to be added, however, that this pre-European modernity involved not only the mutually beneficiary exchange of goods and ideas but also the large-scale traffic in slaves, mainly transported from the ports along the eastern seaboard of Africa to the Arabian peninsula, the Gulf region and the Indian subcontinent. This so-called 'Arab Slave Trade' continued for a period of some twelve centuries from ca. 800 CE to the early 20th century. The number of its victims, most of whom were captured and enslaved from the interiors of sub-Saharan Africa, is estimated between 11.5 million (Segal 2001, 43) and 14 million (Junne 2016, 21). It is of course true that a wide range of items – ivory, gold and coffee in particular – were traded, too, from Mombasa or Mogadishu as far as Calicut and beyond, and that reciprocally highly sought after goods like Chinese ceramics were purchased by wealthy merchants along the East African coast, giving rise to a "Swahili cosmopolitan material culture" (Zhao 2012, 41) all through the medieval and early modern periods. If thus "Indian Ocean Africa played an integral part in the creation and development of the 'first global economy'" (Campbell 2017, 37), the fact remains that the export of slaves was a central, if not indispensable component of this integration.

The "old world order" of the pre-colonial Indian Ocean therefore is not to be mistakenly idealized as a system in which non-competitive regional powers clustered around a "friendly sea" (Desai 2004, 140) and convivially coexisted. Nevertheless, the complexity and density of the Indian Ocean world before European dominance remains a crucial reference point for postcolonial anti-Eurocentrism. Let us conclude by exploring this notion further through Indian anthropologist-novelist Amitav Ghosh's reconstruction of the Indian Ocean world as a viable alternative to entrenched Western modernity.

Ocean before European Hegemony: Amitav Ghosh, *In an Antique Land* (1992)

In his account of his field research in an Egyptian village in the 1980s as a PhD candidate in anthropology at the University of Oxford, Indian author Amitav Ghosh offers a quite different narrative of the nexus between slavery and Oceanic transac-

tions. The Egyptian travelogue, *In an Antique Land* (1992a), forms a substantially extended complementary piece to Ghosh's historical essay, "The Slave of MS H.6," published in the same year in volume VII of *Subaltern Studies*, the by now canonical publication series of revisionary "Writings on South Asian History and Society" (as the subtitle of the series has it).

Subaltern Studies was established in the early 1980s by a group of Kolkata-based historians and sociologists, who were out to interrogate and rectify the received biased historiographies, whether British or Indian-nationalist, of colonial and postcolonial India – historiographies that they rejected for their exclusive focus on the role played by the ruling classes and castes (see also ch. 5). As founding father Ranajit Guha puts it in his introduction to volume one, the aim of *Subaltern Studies* was to counter such narratives by acknowledging "the contribution made by the people *on their own*, that is, *independently of the elite* to the making and development" of modern India (1982, 3), and "the elite" is here both the British colonizers and the local bourgeoisie.

Ghosh was only loosely attached to the Subaltern Studies collective but his approach is clearly resonant with many of the group's tenets. For both the "MS H.6" article and *In an Antique Land* try to recuperate "the barely discernible traces that the humble and the ordinary leave upon the world" (161), and both are exercises in the excavation of a lost history of popular cosmopolitan worldmaking that precedes European modernity by centuries. At the same time, Ghosh's writing strategy shares commonalities not only with the group around Guha but also with the then budding New Historicism as advocated and practiced by Stephen Greenblatt or Catherine Gallagher, who used apparently insignificant and anecdotal archival snippets for the reconstruction of entire complex historical formations.

In a similar way, Ghosh uses an inconspicuous passage from an ordinary trader's letter for a clue that will, eventually, lead to the envisaging of a whole submerged civilization that flourished around the Indian Ocean before European hegemony. The letter in question was written in 1148 by one Khalaf ibn Ishaq, a Jewish merchant residing in Aden, to his friend and colleague Abraham ibn Yiju who was settled as a tradesman in Mangalore on the South Indian Malabar coast famous for its spices at the time of the correspondence in question. At the end of his missive, Khalaf conveys his good wishes to Abraham and his children – and expressly sends "plentiful greetings" to Abraham's slave, who at least in this first written trace remains nameless. Ghosh concedes that

> the mention of the slave is so brief as to be hardly worth notice. But it happens to come to us from a time when the only people for whom we can even begin to imagine a properly individual human existence are the literate and the consequential: those who have the means to inscribe themselves upon history. The slave of MS H.6 was none of these things. (161)

Nor, actually, was his master, Abraham ibn Yiju. In fact, the history that Ghosh reconstructs from the fragmentary archival material retrieved from an ancient synagogue in Cairo in the late 19th century and preserved in the university libraries of Jerusalem and Cambridge is the modest story of a set of common people, "tiny threads woven into the borders of a gigantic tapestry" (95). Against the backdrop of marauding crusaders and their defeat, dynastic warfare and large-scale trading agreements, Khalaf ibn Ishaq, Abraham ibn Yiju and his slave, whose name Ghosh reconstructs as Bomma, engage in the everyday business of trading, marrying children off, acquiring and losing property. What transpires through these quotidian

exchanges, however, is the ubiquity of migrancy and mobility across the vast contact zone that is the Indian Ocean.

Thus we learn that Abraham ibn Yiju is "a Jewish merchant, originally of Tunisia, who had gone to India by way of Egypt" (19). Likewise, Khalaf's itinerary stretches from Egypt via Hormuz to Aden, and Bomma the slave is dispatched as business agent from Malabar to Aden and back. It is true that none of these voyages were undertaken out of free will but rather dictated by economic necessity, and that more than that Bomma's sojourn to Aden simply must have been the result of the slave's compliance with his master's orders. Yet, Ghosh suggests, the role of the slave in the business transactions between the partners was one of an equal as "ibn Yiju's friends in Aden came to regard him with increasing respect, and in time Khalaf ibn Ishaq even began to prefix his name with the title of 'Shaikh'" (1992, 266). Nor is there any indicator in the record concerning religious strife or conflict, even though the two correspondents and trading partners are members of the Jewish minority in Islamic Aden as much as in Hindu Mangalore. Bomma himself, according to Ghosh, must have been a Hindu from a "matrilineal community" affiliated with the specifically tolerant, syncretic and non-brahminic "Bhuta cult" of the South Indian Tulunad region (254).

In the course of reading Ghosh's account, the relation between Abraham, Khalaf and Bomma increasingly takes on a harmonious and convivial quality hardly to be reconciled with the actuality of slavery. This, in fact, is the whole point of *In an Antique Land*:

> Whatever the circumstances of their meeting, the terms under which Bomma entered Ben Yiju's service were probably entirely different from those suggested by the word "slavery" today: their arrangement was probably more that of patron and client than master and slave, as that relationship is now understood. [...] the medieval idea of slavery tends to confound contemporary conceptions, both of servitude and of its mirrored counter-image, individual freedom. (259)

In this understanding, slavery is closely linked to the confluences and conjunctures of apparently distinct and discreet cultural resources in the Oceanic contact zone. This fluidity is the precondition for the syncretic dynamics of Ghosh's "aquatic ideal" (Wiemann 2008, 235). For slavery in the medieval world was not only often used "as a means of creating fictive ties of kinship between people who were otherwise unrelated" (260). It was moreover widely associated with the spiritual 'bondage' of the believer to their deity, whether in the teachings of the "pietist and fiercely egalitarian [Hindu] Vachanakra saint-poets of Bomma's own lifetime," in the Sufi mysticism of the period or its adaptation in the pantheist Judaism that flourished all through the Arab world of the time (261). What emerges from this (re)construction of a trans-denominational shared egalitarian mysticism grounded in the notion of the believer's bonds to god (rather than earthly overlords) is the possibility of a past ecumene of an "inarticulate counter-belief" shared by Hindus, Muslims and Jews alike (263).

Nor is this tolerance and conviviality restricted to the domain of the spiritual. To the contrary, Ghosh insists that the pre-European Indian Ocean world consisted of a variegated, internally pluralistic and yet loosely coherent aquatic civilization to which the idea of a "proprietorial right" (288) over territory was alien. In a principally sympathetic reading of *In an Antique Land*, Gaurav Desai convincingly demonstrates to what extent Ghosh's "friendly sea" is itself a figuration, the product of a "nostalgic optimism" (Desai 2004, 140) whose reading of the archival material

is informed by the desire to make out/make up a workable alternative reference point in the past: "[F]or Ghosh's project to work, it must flatten out the [disturbing] micropolitics of the world before what he sees as the intrusive arrival of the Western powers in this setting" (Desai 2004, 132). More precisely, Desai disclaims Ghosh's eulogy of the Indian Ocean civilizations' idyllic conviviality by pointing out that it "may be true, as Ghosh suggests, that before the arrival of the Europeans no political power in the Indian Ocean ultimately *succeeded* in dictating the terms of trade, but it was not for lack of trying" (Desai 2004, 136).

In this reading, then, the alleged fluidity of the trading cultures would simply be owed to the failure of each of its member states to achieve a domineering position; by no means would it be, as Ghosh suggests, "the product of a rare cultural choice" (287). In Nietzschean terms, therefore, Ghosh employs a "monumentalist" approach to a history that, as such, provides not so much a factual but a strategic reference point in the service of the present; amplifying the pathos of the "syncretic civilizations" of his aquatic ideal, Ghosh's figurations of "cultures of accommodation and compromise" (288) function in order to re-open the conditions of possibility for discourses to emerge that the dominant archive forecloses. And the main agent of such foreclosure is Western modernity with its devastating and impoverishing practices and institutions.

In a poignant anecdote from his travelogue, the author-narrator encounters an Egyptian Imam. What ensues between the Indian PhD researcher and the village priest is an alienated dialogue performed by two postcolonial subjects who have internalized the European notion of progress that provides "the only language we had been able to discover in common" (237): Interrogated by the Imam about the "primitive and backward [Hindu] custom" (235) of burning the dead, Ghosh's narrator engages in a competition about which of the two countries, India or Egypt, is more advanced. Significantly, the quarrel gravitates around 'the West' as the normative point of reference against which alone 'advancement' or 'backwardness' can be measured: in terms of technological achievements that ultimately get expressed in the globally legible symbolic currency of weapons of mass destruction. In the overdetermined arena prepared by imperialism, the Imam and the narrator can only act as "delegates from two superseded civilizations, vying with each other to establish a prior claim to the technology of modern violence" (236); they have to resort, in other words, "to the universal, irresistible metaphysic of modern meaning" (236). The episode condenses a kind of subaltern desire for the condition of modernity and exposes it as the only common ground available to "millions and millions of people on the landmasses around us" (236). Progress and advancement then operate as the definitive horizon within which such encounters occur between postcolonial subjects condemned to compete with one another for the more privileged place "on the ascending ladder of Development" (237). Thus, the narrator retrospectively muses,

> the Imam and I had participated in our own final defeat, in the dissolution of the centuries of dialogue that had linked us: we had demonstrated the irreversible triumph of the language that had usurped all the others in which people once discussed their differences. We had acknowledged that it was no longer possible to speak, as Ben Yiju and his Slave, or any one of the thousands of travellers who had crossed the Indian Ocean in the Middle Ages might have done." (236–37)

Yet in spite of the apparently "irreversible triumph" of the monopoly of one aggressive, monologic and progress-obsessed paradigm that discredits and effectively rules

out all alternatives, *In an Antique Land* culminates in the hopeful discovery of how resilient the apparently vanquished and obliterated Indian Ocean "civilization of accommodation" actually is. Immediately before his final departure from Egypt to India, the narrator is told by some of his local friends about the imminent annual celebrations of a medieval saint's birthday whose tomb is located near the village. As it turns out, Abu-Haseira was indeed a cabbalist and mystic who "belonged to a famous line of zeddikim – the Jewish counterparts of Islamic marabouts and Sufi saints, many of whom had once been venerated by Jews and Muslims alike" (342). The narrator realizes on the point of leaving Egypt that precisely this syncretic practice of cross-denominational veneration is still alive around the tomb of Abu-Haseira. This practice serves as a token that the tiny fragments of the dialogic culture that sustained the Indian Ocean civilization still persist so that "in defiance of the enforcers of History, a small piece of Bomma's world had survived" (342).

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10 *Interlude:* Hybridity

Hybridity is an old concept which goes back to European antiquity. The term originally denoted the mixing of biologically and/or culturally different species or human beings, and was typically used in a negative and condescending way, such as when referring to the offspring of a Greek or Roman man and a 'Barbarian' woman. In the 19th century, biological hybridity and its impact on cultures was a major concern in the emerging natural sciences, and most prominently so in the pseudo-science of raciology. The mixing of races was seen by most colonial physical anthropologists as a threat to the God-given natural order of human races, and not least also to the orders of Empire (see ch. 16) which it stabilized.

Postcolonial theorists have thus partly wrested the concept of hybridity from racists and White supremacists, and thoroughly revalorized it. The most prominent name to whom the concept is attached today is the Indian scholar Homi K. Bhabha. He developed a new understanding of hybridity across several essays collected in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994).

For his purposes, Bhabha completely dissociated the term from notions of biological mixing. For Bhabha, hybridity is a strictly discursive effect – in other words, it only exists in language. Still, this is of great consequence, as Bhabha assumes that the world is essentially constituted by texts, following French poststructuralist theory. His notion of hybridity is indebted to Jacques Derrida's notion of 'différance' (referring to the unavoidable and infinite deferral of meaning in texts), and to Jacques Lacan's concept of 'mimicry' as a camouflage which, in Bhabha's words, "conceals no presence or identity behind its mask" (Bhabha 1994, 88). Hybridity, for Bhabha, has no tangible referent in the real world: it describes the inherent instability and ambivalence of colonial signs and texts, which can be deconstructed to undermine the authority of the colonizer.

Only in this sense does hybridity have an emancipatory and liberating effect, and offer the potential of new, pluralized identities. Bhabha describes hybridity as emerging "in-between the designations of identity" and argues that "this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (1994, 5). According to Bhabha, hybridity thus challenges the colonizer/colonized dichotomy as a "strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority)" (1994, 154).

Bhabha's notion of hybridity has been taken up by Robert J. C. Young in *Colonial Desire* (1995), who aligned it with previous notions of hybridity in biology and linguistics. Young asserts that "hybridization as 'raceless chaos' [...] produces no stable new form but rather something closer to Bhabha's restless, uneasy, interstitial hybridity: a radical heterogeneity, discontinuity, the permanent revolution of forms" (1995, 25). However, he also acknowledges that "there is no single, or correct, concept of hybridity" because it shifts and changes with the cultural context or "ideological network" through which it is being thought (Young 1995, 27).

Today, hybridity is a much contested term which has somewhat fallen out of fashion in postcolonial studies. It has been challenged from different angles, and for very different reasons. Many have complained about the unnecessary opaqueness

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and difficulty of Bhabha's style and argument which he adopted from French theory, while others, especially from a decolonial studies angle, reject it wholesale for its purportedly Eurocentric debt to poststructuralism. More importantly, the concept of hybridity has been critiqued for glossing over the often very violent and very real material consequences of colonial hegemony. Aijaz Ahmad and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, for instance, warned against the term's disregard of institutional and everyday racism, and the asymmetrical experience of colonial power relations which for many subalterns meant and means that they will never even enter colonial discourse. Much hybridity-talk has been indeed complicit in celebrating cultural difference while comfortably ignoring inequality.

In our own reading, a part of the problem is that Bhabha's original notion of hybridity has been stretched by his followers and critics to an encompassing cultural metaphor, thus losing its critical edge and materialist bearings. However, in Bhabha's original conception and case studies, it really only refers to the dynamics of colonial writing, and the very specific ways in which its seemingly stable codes become destabilized and ambivalent in concrete encounters between colonizers and subaltern agents. In deconstructive readings of carefully contextualized colonial discourse, Bhabha's notion of hybridity can still be put to very good use. In other contexts, we would advise to avoid the term (most importantly so when referring to 'mixed-race' people or characters in fiction), or at least to use it with care.

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11 Postcolonialism and Ecology

Colonialism and ecological disruption and exploitation have a long, joint history. With regard to the Americas, historian Alfred Crosby famously highlighted what he termed the "Columbian exchange": the massive importation of European and other pathogens, flora, and fauna since 1492 and the severe repercussions especially for New World ecosystems. Crosby argues that the exploitation of the colonies by Europeans "depended on their ability to 'Europeanize' the flora and fauna of the New World" in order to control and manage the unknown landscape (2003, 64). Even though Crosby concedes that the colonization of the Americas by Spaniards, Portuguese, and others in the wake of 1492 resulted in reciprocal influences between all the ecosystems of the Atlantic world, it was in the Americas that the changes resulted in what he came to call "ecological imperialism." In an article about the British settlement of Jamestown in 1607, Charles C. Mann writes that the European colonizers

> replaced or degraded so much of the native ecosystem that they made it harder and harder for the Indians to survive in their native lands [...]. Unable to adapt to this foreign landscape, [the colonists] unleashed what would become a multilevel ecological assault on North America. (Mann 2007, 44)

In addition to these often diffuse but momentous processes, colonizers actively exploited the resources of the colonies, which included, in a deadly logic, people, animals, plants, the soil, and – most coveted – gold and other mineral deposits.

The link between colonization and the exploitative intervention into ecosystems remains pertinent in the present. In a 2017 blog dedicated to critical discard studies, main contributing editor Max Liboiron writes in a post titled "Pollution is Colonialism":

> Colonialism in Canada is an ongoing structure whereby settler society and government assert sovereignty over lands already occupied by Indigenous peoples. This includes disrupting and exterminating Indigenous life, values, and self-determination, as well as disruption of established relationships between bodies, lands, waters, airs, plants, animals and other beings. [...] Industry and the state disrupt and damage the many relationships that make up the Land when they understand it as a resource. They use the Land to extract value, such as in mining, but use the Land as a place to put pollution – from radioactive waste to urban sewage – as another way to make economic value. Using the Land for the best interests of industry, profit, settlers, or colonial governments is a central part of colonialism. (Liboiron 2017)

To make the issue even more complex, coloniality (the hierarchies and categories produced by colonialism) and the destruction of ecosystems for the sake of economic survival or profit can also remain central features of *post*colonial states who have achieved independence from former colonizers, an issue we will highlight in this chapter's extended close reading of the neo-imperialist structures of petroculture. Coloniality and ecological destruction are also central issues for those populations and peoples living in places declared overseas departments of their former colonizer (for example, Martinique and Guadeloupe), free associated states (for example, Puerto Rico) or unincorporated territory (such as Guam). Frequently, such spaces become involuntary hosts to foreign military bases, nuclear test sites, or toxic waste deposits. In addition, marginalized states and populations are often hit

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hardest by worldwide climate change and global warming. In some academic settings, the discipline of ecology, "the scientific study of natural interdependencies: of life forms as they relate to each other and their shared environment" (Kerridge 2006, 535), has thus become an important touchstone for postcolonial scholarship. In the humanities, postcolonial studies have increasingly sought to collaborate with the field of ecocriticism, a branch of literary and cultural studies influenced by ecology and focusing on the environment and environmentalism.

In the words of Richard Kerridge, ecocritics assess "[b]eliefs and ideologies [...] for their environmental implications. Ecocritics analyze the history of concepts such as 'nature,' in an attempt to understand the cultural developments that have led to the present global ecological crisis" (2006, 530). Lawrence Buell has famously chronicled the history of ecocriticism as consisting of various, albeit overlapping, waves: a "first wave," concerned with the preservation of nature and interested in the descriptive power of the natural sciences, and a "second wave" more concerned with the mutual implication of 'nature' and 'culture,' issues of environmental justice, and the way in which race, class, gender, and coloniality play into environmental concerns (Buell 2005, 21–22; see also Adamson and Slovic 2009, 6). Recently, scholars have argued for the existence of a "third wave" more attuned to translocal explorations of space, comparative, cross-cultural approaches, the interrogation of human relations to animals, material ecofeminism, and an increased attention to issues of sexual orientation (Slovic 2010, 7).

This catalogue suggests that ecocriticism and postcolonialism share central concerns. However, as Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George Handley have remarked, many representations of ecocriticism locate the field as predominantly European and North American and are marked by a "displacement of postcolonial, feminist, ecosocialist, and environmental justice concerns as outside the primary body of ecocritical work" (2011, 14). To counter this one-sided narrative, DeLoughrey and Handley suggest that ecocritics increasingly become aware of and draw on "earlier works in postcolonial literature to suggest that the global south has contributed to an ecological imaginary and discourse of activism and sovereignty that is not derivative of the Euro-American environmentalism of the 1960s and '70s" (2011, 8).

Eco/Poco: A Common Agenda?

In 2005, Rob Nixon provided a set of perceived contrasts between postcolonialism and ecocriticism which, in his view, urgently need to be addressed. Nixon argues that postcolonialists tend to emphasize hybridity over some ecocritics' concern with purity, that postcolonialists emphasize narratives of displacement while ecocritics often focus on a sense of place, that postcolonialists favor cosmopolitan frameworks over ecocritics' more nation-oriented approaches, and that postcolonialists are concerned with reconstructing histories "from below" while ecocritics have tended to advocate "timeless [...] communion with nature," which, especially in settler colonies, tends to obscure the history of violent settlement and genocide (2005, 235). Nixon points out that we need to "rethink oppositions between bioregionalism and cosmopolitanism, between transcendentalism and transnationalism, between an ethics of place and the experience of displacement" in order to bring the two approaches into a working relationship (2005, 247).

In the wake of such observations, numerous critics have tackled the task of creating a combined approach. In their introduction to *Postcolonial Ecologies*, DeLoughrey and Handley advocate four areas central to postcolonial ecocriticism: geography and its connection to colonialism, the deconstruction of Enlightenment dualisms such as nature/culture, the analysis of anthropocentrism, and the issue of agency, particularly the question of "speak[ing] for nature" (2011, 25). In their introduction to *Postcolonial Green*, Bonnie Roos and Alex Hunt argue that "it is the term 'justice' that provides a space for theoretical work bridging and merging ecocriticism and postcolonialism," since environmental justice ecocriticism is transnational in scope and pays attention to factors such as race and class (2010, 3). According to Roos and Hunt, globalization can best be analyzed by an ecocritical postcolonialism which is attentive both to globalization's historical links to coloniality and to issues such as the appropriation and exploitation of land (2010, 3–4). In *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin argue for a re-reading and extension of the work of Alfred Crosby and Richard Grove on the history of ecological imperialism.

Following such critics' work, this short introduction to postcolonialism and ecology will focus on some of the fruitful areas of collaboration (and some points of conflict) between postcolonial studies and ecocriticism and highlight several instances in which postcolonial literature has set the agenda and developed answers to crucial issues in the field. We are thus making two central claims here: The first is that research combining ecocriticism and postcolonialism is crucially important in rethinking contemporary conceptions of space, time, and the human subject in the face of climate change (for an earlier version of this argument, see Waller 2014). The second is that postcolonial literature in particular has played, and continues to play, a leading role in theorizing these conceptions.

Before developing the theoretical framework further, let us therefore intersperse a reading of one such text, Nigerian writer Helon Habila's novel *Oil on Water* (2010), which productively complicates ecocritical positions from a postcolonial angle and thus sets the agenda for connecting ecocriticism and postcolonialism. Habila's fiction zooms in on the ecological devastation wrought upon the Niger River Delta by multinational oil companies and negotiates the competing demands of global corporate capitalism, Niger Delta villagers, the Nigerian government and military officials, foreign and local environmentalists, and militant rebels. Building on Habila's work, we elaborate on the ways in which a combination of ecocritical and postcolonial perspectives has reconceptualized the categories of time and space. In a next step, we trace eco/poco conceptualizations of the human subject – a topic we explore via a reading of Indian playwright, journalist and graphic novelist Manjula Padmanabhan's 1998 play *Harvest*. Finally, we attempt to bring conceptions of time, space, and the subject together in addressing the concept of the Anthropocene, which we interrogate via Marshallese poet, educator and activist Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner's poem "Tell Them" (2011/2017).

The Space and Time of Petroculture: Helon Habila, *Oil on Water* (2010)

Before returning to theory and a reflection on questions of space and time in postcolonial ecocriticism, let us conceptually develop the challenges to these categories, as well as their political urgency, via a literary text. Helon Habila's third novel, *Oil on Water*, is an example for the genre of petrofiction, a term coined by Amitav Ghosh in 1992. In recent decades, fictional reflections on the effects of oil drilling constitute no small part of African (and particularly Nigerian) literature, be it in the form of poems, theatre plays or novels. This comes as no surprise, as the term 'black gold' formerly associated with slaves is now used for crude oil, a resource of major importance for Western capitalism and a trigger for neocolonial moves in order to secure access to the coveted resources.

Already at the very beginning of the 20th century, when Nigeria was still a British colony, exploration activities were carried out on a small scale as they "date back to at least 1903" (Steyn 2009, 245), but with the discovery of huge reserves in the Niger Delta in the late 1950s, large companies like Shell, BP or Chevron took over and the plight of the people living there began. After independence, the Nigerian economy became even less diversified than in colonial times and thus increasingly dependent on crude oil as its sole commodity. The nationalization of the oil industry in 1971 did not make a palpable difference with regard to the distribution of income generated from the huge oil reserves as Shell now operated in tandem with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC). While the money gained from the lucrative trade remained safely in the hands of multinational oil companies, the government and a corrupt elite, the ethnic groups living in the delta were deprived of their livelihood as their traditional occupations as fishermen, farmers and hunters in a subsistence culture ceased to become feasible employment options because of the devastating pollution of the land.

Resistance against the oil companies and the ruling elite, conceived as a global fight against multinational corporations and a local fight for clean earth in a move towards social and ecological justice, was deadly, as Ken Saro-Wiwa, a Nigerian writer and activist who was a founding member and later the figure head of MOSOP (Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People), had to discover. He described the situation in the land of the Ogoni, a Niger Delta people, as follows:

> [L]ands, streams, and creeks are totally and continually polluted; the atmosphere has been poisoned, charged as it is with hydrocarbon vapours, methane, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and soot emitted by gas which has been flared twenty-four hours a day for thirty-three years in very close proximity to human habitation. Acid rain, oil spillages and oil blowouts have devastated Ogoni territory. High-pressure oil-pipelines crisscross the surface of Ogoni farmlands and villages dangerously. (Saro-Wiwa 1995, 94–95)

During the regime of the military dictator Sani Abacha, Saro-Wiwa was at first imprisoned and subsequently sentenced to death. While Western governments imposed sanctions and Nigeria was briefly suspended from the Commonwealth, these measures lasted only until after the death of Abacha in 1998 because the Western greed for oil was bigger than the impetus to mourn the life of an activist and the destruction of a whole eco-system.

This is the background against which *Oil on Water* is set. Cleverly using elements of crime fiction in combination with moments from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Dark-*

ness, only to subvert both in the course of the narrative, the novel follows weathered, alcoholic journalist Zaq and cub journalist Rufus, who try to interview Isabel, the abducted wife of James Floode, a British engineer with one of the oil companies. Following the first-person perspective of Rufus, the novel has a cinematic time structure. The present is constantly interspersed with stories relating to Rufus' past, or to Zaq's as told to Rufus, which occasionally begin in the middle only to be taken up later on at a different point. The plot, which is mainly set on the water, thus flows like the meandering river and employs a time structure that is meant to convey that time is "suspended and inconsequential" (85).

Both journalists start from Port Harcourt, which is the center of the Niger Delta, but as soon as they enter the arms and sidearms of the river, all inklings of city life seem to fade away. Rufus and Zaq find themselves far away from the bustling streets of Port Harcourt and rely for orientation on their boatmen, Tamuno, and his son Michael, who (in contrast to the boatman in *Heart of Darkness*) are named and have their own story to tell. While the canoe floats on the water, the arms of the delta take on a dreamlike quality in the still unpolluted parts: "After a while the sky and the water and the dense foliage on the river banks all looked the same: blue and green and blue-green misty. The whole landscape was now a mere trick of light, vaporous and shape-shifting, appearing and disappearing behind the fog" (4).

Yet, it becomes increasingly clear that most of the delta now presents a devastated, toxic riverscape in which the extraction of oil has left indelible marks on flora and fauna alike:

> Soon we were in a dense mangrove swamp; the water underneath us had turned foul and sulphurous; insects rose from the surface in swarms to settle in a mobile cloud above us [...]. The atmosphere grew heavy with the suspended stench of dead matter. We followed a bend in the river and in front of us we saw dead birds draped over tree branches, their outstretched wings black and slick with oil; dead fishes bobbed white-bellied between tree roots. (9)

But it is not only the river and the air that are polluted, because the land itself also bears the scars of oil drilling: "It looked like a setting for a sci-fi movie: the meagre landscape was covered in pipelines flying in all directions, sprouting from the evil-smelling, oil-fecund earth. The pipes criss-crossed and interconnected endlessly all over the eerie field" (34). The devastated environment proves to be a victim of what Rob Nixon has called "slow violence." Habila's writing thus makes the invisible visible, or, to use Nixon's words, it "can help make the unapparent appear, making it accessible and tangible by humanizing drawn-out threats inaccessible to the immediate senses" (Nixon 2011, 15).

In this context, the notion of witnessing plays an important role because not everybody is taken seriously as a witness. Journalists might be granted enough authority in this respect, though. Thus, Zaq and Rufus have ostensibly set out to discover Isabel Floode and write about the kidnapping, but their main aim slowly changes to telling the story of the polluted Niger Delta in a move to record the slow environmental destruction for posterity rather than telling the story of the abduction. As Zaq puts it, "The story is not always the final goal" (5), referring to the sensational press coverage of the plight of the Niger Delta, which mainly consists of stories making spectacular headlines with acts of short-term violence or sabotage. In contrast to this type of witnessing, the story ultimately recorded by Rufus in *Oil on Water* is made up of his recollections and interviews with the various factions

having a stake in the Niger Delta and thus provides the reader with a multitude of perspectives.

The different factions represented in the novel fall into four groups with regard to their relationship to and complex interactions with the environment as well as with each other: the (expat) employees of the oil companies, the militants who fight them and abduct people to get ransom money, the soldiers paid for by the government and the villagers who are awkwardly sandwiched between all of the former. It is striking that the relationship to the land differs considerably in and between all four groups. In line with many Indigenous groups, the villagers close to Yellow Island declare that the land is not theirs but that they are custodians of it. For this reason they cannot sell it off because "[t]his was their ancestral land, this was where their fathers and their fathers' fathers were buried [...] the land had been good to them, they never lacked for anything" (39). This relationship to the land is by no means a possessive one and acknowledges the responsibility towards the earth and the eco-system.

The same form of communion with the environment lies at the heart of the way of life of the worshippers. They live on Irikefe Island in a shrine which boasts a beautiful sculpture garden. In the mornings, they embark on a ritual welcoming the sun while standing in the water believed to have healing powers, thus paying homage to the two elements which are so important for them. Their belief system also includes good and bad spirits, with the bad ones having "sinned against mother earth" (116). The worshippers are proud to have kept the island free of oil prospecting and the accompanying greed and violence. Still, they also follow strict patriarchal rules as the role of priest and important members are assigned to men, while women do the cooking, healing and nurturing. Towards the end of the novel, the peaceful and lush island, which is constructed as a counter-image to the villages under siege from the oil companies, cannot escape political realities and is destroyed by the soldiers in pursuit of the militants. This shows that there are apparently no safe spaces in the delta any longer.

But the people in the many villages on the Niger are no homogenous group and also not unanimous in their evaluation of the benefits of oil. Many succumb to the temptation to sell off their land for a small compensation (or are coerced into doing so). It is only later that they discover that they will not only lose their traditional ways, but that most of them will end up unemployed and displaced, which the many abandoned villages that Zaq and Rufus encounter during their journey reveal only too clearly. They are all imbued with "the same indefinable sadness in the air, as if a community of ghosts were suspended above the punctured zinc roofs, unwilling to depart, yet powerless to return" (9). Boma, Rufus' sister, exemplifies the negative effects on humans who have sold out to the oil companies because her face is marred by an oil fire that consumed her village, accidentally caused by her father setting the drums on fire which contained oil illegally tapped from pipelines. Ultimately, she carries the environmental destruction havocked by the extraction of oil on her body and nearly loses her will to live.

The foreign employees of the oil companies, in stark contrast, do not care what happens to the environment at all as they keep foregrounding the economic opportunities arising from the extraction of oil. While they are directly responsible for the exploitation of land and water, they remain at a safe distance to the devastating effects. Thus, James Floode lives "in one of the many colonial-style buildings on the Port Harcourt waterfront" (104) in a gated compound, while the company men

looking for his wife survey the land from the safe vantage point of a helicopter. Floode does not accept responsibility for the environmental disaster brought about by the oil companies, but rather berates the corrupt Nigerian government, which should do better with the oil revenues instead of pocketing the money themselves.

Ultimately, both the oil companies and the government are indifferent to the plight of the peoples in the Niger Delta, as related in the story of the Doctor, who in a gesture reminiscent of the District Commissioner in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, is "going to write a book on that some day" (90). He tells Rufus the story of one of the villages succumbing to the offer of money by the oil companies. Initially, the flares represented the Fire of Pentecost for them, only to have their land, air and water poisoned. Corruption is rife because when the Doctor wants to make public the devastating results of his soil and water samples, he suddenly finds himself on the payroll of the oil company, which allegedly wants him to go on with his tests as people keep dying. But these human lives are of no importance, as the Doctor has to discover. When he asks the government for intervention, nothing happens, even when the results are published internationally by concerned NGOs. Habila thus illustrates that environmental or social justice are nowhere near for the affected villagers.

Both militants and soldiers have a very different approach to the meaning of land and water than the villagers. For the soldiers the land belongs to the government and they have been sent there to reinstate order. Ironically, their speedboats are called Mami Wata 1 and Mami Wata 2, thus referring to the African water deity connected to the sacred nature of water, an element that is shown in the novel as abused and dying. The Major embodies the cruelty of the government forces. Thus, he douses assumed militants with oil as a form of torture while meting out what he believes to be justice, which is a far cry from "fancy ideas about human rights and justice. […] The best thing is to line them up and shoot them" (97).

The militants, on the other hand, are likewise not favorably represented as activists who wholeheartedly engage with the cause of the villagers or who could serve as role models. Mostly consisting of unemployed youths from the villages, their modus operandi consists in sabotaging equipment or abducting people in order to claim ransom money from the oil companies. Like the villagers, they are no homogenous group but are divided into several factions, like the Black Belts of Justice, the Free Delta Army, or the AK-47 Freedom Fighters, and represent different ethnic groups living in the delta. Despite repeatedly claiming (like the Professor, leader of the group that has abducted Isabel Flood) that "[w]e are the people, we are the Delta, we represent the very earth on which we stand" (149), in the end they also want to profit from the money gained by extracting oil. Additionally, defying all claims of being environmentalists who care for the eco-system of the Niger Delta, their acts of damaging equipment contribute to the pollution of the eerily personified eco-system, as sabotaging a refinery ultimately leads to "thousands of gallons of oil floating on the water, the weight of oil tight like a noose round the neck of whatever life form lay underneath" (215).

Towards the end of the novel, Rufus finally finds Isabel Floode, but at this point in time, their encounter does not make a difference any longer. While her story adds the mundane angle of marital deceit, the humanized environment with its ubiquitous pipelines, which resemble "diseased veins on the back of an old shrivelled hand" (175), remains doomed and beyond rescue. But despite the odds, the novel ends on a hopeful note when the community of worshippers starts rebuilding the

statues and the shrine destroyed earlier. Their alternative way of life offers ways of healing in communion with the environment. While Zaq, who has succumbed to dengue fever, finds his final resting place in the community's cemetery, Boma, Rufus' sister, and the Doctor opt to stay there and leave all the senseless violence behind.

In *Oil on Water*, Habila does not intend to give answers on how the environmental destruction of the Niger Delta can be remedied. His concern is to make visible the appropriation and exploitation of the delta by not only sketching the complex neocolonial situation that gave rise to the current situation but by also trying to overcome the binary opposition between nature and culture. In order to achieve this aim, the environment devastated by slow violence is shown in all its fragility and has somehow gained a voice due to its personified representation, which calls for environmental, economic and social justice.

Through Helon Habila's novel *Oil on Water*, we exemplarily explored the very concrete challenges and varied approaches to overcoming the opposition of nature and culture, of man and the environment in the context of petroculture in particular. But Habila's novel also provides a model for thinking about the ways in which local and global spaces are entangled, and for thinking about the ways in which environmental destruction is difficult to perceive and describe through our standard conceptions of time. We will elaborate on the categories of space and time, and the way in which they have been addressed in theories combining ecocriticism and postcolonialism, in the following.

Ecocriticism, Postcolonial Literature, and Conceptions of Space

Postcolonial ecocritics frequently advocate turning to postcolonial literature like Habila's in search of ways to think and tell stories of ecological destruction. This entails, first of all, the question of thinking about space and place: of finding ways to link specific, local allegiances and knowledges with both an awareness of global ecological interdependency and a critical view of colonialism's global expansionism. In postcolonial studies, European conceptions of the globe are frequently read as gestures of imperial conquest and control, as well as of the forceful advocation of a system of knowledge about the world that has been posited as universally valid by the colonizers. Neoliberal globalization is frequently seen as a logical extension of imperialist conceptions and practices. At the same time, postcolonial critics also acknowledge the need to think beyond local concerns or identities, particularly with respect to environmental protection or devastation.

Since colonialism is thus often characterized as being a "global design" (Mignolo 2000) based on the violent universalization of European interests and values, the question becomes how to envision the world's ecosystems as an interlinked whole without reproducing such a universalizing colonial vision. Paul Gilroy advocates a "worldly vision which is not another imperialistic particular dressed up in universal garb" (2003, 261), favoring instead a "planetary consciousness" which never forgets the fragility and the small, finite character of our planet. In such a vision, he detects what he calls the "fragile emergent substance of a planetary humanism" (Gilroy 2003, 274). Several scholars, building on the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Gilroy on planetarity, have argued that we need to think about the planet as

contingent, unfamiliar, and uncanny in order to avoid the association of a globalized vision with knowledge and power.

In search of models that can provide such productive links between local and global conditions and allegiances, DeLoughrey and Handley turn to the works of Caribbean writers Wilson Harris and Edouard Glissant. De Loughrey and Handley's reading traces how enslaved and formerly enslaved people, themselves not Indigenous to the Caribbean, have attempted to resituate themselves in the Caribbean, a region which was radically altered (and partly devastated) through colonialism's introduction of foreign forms of cultivation and of plants and species from around the globe. The cognitive mapping of the Caribbean which emerges in the work of these writers acknowledges devastation and displacement, connects Caribbean space to other spaces in Europe, Africa, the Americas and Asia, *and* attempts to affirm a sense of belonging in local communities and environments. In Habila's *Oil on Water*, we are presented with destructive neocolonial global networks that connect Nigeria to other parts of the globe in the attempt to extract resources that will be consumed elsewhere. At the same time, the novel begins to develop a planetary vision in the way it posits the land itself as fragile, yet present, and in the way in which old and new communities, acknowledging the devastation of the land, attempt to reconnect with the land in ways that build on, but re-envision, local traditions.

Ecocriticism, Postcolonial Literature, and Conceptions of Time

In a similar way, ecocritics have turned to postcolonial literature in their search for narrative structures that suggest an adequate conception of time and temporal relations. The most pressing issue is the fact that climate change and environmental damage cannot easily be brought into a short-term narrative of cause and effect that would clearly assign responsibility and suggest immediate actions. Greg Garrard, building on the work of Timothy Clark, points to the way in which various small individual acts have a huge impact on the environment over a long range of time, but no single act or individual can be located as the primary or immediate cause of damage. Conversely, our individual small acts of environmental preservation often appear banal (Garrard 2010, 241).

Rob Nixon has made a similar point in his claim that we are dealing with phenomena of "slow violence," as already illustrated in our reading of *Oil on Water*. Such violence, Nixon argues, is almost invisible due to its long temporal reach. Slow violence is "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (Nixon 2011, 2). Nixon observes: "Stories of toxic buildup, massing greenhouse gases, and accelerated species loss because of ravaged habitats may all be cataclysmic, but they are scientifically convoluted cataclysms in which casualties are postponed, often for generations" (2013, 1). "[H]ow can we convert into image and narrative," Nixon asks,

> the disasters that are slow moving and long in the making, disasters that are anonymous and that star nobody, disasters that are attritional and of indifferent interest to the sensation-driven technologies of our image-world? How can we turn the long emergencies of slow violence into stories dramatic enough to rouse public sentiment and warrant political intervention [...]? (Nixon 2011, 3)

Nixon, too, advocates a turn to postcolonial literature: "To reconfigure the environmental humanities involves acknowledging, among other things, how writer-activists in the Southern Hemisphere are giving imaginative definition to catastrophes that often remain imperceptible to the senses, catastrophes that unfold across a time span that exceeds the instance of observation or even the life of the human observer" (2013, 9). In Nixon's assessment, since postcolonial writers have long dealt with discarded and fragmented histories and denied timelines, they have developed crucial structures of thought and narration for theorizing and communicating such slow violence. In this way, Habila's *Oil on Water* becomes formative not only in its anguished portrayal of the 'endless' devastation of the land crisscrossed by pipelines, but also in the way in which the land itself seems to attest to the catastrophe in its own temporal logic, as can be discerned from the abandoned villages which are taken back by a nature that has lost its healing capacities. Thus, "[t]he patch of grass growing by the water was suffocated by a film of oil, each blade covered with blotches like the liver spots on a smoker's hands" (9), signs that are ultimately signifying the irreversible death of the land, even if this will happen only in the distant future.

In the following, we turn to the third area we identified as characteristic for the productive combination of postcolonial and ecocritical approaches: conceptions of the human subject.

Ecocriticism, Postcolonialism and the Subject

A particular focus of both ecocritical and postcolonialist work has been the question of the humanist self, summarized by Vincent Leitch as "the belief that we are 'individuals' with unique natures, possessing coherent interior identities, motives, desires, and conscious intentions that cause our actions" (2001, 1617). The humanist self is a self associated with agency, "the power of persons, at the individual or collective levels, to develop and achieve creative goals and to act effectively or bring about change within their social environments" (Carle 2005, 309). In economic terms, agency was often connected to ownership and self-ownership, an issue which became especially pertinent in theorizing slavery.

In the past decades, this view of the humanist self has come under attack from several angles: Poststructuralist thinkers have argued that we are not free and unique selves with clearly defined borders, but rather *subjects* created through language and social processes. Postcolonialist theorists have pointed out that the individuals who could claim coherent selves were usually people of social privilege within a specifically European racial and cultural hierarchy. But while the humanist self was understood as a marker of social inequalities, the deconstructed subject often appeared, to postcolonialist thinkers, to erase the concept of agency altogether and thus leave them with very little ammunition for claiming humanity and equality. Martinican writer Edouard Glissant sums up the problem in the following way: "We need to develop a poetics of the 'subject,' if only because we have been too long 'objectified' or rather 'objected to'" (1996, 149). Susie O'Brien has observed that "[i]n the process of highlighting the contradictoriness of the European concept of 'man,' postcolonialism seeks not so much to destroy it as to erect a more truly humanist model in its place" (2001, 144). Postcolonialist theories of the subject and

agency are therefore often situated somewhere in between the humanist self and the deconstructed subject and frequently analyze subject/object relations within the tension between radical alterity and sameness.

In ecocriticism, the question of the subject and of agency has frequently been part of a larger critique of anthropocentrism and our ways of theorizing our relationship both with nature in general and with animals in particular. Susie O'Brien has observed that "Even those forms of ecology which stop somewhere short of the radical biocentrism of deep ecologists are predicated on a recognition of the interdependence of all living organisms in a network of relations which 'man' – as individual or as species – cannot transcend" (2001, 144). In the words of Neil Evernden, "[w]here do you draw the line between one creature and another? Where does one organism stop and another begin? Is there even a boundary between you and the non-living world [...]? How, in short, can you make any sense out of the concept of man as a discrete entity?" (1996, 95). In ecocriticism, then, the very category of the human has come under question (Huggan and Tiffin 2010, 6), and critics such as Cary Wolfe have conceptualized a new "posthumanism" which deconstructs the perceived boundaries between humans and machines as well as humans and animals. This has gone hand in hand with envisioning agency as not necessarily connected to being human.

In contrast, due to colonialism's degrading of the identities and humanity of the colonized, the affirmation of the humanity of colonized people has remained an important part of anticolonial and antiracist work. Yet even this crucial difference has become the starting-point of a larger critique of both racism and speciesism as connected phenomena. Huggan and Tiffin suggest that we should not stop at affirming human beings' humanity, since

> [i]n condemning human genocide and slavery, we are thus almost inescapably colluding – albeit obliquely or implicitly – in the idea that it is acceptable to treat animals cruelly, but not to treat people *as if they were animals*. And in so doing we are also colluding in the fiction that the species boundary is a fixed one. (2010, 135)

A similar point of interconnection has emerged in posthumanism's addressing of the boundaries between humans and technology. Here, too, a postcolonial perspective contributes both a critique of the colonial functions of narratives of technological progress, as well as a reminder of the dangers of attempting to overcome anthropocentrism for those who have never been granted the status of full humanity in the first place, as a consequence of imperial ideologies of race, gender and class – especially so if the critique of the category of the human is not joined by a thorough critique of neoliberal and neo-imperial capitalism. These ideas are powerfully developed in Manjula Padmanabhan's play *Harvest*.

Dystopias of Posthuman Neoliberalism: Manjula Padmanabhan, *Harvest* (1998)

Manjula Padmanabhan's play *Harvest* is set in Mumbai in 2010, which, at least when the play was written in 1997, was in the not too distant future. The main topic of the bleak sci-fi dystopia, which allows for exploratory thinking outside the perimeters of social conventions, are the dangers inherent in new communication and

biomedical technologies which immediately affect the human body and, as a result, challenge our definitions of what it means to be human as well as our assumptions about what can be conceived of as being natural (for an earlier, extended discussion see also Bartels, 2006).

The example Padmanabhan chooses is the transplantation industry, but with a sinister twist as the play shows that the organs are harvested in India, only to be transplanted into the bodies of affluent people in the First World. The circumstances surrounding the grooming of a perfect donor are visualized by making use of all kinds of modern technological advancements (more of these later), but the practice of organ trading is already a reality in today's world. Thus, due to a gap in Indian law, organ trading was legal until 1994 so that kidneys were openly bought and sold in certain quarters in the urban centers of Chennai, Mumbai and Bangalore, which were accordingly referred to as 'the great organ bazaar.'

The Organ and Transplantation Act, which was passed in 1994 and bans commercial trading as well as restricting transplants to organs donated by close relatives, did not succeed in eradicating the international kidney trade as the harvesting of organs now continues underground. Ultimately, the transplant industry presents no exception from the usual paths that capital and technology follow in the global economy, which still exploits resources in the Third World in a recolonizing move by making use of technological advances in various fields. The big difference to the coveted resources in question here, i. e. organs, is that the neoimperialist West has now literally moved into the body of the Other and just like with many other industrial products employs a well-organized just-in-time system to extract the organs exactly when they are needed. Thus, the body turns into a site on which regimes of power are played out to transform it into a commodity consumed by the First World.

This is exactly what the characters in *Harvest* experience. The play revolves around the fate of the Prakash family. Om, husband of Jaya as well as brother of Jeetu, returns from a job interview with InterPlanta Services, a transnational company offering jobs to Indian men. It takes some time before the audience realizes what kind of job 'lucky' Om has secured. In what Sunil Sethi (1997) has called a Faustian pact, Om, in the full knowledge that this implies his death in instalments, has agreed to become a Donor and sell his organs to a yet unknown person from the First World, a Receiver, should he or she be in need of them, in return for financial compensation. Jaya realizes the dire consequences of this decision and objects to the dehumanization this entails:

> JAYA: He's sold the right to his organs! His skin. His eyes. His arse. (*sobs again*) Sold them! Oh God, oh God! What's the meaning of this nightmare! (*sobs*). (*To OM*) How can I hold your hand, touch your face, knowing that at any moment it might be snatched away from me and flung across the globe! (*sobs*) If you were dead I could shave my head and break my bangles – but this? To be a widow by slow degrees? To mourn you piece by piece? (*sobs*) Should I shave half my head? Break my bangles one at a time? (*succumbs to her tears*). (23)

The body of the Other had already been a crucial site for all kinds of cultural and political inscriptions in colonial times; thus, for example, the invented notion of 'race' had been used as a classification system to hierarchize human variation in order to justify imperialism. But now, new markers of 'difference' (as, for example, geographical location in a period in which travel between First and Third World has been suspended) are needed in order to explain that some bodies are raw materials, while other humans are valuable and have to be kept alive at all costs. This results

in a discursive recreation of the body of the Other as an inferior object to be used as the First World sees fit. The ultimate aim of this new discursive regime is the formation of docile bodies and minds not resisting Western authority and power and controlled through dividing and surveillance practices to make the most of their economic utility at a very corporeal level.

In order to ensure Om's obedience, InterPlanta quickly takes over the life of the Prakash family by not only transforming the cramped flat into a sleek apartment with all modern cons but also by installing a contact module. This device, an unsuspicious white globe which "looks like a Japanese lantern" (18) when unlit but emitting a bright light when it is turned on, induces self-disciplinary actions not unlike those triggered by Jeremy Bentham's panopticon because the Prakash family never knows when they will be under scrutiny. Later on, it turns out that the Receiver, whose gender remains obscure, can watch them all the time anyway, no matter whether the contact module is turned on or off.

Om's mother, Ma, is too old to have her organs taken from her but in order to quell her mounting resistance as well as her querulousness, she is presented with a coffin-like video couch "reminiscent of Tutankhamen's sarcophagus, encrusted with electronic dials and circuitry in the place of jewels" (85) and sporting 750 different video channels. Via the image of Ma leaving her old life behind for the virtual reality on offer, Padmanabhan offers a scathing critique of technological gadgets like this which are used to dehumanize the Donors and deprive them of their agency as well as of their human dignity.

Jeetu, Om's brother who had a secret love affair with Jaya, at first acts as a foil to Om because he believes in the necessity to keep at least some amount of control over his life and fights his commodification. But when he is mistakenly taken for Om and has his eyes removed, his rebellion is quenched. The goggles he gets to wear are reminiscent of biotechnological developments like the bionic ear and herald the end of the 'natural' body as we know it, contributing to a dehumanization triggered by a medical objectification which doesn't take emotional or affective experiences into account. Western medicine is not used for the alleged 'good of mankind' (like it was claimed to be in colonial times) but ultimately destroys body and mind of the Other:

> JAYA: There's no place worse than death –
> JEETU: Yet, I know such a place, now. (*painfully*) A bleached and pitted place. Scars and slashes, no stillness, no dimensions. No here, no there – [...] I see in molten bars and blinding shapes, I see symmetries and confused fragments – sparks, shadows, water on mad glass, heat dreams, trains flying on fever tracks – [...] I can't even turn them off. I can't shut these freakish eyes of mine. I can't turn my head away, I can't end this poison-vision. I can't sleep, I can't dream, I can't even cry. (75)

Confined, categorized, and plundered, the body of the Other becomes posthuman, but this condition is a far cry from the celebrated and revolutionary figure of the cyborg which Donna Haraway envisioned to be "about transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and dangerous possibilities, which progressive people might explore as one part of needed political work" (2016, 14). In *Harvest*, the neo-imperialist craving for organs does not create revolutionaries but rather reverses the image of cannibalism constructed in colonial times. Now, it is not the 'savage' Other who allegedly devours human bodies but the 'civilized' Westerner who thus violates the boundaries of the body while at the same time deconstructing and dissolving the

mind/body dualism which has long underpinned Western culture. This also requires a new definition of death, which is provided by Virgil, the Receiver:

JAYA: There's only one way to define death!
VIRGIL: (*softly*) Not where I live. (*pause*) We have some new definitions. (*pause*) We speak of a body-death and a self-death. (*pause*) The body you knew is...still alive. [...]
JAYA (*whispers*) And...the self?
VIRGIL: (*briskly*) The self you knew is also alive.
JAYA: Huh –! Without his body?
[...]
VIRGIL: He has a – casing. (93–94)

The Receivers have, of course, also transgressed the boundaries between human and machine with their bodies continually kept youthful and vigorous by means of new body parts that are added whenever necessary. The contact module (to some degree resembling communication technologies like Skype that didn't exist when the play was written) additionally offers them the possibility to appear in different, digitalized gender identities. Thus, when talking to Om or Jeetu, the Receiver appears as Ginni, a "computer-animated wet dream" (95) arousing male desire, as this is supposed to produce "smiling organs" (41), which are easier to transplant, only to reappear as Virgil when the Receiver finally addresses Jaya.

Virgil needs Jaya (or rather her ability to bear children) because the inhabitants of the First World were not able to solve one particular problem despite all the moments of medical advances and technological progress described earlier. Due to the fact that people live ever longer, a fight between "one generation and the next – old against young, parent against child" (96) ensued which the older generation decided to its advantage at the price of First World women losing the capacity to reproduce. Therefore, the Receivers are not content with only using organs; instead, Virgil, who now appears in Jeetu's body to arouse her desire, wants to claim Jaya's body as a vessel to produce his offspring by means of an implant. In a continuation of colonial practices, the female body is to be (mis-) used for breeding. Jaya, however, rejects the omnipresent gaze of Virgil via the contact module for the affective dimension of touch and thus subverts a discourse that is privileging the visual by persisting on bodily contact: "I want real hands touching me! I want to feel a real weight upon me! Hear your breath in my ear – feel my hair being pulled, sweat running in my mouth" (99). In contrast to the male protagonists, she is able to establish an identity different from the one ascribed to her, which becomes visible in her insistence on Virgil pronouncing her name correctly and in issuing demands instead of succumbing to orders and disciplinary regimes.

Jaya's refusal is the glimmer of hope that the play offers at its ending. By keeping her dignity and rejecting the disciplinary regime of the Receivers, she retains some kind of agency even if this means "[w]inning by losing" (100). Padmanabhan thus not only rejects any notions of a positive cyborg – Jaya is the only one who has remained human at the end of the play – but also offers a scathing critique of neoliberal capitalism and technological progress if it is only employed to keep class, gender and race divisions intact.

In our final part, we attempt to bring together ecocritical and postcolonial concepts of time, space, and the subject in addressing the concept of the Anthropocene. We will show how postcolonial literature in particular has contributed to addressing

the urgency of conceptualizing humans as a geophysical force with a potentially devastating impact on the planet.

Ecocriticism, Postcolonialism, and the Anthropocene

According to postcolonial critic Dipesh Chakrabarty, the largest challenge to postcolonialism's conception of the subject is constituted by the concept of the Anthropocene, which he explains in the following way:

> Humans, collectively, now have an agency in determining the climate of the planet as a whole, a privilege reserved in the past only for very largescale geophysical forces. […] The idea of humans representing a force on a very large geological scale that impacts the whole planet is new. Some scientists, the Nobel-winning Paul J. Crutzen at the forefront, have proposed the beginning of a new geological era, an era in which human beings act as a force determining the climate of the entire planet all at once. They have suggested that we call this period "the Anthropocene" to mark the end of the Holocene that named the geological "now" within which recorded human history so far has unfolded. But who is the "we" of this process? How do we think of this collective human agency in the era of the Anthropocene?" (Chakrabarty 2012, 9–10)

Chakrabarty argues that contemporary postcolonial thought has had to expand in order to face two crucial phenomena: globalization and global warming. These two phenomena, according to Chakrabarty, pose "the challenge of having to think of human agency over multiple and incommensurable scales at once" (2012, 1). Chakrabarty chronicles his own history as a member of the subaltern studies group in India engaging in anticolonial work and his development from an anticolonial into a postcolonial thinker influenced by poststructuralism via the work of Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. He argues that these two movements and historical moments (the anticolonial and the postcolonial) marked a particular view of the human subject: first, "the universalist-Enlightenment view of the human as potentially the same everywhere, the subject with capacity to bear and exercise rights;" and secondly, "the postcolonial-postmodern view of the human as the same but endowed everywhere with what some scholars call 'anthropological difference' – differences of class, sexuality, gender, history, and so on" (Chakrabarty 2012, 2). This second, postcolonial view of the human, he argues, enables us to think critically about capitalism, globalization, and inequality. However, in the face of global climate change, a third conception of the human is needed: the human as a geological force that impacts the planet (Chakrabarty 2012, 2). Here, humans are "constitutively one – a species, a collectivity whose commitment to fossil-fuel based, energy-consuming civilization is now a threat to that civilization itself" (Chakrabarty 2012, 2).

In Chakrabarty's argument,

> [t]hese views of the human do not supersede one another. One cannot put them along a continuum of progress. No one view is rendered invalid by the presence of others. They are simply disjunctive. Any effort to contemplate the human condition today – after colonialism, globalization, and global warming – on political and ethical registers encounters the necessity of thinking disjunctively about the human, through moves that in their simultaneity appear contradictory. (Chakrabarty 2012, 2)

Such thinking of the "human-human" together with the "nonhuman-human" (Chakrabarty 2012, 11) poses a striking challenge to environmental justice movements, as well as to postcolonial thought and literature: "We can […] – through art and fiction – extend our understanding to those who in future may suffer the impact of the geophysical force that is the human. But we cannot ever experience ourselves as a geophysical force – though we now *know* that this is one of the modes of our collective existence" (Chakrabarty 2012, 12–13). Chakrabarty's argument effectively combines conceptions of space, time, and the human subject in his call to address the impossibility of thinking of the human as a geophysical force with a devastating planetary impact. Addressing this impossibility, thus, is one of the challenges of contemporary postcolonial literature.

We Are the Ocean: Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, "Tell Them" (2011/2017)

Our final close reading of a literary text essentially challenges Chakrabarty's dilemma. It takes us to the Marshall Islands, a group of scattered atolls roughly halfway between Papua New Guinea and Hawai'i, seemingly very far from the hubs of modernity. And yet, we would like to begin by arguing that the Marshall Islands are not in the periphery, but have been an epicenter of globalization. Before the arrival of Western colonization, they were part of what was geographically the largest multicultural nation on earth, the island world of Oceania which was closely networked by migration and trade, and travelled extensively by some of the finest canoe builders and navigators on the planet (see our reading of Tupaia's Map in ch. 9). The marginalization and isolation of many Pacific islands was primarily a product of colonial rule and missionary activities which estranged its peoples from their own culture and traditions, including the art of Oceanic wayfinding. The Marshall Islands were affected by Spanish imperial networks since the 16th century, but only formally claimed by Spain in 1878. After the Berlin conference in 1885, they became a German protectorate and a center for the exploitation of the highly profitable resource of copra (dried coconut meat for oil extraction). The islands fell to Japan in the early years of the First World War, and were finally conquered by US troops in 1944.

In the following, the archipelago became the first location on earth where singular man-made events had effects which could be measured everywhere else on the planet, with devastating consequences for the local population and ecosystems. A range of Marshall Island atolls served as the 'Pacific Proving Grounds' for US nuclear testing, which began on Bikini Atoll in 1946, and only ended in 1962. Vast parts of the region are still contaminated by nuclear fallout, marking it as a key "sacrifice zone" (Klein 2016, 12) where humans and nature alike have been forsaken in the name of a very dubious progress.

Over the past decades, the sacrifice zones of the Marshall Islands have gained different, and even more encompassing, connotations. For an archipelago consisting not of high volcanic islands but exclusively of low atolls rising only about two meters above sea level on average, the effects of global warming have been no abstract, but a very real and very existential threat, long before they were hotly debated in the industrialized centers of the world. Pacific Islanders, in other words, are among

the first analysts, largely unacknowledged by the Western frameworks of politics and science, of the Anthropocene. Should its 'geophysical force' not be checked and carbon emission drastically reduced across the planet, the Marshall Islands will become uninhabitable and ultimately disappear within the lifetime of living generations.

The fate, but also the embedded knowledge of the "sacrificial people" (Klein 2016, 12) of the Marshall Islands has been powerfully brought to the attention of a global public by the young Marshallese poet, educator and activist Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, in a poem she was invited to perform at the 2014 United Nations Climate Summit opening ceremony in New York. The poem is titled "Dear Matafele Peinam," and is composed as an extended promise to her baby daughter, rallying the world to fight global warming in the name not only of Marshall Islanders, but also of other peoples across the planet in "Tuvalu / Kiribati / Maldives / [...] in the Philippines / [...] Pakistan, Algeria, Colombia" (Jetnil-Kijiner 2017, 72). In this chapter, however, we would like to discuss her slightly older poem "Tell Them," first published on her blog in 2011 (https://www.kathyjetnilkijiner.com), complemented by a haunting video performance in 2012, and printed, with "Dear Matafele Peinam" and other poems, in the 2017 collection *Iep Jāltok: Poems by a Marshallese Daughter*.

In our reading, we wish to foreground the conceptual contributions and complications "Tell Them" offers in view of the three formative dimensions of postcolonial ecocriticism we discussed above. We shall begin by briefly addressing questions of the conception of space, then turn to conceptions of subject and agency, and finally discuss aspects of time.

"Tell Them" opens with the packing of a package, to be sent as a gift to "friends in the states":

I prepared the package
for my friends in the states
First – the dangling earrings, woven
into half-moons black pearls glinting
like an eye in a storm of tight spirals

Second – the baskets
sturdy, also woven
brown cowry shells shiny
intricate mandalas shaped
by calloused fingers (64)

What follows, then, is a long message the speaker sneaks into the package: "Inside I write a message: [...]" (64).

The message of "Tell Them" is thus emphatically embedded at the interstices of the local and the global, at a time when more Pacific Islanders live in Australia, New Zealand, the US and elsewhere than on their home islands (see Lee 2009; Spickard 2002). Like so many Islanders, Jetnil-Kijiner herself received her higher education abroad, in California and Hawai'i, and claims multiple affiliations. In a formative essay titled "The Ocean in Us," the Tongan-Fijian writer and anthropologist Epeli Hau'ofa made it clear that the diasporas (see ch. 8) of the Pacific world, and the multiple travels of people and packages, of things and ideas they enhance, should not so much be seen as a danger to Pacific cultures, but as a resumption and extension of the vast precolonial networks of Oceanic peoples. Hau'ofa speaks of the "enlarged world of Oceania" (1998, 392) in this context. The many realities of mod-

ern Oceania involve that one can easily live in Auckland, Los Angeles, or Brisbane and "yet be deeply connected to Hawai'i, Tonga, Samoa, or the Cook Islands" (Clifford 2001, 474), with profound investments in Islander traditions and systems of knowledge.

Such distinctly local systems of knowledge and their global travels are evoked in the two gifts the speaker packages, surely not only for diasporic Micronesians, but for friends of all origins and complexions: The woven earrings with black pearl calling up patterns of local ecology (storms) and cosmology; and especially the baskets, which both reference patterns of poetic practice (the 'weaving' of both ancient and new story lines) and genealogical origin (we later learn that the Marshallese archipelago came into being when "our islands were dropped from a basket by a giant"). The insights of "Tell Them" are thus framed, on the one hand, as distinctly local, but on the other packaged as a cosmopolitan gift to the planet.

This brings us to the figurations of the self and questions of agency in the poem. The first thing to note here is that the lyrical 'I' disappears once the opening frame has been set up. The following message embedded in the package sent out to the world persistently uses the imperative second person address of "Tell Them" when turning to the speakers' friends. When referring to the self, this self is emphatically collective, shifting from the first person singular of the frame to a lyrical 'we' in the embedded lyrics.

Crucially, the lyrical 'we' of "Tell Them" defies and explodes the Cartesian split that is formative of Western philosophies distinguishing between the bounded, autonomous self and its surrounding world, between subject and object, man and nature. The message of the poem projects Marshall Islanders instead as a relational collective, extending into and irrevocably one with their island world. This concerns the spiritual as much as the material realities of Islander life, both past and present. Significantly, it does not celebrate a pristine island idyll, but a world both ancient and modern (see Muecke 2004), of ancestral connection as much as of the remnants of capitalist promises. The lyrical 'we' extends into "the hollow hulls / of canoes as fast as the wind" (65) as much as into "broken beer bottles / burrowed beneath fine white sand" (66). Take this passage from the middle of the poem:

Tell them we are whispered prayers
the breath of God
a crown of fuchsia flowers encircling
Aunty Mary's white sea foam hair

Tell them we are styrofoam cups of koolaid red
waiting patiently for the ilomij

We are papaya golden sunsets bleeding
into a glittering open sea
We are skies uncluttered
majestic in their sweeping landscape
We are the ocean
terrifying in its regal power (65)

The collective self of "Tell them" oscillates between the transcendental ("breath of God," "ilomij") and the banal ("styrofoam cups of koolaid red"), the mundanely beautiful ("fuchsia flowers") and the sublime ("skies uncluttered," "the ocean / terrifying"): it is all of these things and nothing at once, fundamentally unbounded, a relational part of the world.

Agency, as a consequence of this philosophical proposition, can only be an equally relational category, and thus a property of human beings as much as of natural phenomena and banal objects. It may reside in the stories Aunty Mary shares as much as in a flood wave sweeping from the ocean floor. It may also reside in styrofoam cups or koolaid wrappings, disintegrating into polymer particles poisoning the sea fauna and entering the food chain, giving Hau'ofa's phrase "The Ocean in Us" an entirely new and disturbing twist. The message is unambiguous: Only if people across the planet begin to feel and think in tune with the insights of Marshall Islander philosophy, only if man overcomes the engrained mantras of the European Enlightenment and capitalism preaching the autonomy of man and his control over nature, only if we begin to understand the profound relationality of existence can there be hope for the future. In the poem, this future is first and foremost that of the Marshall Islands, but future, of course, as the opening frame made clear, is invariably local and global. This brings us to the conception of time.

"Tell Them" first and foremost testifies to what Nixon terms the "slow violence" of the carbon emissions of the industrialized world, and the rising sea levels resulting from global warming. While this violence remains largely invisible for most continental dwellers most of the time, it has literally encroached upon Marshall Islanders for decades, visible on an everyday basis, persistently gnawing at the very foundations of their relational existence and identity:

After all this
tell them about the water – how we have seen it rising
flooding across our cemeteries
gushing over the sea walls
and crashing against our homes

Tell them what it's like
to see the entire ocean__level__with the land (66)

The reality of the undeniable, existential threat of the slow violence of the Anthropocene has no need for corroboration by Western institutions ("Tell them / we don't know of the politics / or the science / but tell them we see / what is in our own backyard" [66]). The time of ecological destruction is now.

In her poetry, Jetnil-Kijiner persistently implies that the orders of this destruction are geared by a blindfolded belief in teleological progress, which she implicitly genders as masculine. Against such patrilinear time, she projects the matrilinear genealogy of her native Marshallese Society, grounded in cycles of mutual nurture and care between mother and daughter, from ancestral times into the future. It is in this sense that Jetnil-Kijiner subtitled her first volume of poetry "Poems from a Marshallese Daughter," and it is this sense which underwrites the promises of "Dear Matafele Peinam," the poem which for a brief moment shook up the United Nations Climate Summit assembly. The objective correlative of matrilinear time is the basket, a leitmotif in Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner's poetry that is also invoked in the main title of her collection, *Iep Jāltok*. The paratext translates it as: "A basket whose opening is facing the speaker" (Jetnil-Kijiner), representing the promises of a female child to her relatives.

In our reading, we have attempted to bring out the conceptual profundity and urgency of Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner's poetry, and the critical contributions they make to the discourse of postcolonial ecocriticism. Let us close by asserting, however, that the conceptual is only one level of Jetnil-Kijiner's art. Her lyrics are also to be expe-

rienced and felt, to be listened to with the body, even if only read on paper. We really encourage readers to check out Jetnil-Kijiners own video readings, as her poetry unfolds its full force when experienced in performance (live or mediatized, on her blog or on YouTube where she started her career). Responding to the break-through performance of "Dear Matafele Peinam" at the 2014 New York Climate Summit, her late fellow poet, activist and cultural critic Teresia Teaiwa from Kiribati expressed how "breathtaking in her confidence, her poise, even her fragility" (Teaiwa 2014) Jetnil-Kijiner was. The video reading of "Tell Them," produced at London's Southbank Centre in 2012, displays no traces of such fragility, but equal poise, sharp sound and superb flow. The camera shoots the performing poet alternatively in profile close-up, and, to stunning effect, in low angle shot before the backdrop of a vast and foreboding black sky. "Tell Them" rings with prophetic intensity. The experience of Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner's poetry makes us doubt whether Dipesh Chakrabarty's dictum that "we cannot ever experience ourselves as a geophysical force – though we now *know* that this is one of the modes of our collective existence" entirely holds true, if only for as long as we listen to Jetnil-Kijiner's art.

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12 *Interlude:* Indigeneity

In postcolonial studies, Indigeneity is applied and debated as a concept that signifies difference, usually from a dominant settler society and its empire (see ch. 16). Indigeneity is established on the basis of demonstrated relation – genealogical, genetic, cultural or otherwise – to the people who occupied certain territories continuously or prior to their current settler occupants. The term is most commonly used in relation to marginalized groups around the world exposed to colonial settler regimes or projects, including the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, Japan, and South-East Asia. The term is also sometimes applied to Indigenous peoples in Europe such as Welsh, Gaelic, Basque, Frisian, Sami, and others.

'Indigenous' is often used synonymously with 'aboriginal,' 'native,' or 'autochthonous.' In general, Indigenous is an umbrella term; however, in many contexts another name serves a preferred political purpose. For example, an invocation of a specific tribal/national allegiance may be preferred to 'Indigenous,' such as when one intends to foreground Indigenous noncompliance with forced incorporation into nation-states. Although the terms Indigenous, aboriginal, and native may represent a variety of political positions, they have grown to be strongly associated with rather left-leaning movements. Autochthonous, in turn, is rarely used in postcolonial studies; instead it is most often invoked to assert supremacy of those 'who were here first' and claims to protect the morally pure of the 'local,' such as right-wing groups in Europe, the Americas or China arguing for anti-migrant localism (Zaslove 2011, 98; Cho 2016, 323).

Works in postcolonial studies overwhelmingly maintain that, for the entire duration of Western colonialism, Indigenous peoples globally were represented as primitive, uncivilized, less developed and less capable than their colonizers. They have been subjected to genocide and genocidal policies for centuries. To this day, some of them are still sometimes seen as "a vanishing race," in perpetual expectation of extinction (King 2011, 41). Within the last decade, postcolonial analysis has focused on how Indigeneity is established, maintained and utilized politically, legally and polemically by various forces.

Native ties, however vague this concept remains, are key to establishing Indigeneity. Land, and the supposition that continuous connection to it makes one Indigenous, are the basis of some legal definitions as well as of some forms of Indigenous identity politics (see also ch. 13). Moreover, Indigeneity is often determined on the basis of self-identification, acceptance into a given community, blood quantum, genealogy, genetics, looks, and other factors. That all these characteristics are heavily debated is demonstrative of the crisis of authenticity that Indigeneity is part of: Who is part of a given group and why? According to some critics,

> indigenous groups have so often fallen into the political trap of essentialism set for them by imperial discourse [reproducing] the binarism of centre/margin [which] prevents their engagement with the subtle processes of imperialism by locking them into a locally strategic but ultimately self-defeating essentialism. (Ashcroft et al. 1995, 214)

Postcolonial theory is concerned with how the Indigenous is construed as authentic (and whether authenticity is necessary to be able to represent a culture in a legiti-

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mate way) within various discourses such as media, academia, and politics (Griffiths 1995, 239).

Whether Indigenous groups are to be considered simply as ethnic groups like any other has been a major point of conflict in the field. On the one hand, Indigeneity has been incorporated into the larger discussion of pluralism and multiculturalism. According to this view, Indigenous people, notwithstanding the specificity of their position, find themselves sharing a political arena and the project of global democracy with those oppressed on other fronts. This position is largely based on the supposition of a common world (or global Empire) within which groups struggle for space, rights, and resources within a hegemony of liberal capitalism globally and national hegemonies locally (Hardt and Negri 2001, 42).

Others argue that the conceptualization of such a common world is itself a legacy of an idealistic Western liberalism, which presupposes perpetual peace between all parties and a chance of empowerment and emancipation for all (Byrd 2011, 20). This image of politics itself bears traces of the imagery of Western cosmopolitan imperialism, which is one of the major topics for Indigenous activism: namely, the association between the supposition that the world is a politically peaceful place within which the rights and privileges of White people (such as liberal democracy, the rule of written law, positivistic or linear logics) are both to be aspired to, and possible to achieve for those 'marginalized' by colonialism. Against this single-world model, many Indigenous scholars and activists in turn propose that such "Whiteness" is a "project of disappearance for Native peoples rather than signifying privilege" (Kauanui 2008, 11). Thus, Indigeneity is lived as a political identity and a means of negotiating sovereignty and surviving ongoing colonialism (Griffiths 1995, 240; see also ch. 17). This conception is most prominently upheld by the Indigenous communities in North America, many of whom strive towards full independence from the US, Canada, and Mexico respectively, as well as safe zones and "cultural 'leave us alone' agreements" (Alfred and Corntassel 2011, 141–42).

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13 Indigenous Sovereignty

Sovereignty is a highly contested term. In postcolonial studies and other fields concerned with decolonization, the term is regarded as a European concept that has served as a crucial tool of colonization and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and that still shapes the unequal geo-political world order we encounter today. Scholars and activists working in the fields of Indigenous, Native Pacific, and Native American studies have exposed the colonial history of the concept of sovereignty and have made multiple claims about its current usefulness. Despite its history, some critics advocate using the concept of sovereignty as a powerful tool in the struggle for decolonization and the return of stolen land to Indigenous populations. Others reject the term because it limits decolonization to a European conceptual tradition and drowns out alternative ways of envisioning community and governance. A third position argues against having to decide between the consistent use or rejection of the concept, advocating a "third space of sovereignty" that negotiates Indigenous and non-Indigenous conceptions. While there are various positions that fall in between or combine aspects of these three stances, all emphasize that Indigenous claims to land and governance pre-date, and exist independently of, European colonization.

This chapter will briefly trace historical and contemporary European conceptions of sovereignty. More importantly, however, we will concentrate on the postcolonial challenges to these conceptions. While mindful of the pitfalls of the term sovereignty, we use the heading 'Indigenous sovereignty' to describe the relation to land and water, as well as the forms of culture and governance, developed and affirmed by peoples facing systematic colonization and dispossession by hostile settler populations (see also ch. 12). We encourage students to learn about each of these conflicts in its specificity. To facilitate such a 'closer look,' we have added the national affiliations of the Indigenous scholars and writers whose work is discussed here. Nevertheless, in this chapter we tentatively and cautiously offer some general observations about similarities in Indigenous takes on sovereignty. We place our focus particularly (but not exclusively) on the settler colonies of the US, Canada, and Australia, and outline some of the ways in which Indigenous scholars, artists and activists have handled the concept of sovereignty in various ongoing projects of decolonization. In our readings of Louise Erdrich's *The Round House* and Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria* we trace how Indigenous literature contributes to the ongoing reconceptualization and imagination of sovereignties.

Sovereignty as a European Concept

Sovereignty is generally understood as "an absolute power to govern" (Barker 2005, 2). Early Christian conceptions were associated with the sovereignty of God. In Europe, both the church and absolute monarchs often claimed to derive their power to rule from this divine source of sovereignty. Medieval Europe was characterized by a variety of political structures and overlapping spheres of power, but several upheavals, particularly the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), led to the gradual forma-

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tion of nation-states (see ch. 2). Historians often describe the division of the world into nation-states with exclusive, non-overlapping territories as the 'Westphalian' order, linking it to the 1648 Peace of Westphalia as one of the more obvious markers of this longer and often violent transition (Murphy 1996, 86). As a result, sovereignty became the prerogative of the nation-state, which was seen as the seat of economic, political, and social power (Murphy 1996, 82). Sovereignty is thus often defined as "the ability of the state to exercise recognized rights of exclusive jurisdiction within a territorially delimited space" (Griffiths qtd. in Loukatcheva 2009, 84); as "the exercise of supreme authority and control over a distinct territory and its corresponding population and resources" (Diener and Hagen 2012, 7); or as "a final, absolute, and centralized form of political power vested in the territorial state" (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 188). Jon Carlson et al. have argued that all definitions of sovereignty center "upon internal political order and an external demarcation via borders" (2013, 21). Thus, sovereignty works inward (the power to govern and legislate within a nation-state, often associated with 'the people') and outward (the recognition of a state's exclusive sovereignty by other states, including the practice of non-intervention).

These definitions, however, are considered inadequate for understanding the globalized world of the present. Critics argue that large-scale migration, global capitalism, internationalization, and the rising importance of non-governmental organizations have resulted in new forms of sovereignty. These concepts are variously defined as "graduated sovereignty," which "refers to a state's differential treatment of segments of its population or territory" (Diener and Hagen 2012, 73); "extraterritorial" or "detached sovereignty," which describes the "control of places beyond the recognized limits of state jurisdiction" (74); and "layered," "overlapping," "fluid," or "intermingling" sovereignty, in which states or other actors share rights usually defined as the exclusive prerogative of one state or ruler (Carlson et al. 2013, 39; Aponte Toro 2001, 261). In addition, human rights interventions or interventions to prevent the production of certain weapons on another nation's territory are frequently legitimized by insisting on "justice and human dignity over state sovereignty" (Diener and Hagen 2012, 70). Finally, various scholars have argued that the Westphalian system of state sovereignty never existed in a pure form: It is a construct that was posited as a normative ideal.

Indigenous Critiques of Sovereignty

Postcolonial challenges to conceptions of sovereignty have the potential to push these debates much further. Particularly Indigenous scholars, artists, and activists have examined the complicity of sovereignty with colonialism and have retained or developed conceptions of community, territory, and governance that differ from mainstream notions of sovereignty and the nation-state. In the United States, Native Americans have looked closely at the way the concept of sovereignty was used to dispossess Native Americans of their land. A centerpiece of this dispossession is the so-called Marshall Trilogy, a series of US Supreme Court rulings (*Johnson v. McIntosh* of 1823, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* of 1831, and *Worcester v. Georgia* of 1832). While we cannot attempt here to provide a detailed discussion of the cases, we evoke them because the Supreme Court developed a series of crucial positions on

Native American sovereignty that resulted in large-scale Indigenous displacement and death.

One such position argued by chief justice John Marshall is the "doctrine of discovery," claiming that since Native Americans simply "roamed" the land instead of cultivating it (an assessment both Eurocentric and incorrect), they could not possess full sovereignty. This applied even if Native Americans had negotiated treaties with Europeans or US-Americans that secured Indigenous ownership of the land. As Joanne Barker (Lenape) explains, "While it was accepted that Indians maintained particular rights associated with their status as the original inhabitants of the land, the exclusive rights of property in the land belonged to the nation who discovered the lands" (2005, 7–8), in other words, the European colonizers. US sovereignty over Native American land was assumed as an inheritance from British colonization. In this view, discovery was the right of European-style nation-states: "Nations possessed the full measure of sovereignty because they were the highest form of civilization; individuals roaming uncultivated lands did not possess either civilization or sovereignty" (Barker 2005, 3).

Equally formative was Marshall's definition of Native Americans as "domestic dependent nations," which could not possess the rights of foreign nations vis-à-vis the United States and which were related to the United States as a "ward" to a "guardian." Critic Mark Rifkin calls this fabrication of a "higher" US sovereignty with regard to Native Americans "overriding sovereignty" (2009, 102–03). As Barker sums up, "Marshall's discovery reinvented a sovereignty for indigenous peoples that was void of any of the associated rights to self-government, territorial integrity, and cultural autonomy that would have been affiliated with it in international law at the time" (2005, 14).

Philip Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux) has argued that *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* reflects a new phase in US federal dealings with Native Americans, a shift from nation-to-nation treaties and negotiations to a policy of incorporating, "managing," and segregating Native Americans (2009, 208). From the 1870s on, federal policy aimed to destroy the status of Native Americans as peoples, turning them into racialized individuals who could no longer hold land communally. By enforcing individual ownership of land, plots could more easily be siphoned off to settlers; through racialization, Native Americans were transformed from peoples with claims to their homeland into mere minorities within a larger US "immigrant nation." In Barker's words, "the *making ethnic* or *ethnicization* of indigenous peoples has been a political strategy of the nation-state to erase the sovereign from the indigenous" (2005, 16; see also Byrd 2011, xxiii).

Indigenous Sovereignty as a Decolonizing Tool

If racialization and incorporation have facilitated colonial dispossession, it is precisely here that some Indigenous peoples have put the concept of Indigenous sovereignty to use. The Marshall Trilogy, after all, not only exemplifies settler legitimizations of taking Native land, but is also significant because the Native nation involved in the case, the Cherokee nation, developed powerful (but ultimately disregarded) strategies to combat encroachment by skillfully using the Euro-American concept of sovereignty against the settlers in their own courts. Various Indigenous

peoples have attempted to make use of this strategy. Barker observes that especially in the aftermath of World War II,

> sovereignty emerged not as a new but as a particularly valued term within indigenous discourses to signify a multiplicity of legal and social rights to political, economic, and cultural self-determination. It was a term around which social movements formed and political agendas for decolonization and social justice were articulated. It has come to mark the complexities of global indigenous efforts to reverse ongoing experiences of colonialism as well as to signify local efforts at the reclamation of specific territories, resources, governments, and cultural knowledge and practices. (2005, 1)

Sovereignty thus defined enabled Indigenous peoples to assert themselves as *peoples* and to highlight that anti-racism or the fight for racial inclusion is a limited strategy in the Indigenous struggle for decolonization, since it advocates equality instead of the restoration of Indigenous lands (Byrd 211, xxiii). "[S]overeignty defined indigenous peoples with concrete rights to self-government, territorial integrity, and cultural autonomy under international customary law" (Barker 2005, 18). Working through the United Nations and other institutions, Indigenous peoples have claimed nation status, sovereignty, and rights not only within US-American, Canadian, Australian, or New Zealand law, but also within the wider field of international law, beyond the immediate colonizer's courts. While such a strategy implicitly accepts European conceptions of sovereignty and the nation-state, many Indigenous peoples see such claims as a useful defense strategy.

The question whether such a strategy can serve to promote not only Indigenous legal victories, but Indigenous epistemologies and systems of governance, remains hotly debated. Hōkūlani Aikau (Kanaka ʻŌiwi Hawaiʻi) observes a division between strategies of "indigenous rights discourses," which work within European legal systems to stake Indigenous claims, and "indigenous resurgence," which instead seeks to privilege Indigenous conceptions of community and governance (2016, 656). Taking the latter position, Aikau's call to envision futures "that do not require the nation-state as the only legitimate and intelligible governing entity for the enactment of a peoples' sovereignty" (2016, 659) points to a score of alternative Indigenous approaches that replace European conceptions of sovereignty with Indigenous concepts and/or envision thinking 'beyond sovereignty.'

Futures Beyond Sovereignty

Many Indigenous people hold the position that Indigenous, not European, epistemologies should be central to the debate. In the words of Joanne Barker, "[s]overeignty as a discourse is unable to capture fully the indigenous meanings, perspectives, and identities about law, governance, and culture, and thus over time it impacts how those epistemologies and perspectives are understood" (2005, 19). Taiaiake Alfred (Mohawk) has argued that "[t]he positive effect of the sovereignty movement in terms of mental, physical and emotional health cannot be denied or understated. Yet this does not seem to be enough" (2005, 39). Alfred, like many others, thus argues for a retraditionalization that takes seriously Indigenous relations to land and conceptions of community, justice, and governance. This includes thinking beyond the nation-state, because the settler colonial nation-state is built on

the very dispossession of Indigenous peoples: "State sovereignty can only exist in the fabrication of a truth that excludes the indigenous voice" (2005, 44). Alfred argues:

> The challenge for indigenous people in building appropriate postcolonial governing systems is to disconnect the notion of sovereignty from its Western, legal roots and to transform it. It is all too often taken for granted that what indigenous peoples are seeking in recognition of their nationhood is at its core the same as that which countries like Canada and the United States possess now. (2005, 42)

Within the field of Indigenous resurgence, scholars are working on clarifying Indigenous positions on a large number of subjects that all relate to the problem of sovereignty. Insisting on the "rhetorical sovereignty" of Indigenous practices of communication, Scott Richard Lyons (Leech Lake Ojibwe) contrasts Indigenous views of themselves as a "nation-people" to Euro-American definitions of a "nation-state." Indigenous takes on sovereignty, he argues, are characterized by "an adamant refusal to disassociate culture, identity, and power from the *land,* and it is precisely this commitment to place that makes the concept of rhetorical sovereignty an empowering device for all forms of community" (2000, 455, 457). While every Indigenous nation has its own specific conception of sovereignty, governance, and justice, some similarities lie in the refusal to treat land as property or resource for exploitation, the development of concepts of stewardship, the centrality of culture for theorizing sovereignty, and the priority of preserving the existence of the group. Robert Warrior (Osage), who has coined the term "intellectual sovereignty," argues that "if sovereignty is anything it is a way of life" (1992, 18).

Warrior's work is also an important early intervention into the vexed relationship of Native American and Indigenous studies with postcolonial studies. Many Native Americans have pointed out that postcolonialism's perceived focus on decolonization through nation-state structures, anti-racism, and the embrace of multiculturalism cannot do justice to Indigenous efforts of regaining stolen land and enabling the resurgence of Indigenous epistemologies. Nevertheless, scholars like Robert Warrior and Jodi Byrd (Chickasaw) have explored fruitful areas of overlap and cooperation between the fields, arguing that Native Americans should engage "other oppositional discourse outside of Europe and EuroAmerica" (Warrior 1992, 19). Building on the work of Vine Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux), Warrior argues that reaching out to postcolonial theorists like Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak can enable Native Americans to "withdraw without becoming separatists" (19).

The Third Space of Sovereignty

Many Indigenous struggles are marked by creative combinations of the positions discussed so far. Discussing the political strategies of Canadian Inuit in obtaining control over their ancestral land and culture, Pauline Wakeham observes:

> Rather than perpetuating colonial paradigms that view settler-state and Indigenous sovereignties as necessarily pitted in a zero-sum game, many Inuit political organizations are fostering more nuanced conceptualizations of Canadian and Inuit sovereignties as strategically articulated forces that require vigilant and ongoing recalibration in the face of persistent co-

> lonial power asymmetries. […] While some Indigenous intellectuals have argued against capitulation to the Western political category of sovereignty, others invoke the term strategically as what Michelle Raheja calls "a placeholder for a multitude of indigenous designations" that "incorporates European notions of recognizing political autonomy" while also foregrounding "indigenous concepts of self-governance." (Wakeham 2014, 105)

Inuit organizations like the Inuit Circumpolar Council, an organization that comprises the Inuit of Russia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland, relate to European conceptions of sovereignty but insist on the necessity for Canadian and other authorities to adjust and reshape them according to Inuit epistemology. Many Inuit have argued that they are simultaneously citizens of their respective country and of an envisioned circumpolar Inuit homeland, Inuit Nunaat.

In 2009, the Inuit Circumpolar Council published *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic*, which pointed to the need to refashion outdated models of sovereignty via Inuit conceptions. "Sovereignties overlap and are frequently divided within federations in creative ways to recognize the right of peoples," the declaration asserts. Kevin Bruyneel has called this double orientation, and the strategy of working with conceptual overlaps, the "third space of sovereignty." Bruyneel laments the "false choice" set up by "the imperial binary: assimilation or secession, inside or outside, modern or traditional" (2007, 217). He argues instead for postcolonial work in the areas between Indigenous and non-Indigenous conceptions, while still insisting that Indigenous sovereignty must be thought as being "prior to and thus outside of" European and American colonization (Bruyneel 2007, xv). Thus Bruyneel advocates "a postcolonial supplemental remapping of sovereign relationships that can include but will not be dictated to or contained by state boundaries" (2007, 222). The two close readings that we offer in this chapter tackle the question of sovereignty from various different angles, corresponding to Joanne Barker's assessment that "[s]overeignty carries the horrible stench of colonialism. It is incomplete, inaccurate, and troubled. But it has also been rearticulated to mean altogether different things by indigenous peoples" (Barker 2005, 26).

Restoring Sovereignty? Louise Erdrich, *The Round House* (2012)

The novelist Louise Erdrich is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa (Ojibwe), an Anishinaabe people. The daughter of an Ojibwe mother and a father of German ancestry, Erdrich has created a fictional universe in her works, the space of "Indian country" centered around an Ojibwe reservation in North Dakota (Nance 2012, 52). Her novels often exhibit a collage- or chorus-like structure, told from different angles by a set of mostly Ojibwe characters who re-appear at different stages of their lives throughout her books (Nance 2012, 48). *The Round House* is set in this reservation space, but is told through a single voice, the first-person narrator Joe Coutts. Even though we learn that the narrator, at the time of the telling of the story, is a grown man, the story's focalizer is Joe's younger, thirteen-year-old self, and we see the world through the eyes of the boy he was in 1988 (Tharp 2014, 29).

The question of Indigenous sovereignty is addressed via the question of the jurisdiction over Native American territory. Joe's mother, Geraldine Coutts, is brutally attacked, raped, and almost killed by a non-Indigenous man, Linden Lark. Even

though the perpetrator is eventually identified, he cannot be prosecuted for rape because it is unclear where exactly the attack took place. The jurisdiction over land in the area where Geraldine was assaulted is complicated, and Lark kept Geraldine unaware of her whereabouts by tying a sack over her head. "Three classes of land meet there," Joe's father Bazil Coutts, who is a tribal judge, explains. "Tribal trust, state, and fee" (187). Later, he states: "Lark committed the crime. On what land? Was it tribal land? fee land? white property? state? We can't prosecute if we don't know which laws apply" (231).

Bazil Coutts's explanations make it clear that the colonial dispossession of Native land and the gradual denial of Native American jurisdiction over the land is the reason why Geraldine cannot seek justice. As various scholars have pointed out, US history is marked by a string of Supreme Court decisions and laws that have severely reduced Native American jurisdiction over Native American territory and serve to entangle prosecutors in complicated legal considerations: The Major Crimes Act of 1885 asserted US federal jurisdiction over all "major" crimes committed on tribal land. However, it is not always clear whether this means sole jurisdiction or "concurrent jurisdiction with tribal courts" (Owens 2012, 504). The Dawes Act of 1887 fragmented collectively owned Indigenous land into plots owned by White people, Indigenous people, the state, or the federal government. In the words of Amy Casselman, "As jurisdiction is predicated on the location of a crime, the Dawes Act has made determining whether a parcel in Indian country is governed by tribal, state, or federal entities exceptionally complex" (2016, 34). In 1953, Public Law 280 shifted jurisdiction over crimes committed on Native American land in several states from the federal government to the state, against the protest of Native American communities. In many instances, states were burdened with criminal cases for which they received no additional federal funding, resulting in frequent failure to address the case or prosecute the crime. In Casselman's assessment, this introduced the state level as a "third sovereign" (beside Indigenous and federal jurisdictions) into criminal cases taking place on reservations (2016, 37). Finally, due to the Supreme Court's decision in *Oliphant v. Suquamish Tribe* of 1978, "Native nations were prohibited from exercising jurisdiction over non-Native individuals on Indian land" (38; for an overview, see also Owens 2012, 504–08; Tharp 2014, 26–27).

In the novel, this legal situation is described as "toothless sovereignty" (166). As Julie Tharp has noted, "*The Round House* testifies to the loss of tribal jurisdiction, which has directly affected the ability to protect Native women from sexual and domestic violence" (2014, 26). In a similar vein, Amy Casselman argues that "[i]t is against this backdrop of legal violence under colonization that we can begin to situate the emergence of jurisdictional conflicts in the prosecution of sexual violence against Native women" (2016, 28). Claiming that legal and sexual violence have always been linked in the North American colonization process, Casselman argues that the current legal situation has made it almost impossible to prosecute rape, especially when perpetrated on a Native woman by a non-Native man. When a Native American woman is sexually assaulted, Casselman points out, "the type of crime, exactly where it occurred, the racial identity of the perpetrator and victim, and the nature of their relation to each other and to the community all play key roles in determining jurisdictional authority" (2016, 46). Citing an Amnesty International Report of 2009 in her afterword to *The Round House*, Louise Erdrich writes: "1 in 3 Native women will be raped in her lifetime (and that figure is certainly higher as Native women often do not report rape); 86 percent of rapes and

sexual assaults upon Native women are perpetrated by non-Native men; few are prosecuted" (2012, 372).

As *The Round House* unravels the many layers of colonization that contribute to the victimization of Native American women, it also addresses the denial of Indigenous jurisdiction over non-Indigenous persons on tribal land as another marker of the racialization which reduced Native American identity in the US to a federally monitored "blood quantum" and elevated White identity to an unquestioned norm. Poignantly, Geraldine is a tribal enrollment specialist and keeps the Indigenous community's census roll, the list of official members that contains information both empowering to the community and harmful if utilized by the community's enemies. It is Geraldine's possession of a file from these records, telling the story of the abuse of a young Native woman by the White governor of South Dakota, that brings her to Lark's attention in the first place. This complicated racialization is placed in its colonial context when Joe asserts:

> You can't tell if a person is Indian from a set of fingerprints. You can't tell from a name. [...] You can't tell from a picture. A mug shot. From the government's point of view, the only way you can tell an Indian is an Indian is to look at that person's history. There must be ancestors from way back who signed some document or were recorded as Indians by the US government, someone identified as a member of a tribe. And then after that you have to look at that person's blood quantum, how much Indian blood they've got that belongs to one tribe. In most cases, the government will call the person an Indian if their blood is one quarter – it usually has to be from one tribe. But that tribe has also got to be federally recognized. In other words, being an Indian is in some ways a tangle of red tape.
> On the other hand, Indians know other Indians without the need for a federal pedigree, and this knowledge – like love, sex, or having or not having a baby – has nothing to do with government. (36–37)

In *The Round House*, the complications of such identities, and the connected questions of land ownership and jurisdiction, are also spelled out in the story of a twin brother and sister, both born White: Linden Lark, the perpetrator, and his sister Linda, who was abandoned at birth by her White parents because they thought she was disabled. Saved and raised "*as an Indian*" by an Ojibwe family, Linda lives on Native land that is eventually coveted by her White mother and brother, who try to use their blood relation to Linda in order to get hold of the parcel (60). The hatred that Linden Lark feels for Joe Coutts's family stems from a court case in which Joe's father asserted the Ojibwe family's right to this land. Like Geraldine, Joe, and Bazil Coutts, Linda eventually joins the effort to restore Indigenous sovereignty under difficult conditions. In Erdrich's rendering of this struggle, however, all of these characters pay a high price.

The characters' different approaches to restoring the sovereignty that would give them jurisdiction over Lark become most apparent when Lark is released from custody and is free to return to the area since he cannot be prosecuted. Joe's father attempts to deal with this painful situation by concentrating on his long, slow work as a tribal judge, arguing that all the small, seemingly insignificant cases he is left to rule will one day build up to a sustained change. He tells his son that he and other tribal judges try to rule every single case in ways that will be considered waterproof: "We are trying to build a solid base here for our sovereignty. We try to press against the boundaries of what we are allowed, walk a step past the edge. Our records will be scrutinized by Congress one day and decisions on whether to enlarge our jurisdiction will be made" (269). Working with and within the constraints of the

Euro-American legal system and the US nation-state, Joe's father nevertheless hopes to achieve decolonization in the future, envisioned as "*the right to prosecute criminals of all races on all lands within our original boundaries*" (269).

The idea of colonization as a long, historical process and of decolonization as a movement into the future that may take generations to achieve is, however, also linked to images of suspended time and thwarted futures. When Geraldine is attacked and doesn't come home, Joe remarks that "her absence stopped time" (6). After the attack, Bazil disconnects the family's clock, and Geraldine withdraws into her bedroom for weeks without talking about her rape, caught by her desire to shield another young Native woman and baby whom Lark has in his power (Mace 2013, 162). This paralysis and the violation of the younger generation drains the lives of the characters and, like colonization, seems almost unbreakable. Lark's continuing presence on the reservation eventually proves unbearable for Bazil: When Lark shows up in the local supermarket, Joe's father yields to his provocations and beats him. However, Bazil suffers a heart attack as a consequence, and when family friends take it upon them to beat up Lark, they likewise fail to rid the community of his taunting presence. In addition to the sudden and brutal attack on Geraldine, then, it is the long-term draining of life and futurity that threatens the Native American community in the novel. As Geraldine realizes, Lark's continuing presence is not only devastating to herself, but slowly corrodes the entire family and community, "trying to eat us" (290). She decides that she must stop him personally. Desperate to keep his mother from going after Lark herself, young Joe, with the help of his best friend Cappy, secretly shoots and kills him.

On the surface, this dramatic act seems to resolve the conflict. Since it is not clear who murdered Lark, and since the community shields the young boys they vaguely suspect of plotting to kill him, Lark's murder is not prosecuted legally. Joe's mother eventually dares to leave her sickbed, and time resumes as Joe's father buys a new clock. Bazil, who harbors the suspicion that Joe is involved in Lark's murder, even applies an Ojibwe legal and cultural logic to the case that could serve to justify the killing of Lark (Tharp 2014, 33). As he tells his son, "It could be argued that Lark met the definition of a wiindigoo, and that with no outer recourse, his killing fulfilled the requirement of a very old law" (358).

Bazil's statement asserts a non-Western epistemology that is woven into the texture of the novel from the very beginning. Repeatedly, characters encounter ghosts or have visions that suggest that Joe will endure hardship. Joe's grandfather Mooshum talks in his sleep, and through his words, Joe has already encountered the story of a wiindigoo via the tale of Akii. In this tale, Akii's husband tires of his wife and suspects her of being possessed: "A wiindigoo could cast its spirit inside a person. That person would become an animal, and see fellow humans as prey meat" (211). Significantly, this family drama happens as a direct consequence of settlers' dispossession of Native Americans, in the "year they forced us into our boundary. The reservation year" (210). Spun around instances of imprisonment and starvation, the tale asserts that Akii is falsely accused, but it also gives advice about how to deal with a real wiindigoo by killing it. Significantly, however, one of the lessons is that "wiindigoo justice must be pursued with great care. A place should be built so that people could do things in a good way" (220). This place, in the story, becomes the Round House, the spiritual gathering place of Joe's people. The violent attack on Geraldine in the environs of the Round House is thus also an attack on a Native spiritual space, but the foundational story received by Joe asserts an Ojibwe interpretation of the space and affirms its endurance. Joe realizes that this logic

moves beyond a culture of books and argues in hindsight what he did not see at the time: namely, that Mooshum's story could be taken as "a reading of traditional case law" (359). In the same logic, Geraldine interprets Lark's presence in the area as an attack by a wiindigoo and thus determines that he must be stopped (290).

The assertion of an "other" logic, however, is severely impeded by the conditions in which the Native characters operate. Bazil attempts to take recourse to an alternative system of justice when he argues that with respect to Lark, "there is traditional Anishinaabe justice. We would have sat down to decide his fate. Our present system though ..." (230). Ending in an ellipsis, the Anishinaabe legal system that could restore Indigenous sovereignty over the land and Lark is still discernible, but becomes reduced to a trace from the past. Likewise, Joe's desperate killing of Lark becomes a problematic act not only within the colonizer's legal system, but perhaps also within a Native logic in which such acts of justice must follow careful rules. After hearing his father's defense of the unknown killer of Lark, Joe observes that he and Cappy are nevertheless not really safe from Lark: "Every night he came after us in dreams" (359). In the end, Cappy dies tragically in a car crash, and as Joe holds his friend's dying body, he is visited once again by a ghost looking at him "with a sour contempt" (370).

Thus the Ojibwe cultural logic within which Lark can be defeated and sovereignty could be restored cannot fully develop, and the characters must struggle on with their additional burdens of trauma and sadness. The new clock in the family kitchen resumes counting time, but the clock is described as "ugly" (Mace 2013, 162). As Joe's parents bring him home after Cappy's death, all three of them become "old people" (370). As they ride in their car back into the reservation, even the familiar celebration of coming back home onto one's land is discarded:

> I do remember, though, the familiar sight of the roadside café just before we would cross the reservation line. On every one of my childhood trips that place was always a stop for ice cream, coffee and a newspaper, pie. It was always what my father called the last leg of the journey. But we did not stop this time. We passed over in a sweep of sorrow that would persist into our small forever. (371)

Indigenous sovereignty thus exists in traces and must be carried into the future as an individual and collective burden. In an ambiguous mix of the Western legal language of courtroom sentencing and a stubborn resistance almost worn down, Joe understands that "The sentence was to endure" (371).

Indigenous Sovereignty in Australia

With our second case study, we move from North America to Australia. The problems and debates around Indigenous sovereignty in Australia are in many ways similar to the ones in other settler colonies, yet they are also markedly different in one crucial respect. Henry Reynolds, one of the foremost thinkers on Indigenous Australian sovereignty (cf. Reynolds 1996), remarks that

> unlike the North American Indians or the Maoris, at the time of the European arrival (and long after it), Australian Aborigines were thought to be without laws and government. There was, then, no need for a treaty or treaties. The tribes could never be considered domestic dependent nations with partial, subsidiary sovereignty (Reynolds 2006, 5).

From the earliest moments of contact, the British denied the Indigenous population of Australia any claim to the land. Already William Dampier, who briefly skirted the Western Australian coast in 1699, infamously wrote that "[t]he Inhabitants of this Country are the miserablest People in the World" (Dampier in Lamb et al. 2000, 12), even though he only ever saw them from afar. Based on the observation that they wore no clothes, presumably had no houses or tools to fish or work the land, he concluded that they were essentially without culture. A little over 70 years later, when James Cook arrived in Botany Bay on his first circumnavigation of the world in April 1770, the English were struck by the fact that, unlike all other people that they had encountered before, Indigenous Australians refused to trade, and put no value in the gifts and trinkets left for them. In the age of the Enlightenment (see ch. 7) which redefined civilizational standards in the interest of the rising mercantile classes and considered a free market economy as the key to global advancement and ultimately "perpetual peace" (Kant 2008), this was unforgivable. The British utterly failed to understand Indigenous Australian protocols of encounter and their ways of working and relating to the land, (wrongly) assuming they had no agriculture or resource management; they failed to recognize Aboriginal social structures and law, assuming that there was no system of government and entitlement. Last but not least, they willfully downplayed the possible numbers of Aboriginal people, extrapolating on the entire continent from the few individuals who decided to show themselves to Cook and his crew on their northbound course along the Australian East Coast and through the Torres Strait. The large continent, they argued, would be almost empty.

When Cook took possession of Australia for the British Crown on 22 August 1770 in the northern reaches of what is today Queensland, the assumption therefore was that there was no preexisting claim of sovereignty, neither by Indigenous Australians, nor by any other imperial power. The understanding was that there were no original owners who could cede the land, nor was it to be purchased or conquered from anyone else. There were no borders that needed to be delineated or negotiated. As Reynolds puts it:

> Local history was reassuringly simple. Australia was a land without a sovereign – a *territorium nullius* – as well as a land where there was no tenure – a *terra nullius*. When Britain claimed sovereignty in 1788, 1824, 1829 and 1879, the Crown acquired an original title. She was the first sovereign – the only one there had ever been. (2006, 5)

The legal fiction of *terra nullius* was upheld in Australian law until 1992, when the Australian High Court decided in favor of Eddie Mabo in second instance, a Torres Strait Islander who demanded the territorial rights of the Mariam people to the islands of Mer from the State of Queensland. The *Mabo vs. Queensland* (no 2) (commonly known as *Mabo*) case was a landmark decision in Australian history. It is widely celebrated as the belated arrival of Native title legislation on the Australian continent. What is rarely mentioned, however, is that *Mabo vs. Queensland* (no 2) and the subsequent Native Title Act of 1993 at the very same time dealt a severe blow to all aspirations and previous struggles for Indigenous sovereignty. Koori scholar Gary Foley goes as far as to argue that *Mabo* and the Native Title Act were "tantamount to the biggest single act of dispossession since 1788" (Moreton-Robinson 2007, 10). For even while giving Indigenous Australians the right to claim Native title under rather narrowly defined conditions, they cemented the position of the Crown as sovereign. The (circular) claim was essentially that the issue of sover-

eignty was beyond the jurisdiction of domestic (Australian) courts, as it was originally established in 1788 by an act of state (that is, by the British Crown).

Mabo thus left White sovereignty untouched. The right to Native title, moreover, was only granted to Indigenous groups who could prove an ongoing connection to their land, in legal processes before White courts which continue to disavow Indigenous law and tradition, but tend to only accept evidence of occupation from the colonial archives. The provision that Native title hinges upon uninterrupted connection to the land is additionally problematic before the backdrop of a long history of genocidal frontier violence, forced removals, and the "stolen generations" policy, the practice of removing especially mixed-race children from their families and communities to mission stations and foster families (a practice which continued until the 1970s). What is more, Australian governments have systematically discredited Indigenous Australian communities and their territorial claims whenever and wherever the interests of the neoliberal economy are at stake.

The most dramatic measure in this respect taken by the Howard government (and since upheld with minor adjustments by all subsequent governments) is the so-called Northern Territory Intervention of 2007. The Northern Territory has by far the highest percentage of Indigenous people (29 %, as opposed to a national average of 2 %) and land tenure (more than 50 %). It is also extremely rich in mineral resources. Grounded on an evidently fabricated report on child abuse in Aboriginal communities, the federal government declared a state of emergency for the Northern Territory, severely limiting the rights of Indigenous people in almost all spheres, including customary law and questions of tenure. The same period has seen an unprecedented boom of multinational mining industries prospecting and exploiting the mineral resources of the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and northern Queensland, which allowed the Australian state to sail through the global financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath by and large unscathed.

Before this backdrop, Indigenous Australian debates around sovereignty are even more marked than North American debates (or debates in Aotearoa/New Zealand for that matter, which can refer back to the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840) by the utter disillusionment with national institutions. They are also more skeptical about the potential of striving for sovereignty through international institutions which remain predicated on principles of European law. The "third space of sovereignty," too, has little purchase in a context of suffocating political, social and not least legal hegemony. Prominent Australian thinkers of Indigenous sovereignty have therefore begun to forcefully align their arguments with such American voices discussed above who call for futures beyond Western notions of sovereignty, grounded in a foundational recognition of Aboriginal epistemologies and ontologies, and promoting a categorically different way of being in and relating to country.

Goenpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson holds: "What Indigenous people have been given, by way of white benevolence, is a white-constructed form of 'Indigenous' proprietary rights that are not epistemologically and ontologically grounded in Indigenous conceptions of sovereignty" (2007, 4). *Mabo* and Native title law have rather aggravated this foundational problem:

> Indigenous land ownership, under these legislative regimes, amounts to little more than a mode of land tenure that enables a circumscribed form of autonomy and governance with minimum control and ownership of resources, on or below the ground, thus entrenching economic dependence on the nation state. (Moreton-Robinson 2007, 4)

Cobble Cobble/Wakka Wakka Murri legal scholar Megan Davis insists in this context that the struggle for sovereignty must follow a two-fold strategy. The first is to continue to produce scholarship along the lines of Henry Reynolds which "chips away at state mythologies." Yet Davis also insists that Indigenous Australians must articulate, "with greater specificity than we have in the past what we actually mean by sovereignty and self-determination" (Davis 2006, 15). Little about Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies of sovereignty circulates in the available scholarship. Yet is has been powerfully articulated in literature. The most profound and challenging intervention in this respect to date is Alexis Wright's 2006 novel *Carpentaria*.

Radical Reflections on the Sovereignty of Country: Alexis Wright, *Carpentaria* (2006)

Alexis Wright is a writer and political activist from the Waanyi people, the traditional owners and custodians of country in the southern highlands of the Gulf of Carpentaria in northern Queensland. It is in this country, also, that *Carpentaria* is set. At the center of a range of intersecting plotlines involving an epic range of episodes and characters is the fictional city of Desperance, named after Captain Matthew "Desperance" Flinders, the town's purported founder (clearly a narratorial joke, as Flinders did not have a middle name). Once an important outpost of the colonial frontier by a river mouth on the Gulf (60), the town turned into an insignificant dustbowl when the river decided to change its course, leaving Desperance behind as a "waterless port" (3). Anne Brewster reads the town of Desperance as "metonymic of the white postcolonial nation (with particular reference to rural Northern Australia)" (Brewster 2010, 85). Its motely cast of White inhabitants desperately clings to mythologies of former colonial greatness, only thinly veiling the fact that they have no real relation to the place they inhabit:

> Uptown whitefella mob was full of people claiming they had no origins. They usually met each other on the street with greeting like: *Hey! Stranger, where did you come from*? They said they were not strangers because they had originated from nowhere. (56–57)

When at one point in the novel indeed a complete stranger mysteriously walks across the mudflats of the Gulf towards town, a White man by name of Elias with no idea of who he is and where he comes from, the White people of Desperance celebrate his arrival as a re-enactment of White settlement (Brewster 2010, 95). They conclude that he must be "a descendant of English gods" (49) (or alternatively, "Santa Claus" or the "snow man" given that he arrived on Christmas day and has a white beard). They thus tie Elias into an absurd web of White mythologies to providentially legitimate and safeguard their own existence on the land. Wright's satirical exposition of the hollowness, and partly, the ridiculousness of such mythologies is biting, and resonates with Ghassan Hage's analyses of the "paranoid nationalism" of the "white nation" (1998, 2003). It can be choking, however, when the novel accounts for the "living hell of the lives of many Aboriginal people" (Wright 2002, 13) within this White nation. The exchanges between White 'Uptown' and Indigenous people are rare, yet when they occur, they are almost invariably sexually exploitative or violent, culminating in the death in custody of three Aboriginal teenagers. The only genuine relations between White and Indigenous characters in the

novel involve Elias, whose amnesia absolves him from White paranoia. After his violent death, Elias is adopted into the cosmogonic order of the Gulf country.

Two Indigenous communities live on the fringes of Desperance, at opposite ends. The first is the west-side "Pricklebush mob," led by Norm(al) Phantom, a chief lawman with profound knowledge of the land and the sea of the Gulf. A second group which broke away from the Pricklebush people in the past squats at the other end of town in wrecked car bodies. Their mob is led by another chief lawman with profound knowledge of country, "Old Man" Joseph Midnight. The novel implies that the division between Norm Phantom and Joseph Midnight originated in questions of how to best deal with the Native title legislation after the *Mabo* decision. The questions came to a head when a multinational corporation (Gurfurritt International) set up a gigantic mining project near the town of Desperance on ancestral land. The west- and eastside mobs of Desperance represent two different tactics of reclaiming sovereignty in this context: Norm Phantom, and especially his son Will, categorically reject the legitimacy of White law and (in Will's case, militantly) oppose the mine, thereby following the Indigenous political mantra that "sovereignty was never ceded" (Behrendt 2003, 95). Joseph Midnight and his people, by way of contrast, try to make subversive use of *Mabo* and the new Native title legislation to claim from the state the rights to the territory which Gurfurritt International exploits (thus implicitly accepting the sovereignty of the Crown). They go as far as inventing a fictitious tribal identity and even a language for these purposes, and send their youngsters as spies to Uptown to learn more about White claims to the land (only to find that there are no records of history nor of "sanctified ground") (58).

In the end, it is the logic of the Phantom clan which prevails, yet only after a Romeo and Juliet-inspired plot ends in tragedy. Will Phantom, Norm's estranged son leading a group of anti-mining activists, falls in love with Joseph Midnight's granddaughter Hope, and they have a child, Bala. Only when Hope and Bala are kidnapped by security guards of the mining company to extort Will, in a ploy which also involves the murder of Elias, do both clans join forces again. Joseph Midnight shares with Will the ancestral directions to a secret getaway in the Gulf: "The old man gave him the directions to the safe place in his far-off country – a blow-by-blow description sung in song, unravelling a map to a Dreaming place he had never seen" (372). Will eventually encounters the kidnappers in this place, only to witness how they push his wife from a helicopter to her (almost certain) death.

Without being able to do justice to all episodes and themes of the novel, let us in the following single out four characters which particularly matter to its unfolding vision of Indigenous sovereignty.

The first two are the chief lawmen residing at the fringes of Desperance, Norm Phantom and Joseph Midnight. Both elders represent an ontology of being in and an epistemology of relating to country which foundationally challenge the British utilitarian and German idealist traditions of Western law. The political, yet also the possible epistemic differences between the clans of Norm and Joseph are a powerful reminder of the fact that Indigenous sovereignty is neither a static idea unchanging from time immemorial and unaffected by geopolitical change, nor can it be uniform across a highly diverse body of Aboriginal communities with different, and often competing traditions, systems of knowledge and political agendas. Still, there is significant common ground.

Both Norm Phantom and Joseph Midnight embody a notion of relating to country which denies the Cartesian split between subject and the objective world.

Knowledge of the land is not acquired by its mastery and subjugation, but by relational immersion in country which is itself animated and inhabited by ancestral spirits from the time of creation. Like Joseph Midnight, Norm Phantom, too, is of a type who has "a library chock-a-block full of stories of the old country in their heads. Their lives were lived out by trading stories for other stories […] of what to do, how to behave for knowing how to live like a proper human being, alongside spirits for neighbours in dreams" (207).

In the cosmogony of *Carpentaria*, the ancestral land itself is sovereign. Human beings are part of this sovereignty by way of relational and spiritual connection – not as owners of the land, but as custodians. In this universe, encounters with spirit beings are not irrational, nor is it illogical that rivers, like humans, have agency to choose their courses, as much as the sea has agency to eventually wash away an entire town and a multimillion-dollar mining port.

Critics of *Carpentaria* have tended to read such novelistic occurrences as elements of 'magical realism,' either unwilling or unable to accept their claims to rationality and the Real. In an excellent review of "*Carpentaria* and its Critics," Alison Ravenscroft has critiqued such commentary as diffusing the conceptual and political powers of the novel. Rather, she argues, readers should "allow *Carpentaria* its difference, its strangeness" (2010, 198) which imaginatively points to a way of being in the world which will have to remain un-knowable and un-ownable, especially by White readers. Against Ravenscroft's somewhat modernist pessimism of productive intercultural exchange and learning through the novel we would insist, however, that *Carpentaria* speaks powerfully toward other cultural, political and legal contexts around the globe in this manner, such as the Native American examples discussed above and beyond. It also resonates with eco-critical and post-humanist research and activism from across the globe which similarly challenges the arrogations of an anthropocentric world view, decries the "slow violence" (Nixon 2014) of capitalist environmental destruction, and insists on the agency of natural phenomena responding to it (see also ch. 11).

Carpentaria's vision of Indigenous sovereignty in this context is explicitly not traditionalist. It does not reject all elements of White culture, or of modernity at large for that matter. Rather, it insists on organically drawing them into a different relation to the world in a political move that is directed at a sustainable future as much as toward a reconnection with the past. A third elder lawman, a character called Mozzie Fishman, is emblematic of this argument. "Big Mozzie" left the Pricklebush settlement for reasons which involve the only major female character in the novel, Norm Phantom's wife, Angel Day, with whom he had an affair. Away from his country, he established himself as a spiritual leader following the ancestral Dreaming paths from across the Northern Territory border, thereby connecting different country and Aboriginal communities across the larger nation. He is also a surrogate father and spiritual instructor of Will, who joined Mozzie Fishman's convoy on his walkabout.

What matters for our argument in this context is that Big Mozzie's convoy, which keeps the ancient connections to and across country alive, is hardly traditionalist in its choice of mobility: It consists of an ever-growing number of old and beaten Ford and Holden motor cars crawling snake-like across country, petrol-driven and thus fueled by one of the prime mineral resources extracted by multinational corporations from Indigenous lands. Along the lines of Stephen Muecke's profound insights into the syncretistic powers of Aboriginal communities to combine ancient cosmol-

ogies and beliefs with modern ideas and technologies (Muecke 2004), *Carpentaria* thus firmly locates its vision of Indigenous sovereignty not against, but firmly within an Australian modernity. Just like the cars on Big Mozzie's convoy, however, which are kept alive and running by continual bush-mechanical skill "using tools and parts found only in nature" (120), *Carpentaria*'s vision of modernity is one which harmonizes technology and nature, and ultimately puts them in the service of spiritual connection and communal healing.

In this reading, mining and the exploitation of natural resources from ancestral lands as such are not the core problems. The problem, rather, is the way in which it is done – by multinational corporations backed by state, territory and federal governments who systematically violate the protocols of the traditional owners of the land, ignore the fact that sovereignty was never ceded, and have no sense of the ecology and agency of the sovereign land itself. At its core, *Carpentaria* therefore revolves around the resistance against these violations of Indigenous sovereignty, a resistance enacted both by human agents and by the land itself.

The prime human agent of resistance is Will Phantom, leader of a group of anti-mining activists, guerrilla fighter for Indigenous sovereignty, and the spiritual heir of the three elder lawmen Norm Phantom, Mozzie Fishman and Joseph Midnight. At a climax of the intersecting plotlines of *Carpentaria* (told in a-chronological order), Will blocks the 150-km Gurfurritt pipeline carrying the ore extracted from the mine to the Gulf, leading to knock-on explosions leaving the thirty-million-dollar artifact in ruins. Will's sabotage of the Gurfurritt pipeline is modelled on the historical protests of Wright's Waanyi people contesting the development of the gigantic Century Mine on their ancestral lands. In particular she recalls a speech by one of the spokespeople who claimed he could singlehandedly stop the mine by throwing shards of glass and nails on the roads, and then disappear without a trace in Gulf country. Wright remembers:

> You could feel the embrace of our ancestors. It might sound hard for anyone with what is called a rational mind to believe that someone could smash the tyres of any of those 380-ton haul trucks loaded with up to 255 tons of ore that are now constantly on the move, working non-stop at the mine. But the Gulf is full of belief of making what might seem impossible possible. (Wright 2007, 13)

Carpentaria writes this belief into being, in a mode of spiritual and political empowerment. Yet it is also far from romantic about the consequences of the militant fight for sovereignty: In the novel, Will indeed evades the mining people after his act of sabotage through his intimate knowledge of country, and eventually escapes the region on Mozzie's convoy. Yet when the state and the mining company strike back and he returns to Desperance to protect his family, he loses his friend Elias and his wife Hope. In the end, he is about to lose his mind and his life.

Epic justice in the novel is eventually executed by nature itself. The storylines of *Carpentaria* culminate in a furious cyclone reclaiming the ancestral lands from the grip of the mining company and the Uptown people of Desperance alike. Washed over by a huge tidal wave, much of the town of Desperance is forever drawn into the waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria, and with it Will. When he awakes, he finds himself on a floating island composed of the debris of the town drifting on circular currents of the Gulf and slowly falling apart. In the end, it remains unclear whether Will shall ever escape from his disintegrating island of exile made of the ruins of colonial settlement, or whether Hope, whom Will encounters in visions, might have

survived the drop from a mining company helicopter. Still, the novel closes with an upbeat vision, narrating how their son Bala and Norm Phantom walk across the derelict town of Desperance after the tidal wave: "It was a mystery, but there was so much song wafting off the watery land, singing the country afresh as they walked hand in hand out of town, down the road, Westside, to home" (516).

With this final image, *Carpentaria* thoroughly provincializes, to use Dipesh Chakrabarty's (2000) term, White histories and their hold on Australian land. It foregrounds the ephemerality and hybris of settler society itself *vis-à-vis* the continuing and flourishing deep history of sovereign country. In its first chapter, titled "*From time immemorial*," the novel opens with the original creation of the Gulf country: "The ancestral serpent, a creature larger than storm clouds, came down from the stars, laden with its own creative enormity" (1), and in the end, this ancestral connection prevails. When Norm plans to rebuild his old house after the flood, he does so "on the same piece of land [...] where the snake slept underneath" (515). And it is implied that he will teach Bala, the son of Will and Hope (telling names in the Indigenous fight for sovereignty), "the Aboriginal Law handed down through the ages since time began," a Law that respects the agency of nature and creation, and envisages sovereignty not as a mode of control, but a privileged mode of custodianship and relation: "It takes a particular knowledge to go with the river, whatever its mood. It is about there being no difference between you and the movement of water as it seasonally shifts its tracks according to its own mood" (3).

True to this vision of sovereignty, the discourse of *Carpentaria* reflects on the importance of storytelling and an oral tradition "from time immemorial," *vis-à-vis* the ephemerality of Western historiography and law written in the metropolitan centers. In its narrative conception, the novel follows, in Wright's own words, "the original pattern of the great ancient sagas that defined the laws, customs and values of our culture." Wright insists that these "original patterns" still hold as they have been continually adapted to new challenges and encounters: "The oral tradition that produced these stories continued in the development of the epic stories of historical events, and combining ancient and historical stories, resounds equally as loudly in the new stories of our times" (80).

However, the challenge to paradoxically write a "new stor[y] of our times" in the form of a novel, the signature literary form which emerged from the rise of the very mercantile classes of Europe which also settled the Australian continent and perpetuated the doctrine of *terra nullius*, was a tough one. Wright's eventual resolution to the paradox was to work – not unlike Sam Selvon in *The Lonely Londoners* (1956; see chapter 3) – towards a distinctly oral, musical sound in writing by replicating the prosody and rhythm of Indigenous Australian Englishes. The second crucial move was to install a distinctly collective rather than singular and monadic narratorial voice, recalling a storytelling session by a group of elders.

Wright records how she worked on subsequent drafts of the novel but destroyed each and every one of them feeling dissatisfied with the figuration of her narrators, until one day in Alice Springs, she overheard "two old men, elders of their country, who were deep in conversation, talking about how life in general was finishing up for them" (10). Inspired by this discourse and reminded of the storytelling experiences of her own childhood, Wright eventually found the narrative key to writing a novel which is "both ancient and modern, both colonial experience and contemporary reality," a novel living up to the challenge to "carry all times when approaching the future" (11–12, see also ch. 17).

The result is a novel to which not all readers have equal access, which will estrange the vast majority of its audiences who have neither title nor access to "the great ancient sagas that defined the laws" of the Waanyi people. *Carpentaria* powerfully writes futures beyond Western sovereignty into being, primarily for the traditional owners of the country it speaks of and to. And yet it also speaks powerfully toward the futures of the entire planet that is almost everywhere under siege by global capitalism, the extractive industries, and the sovereign regimes ever more aggressively sustaining them. Naomi Klein reminds us in this context how in debates on global warming and climate change, questions of postcolonial and environmental justice must not be read as separate or competing, but as deeply intertwined. She argues that global capitalism and the extractive industries have always required "sacrifice zones," zones in which not only the environment, but also the people inhabiting it are sacrificed to the gods of (neo)liberal progress, and how ideologies "from Manifest Destiny to Terra Nullius to Orientalism" (Klein 2016, 12) have been devised to justify and maintain them. Such sacrifice zones have more recently come to also visit the industrialized centers of the global North, yet they have been habitually inflicted upon those colonized regions and people who could offer the least resistance (see ch. 11).

It is before this background that Naomi Klein launches a pertinent critique of mainstream discourses on climate change, and especially intellectual debates about the Anthropocene, which often insinuate that global warming can be blamed on "'human nature,' on the inherent greed and short-sightedness of our species" (Klein 2016, 12). Such arguments erase, each and every time they are reiterated, the existence of alternative human theories and traditions of living on and relating to the planet. This erasure repeats the colonial disavowal of, in Klein's words, "systems that insist that humans must think seven generations in the future; must be not only good citizens but also good ancestors; must take no more than they need and give back to the land in order to protect and augment the cycles of regeneration" (2016, 12). Let us close, then, by insisting that the postcolonial reflections on Indigenous sovereignty we have traced in this chapter, across a range of critical positions and in exemplary readings of two novels, are hardly marginal debates. They are not of merely local relevance, instrumental for the emancipation of those whose sovereignty was disavowed in the processes of colonial and capitalist expansion. They matter globally, and merit listening in from wherever we are, lest the fate of Desperance shall before long be the fate of the planet.

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14 *Interlude:* Epistemic Violence

Epistemic violence is a concept introduced to postcolonial studies by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her influential essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988, see also ch. 5). Originally, Michel Foucault developed the idea of the episteme in Western thought in *History of Madness* and continued its exploration in *The Order of Things*. According to his definition, an episteme is the anonymous codification and structure which determines the knowledge formation of a given epoch. Thus, in the Renaissance the ordering episteme was 'similarity,' which was replaced by 'representation' and 'classification' in the Classical Age – roughly corresponding to the Enlightenment period (see ch. 7) – only to be superseded by the human being as the object of knowledge in the Modern Age. Knowledge and, following from this, discourses can only be formed within the confines of the respective episteme.

Spivak took issue with Foucault because according to her, he ignored the violent knowledge production of imperialism. Moreover, she charged him with unquestioningly assuming the capability of the Western intellectual to represent the Other. She states: "The clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other. This project is also the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subjectivity" (Spivak 1988, 280).

For Spivak, epistemic violence is an integral part of colonialism as it not only undermines and dismisses Indigenous knowledge systems by projecting European epistemologies onto the subjugated Other, but by also proclaiming Western knowledge of the Other as 'truth.' This results in a denial of the possibility of self-representation for the 'subaltern,' a term derived from Antonio Gramsci and referring to the marginalized who are subject to a ruling hegemonic elite.

In order to illustrate her argument, Spivak uses the example of the discursive erasure of the Hindu widow committing sati (sati refers to the practice of self-immolation of a wife on the funeral pyre of her husband) who becomes subject to an act of epistemic violence within two discursive frameworks: British imperialist discourse (which also includes Western feminist voices) constructs the widow as a helpless victim who has to be saved as part of the civilizing mission, while native patriarchy represents her as a willing participant in a time-honored tradition. This goes to show that both sides transform her into a mere object, rather than a subject of knowledge, and thus prevent her from entering discourse. As a result, "[t]here is no space from which the sexed subaltern can speak" (Spivak 1988, 307). This does, of course, not mean that subaltern women do not have the capacity to utter words – rather, their words cannot aspire to the status of knowledge within the imperial and patriarchal episteme. Imperialism and patriarchy thus collude to effectively silence as well as to essentialize the subaltern.

Spivak's analysis of epistemic violence has not only been influential for postcolonial feminism (see ch. 15), but is also productive in deconstructing various fields of colonial discourse like dominant forms of historiography or cartography. An example for the latter is provided in our reading of Tupaia's Map (see ch. 9), which employs an epistemology completely different from Western cartographic knowledge.

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15 Postcolonial Feminism and Intersectionality

"Sisterhood Is Global," "The Personal Is Political" or "Wages for Housework," all these are slogans of the second wave of the women's movement in the West. But despite its good intentions and the diversity of the various strands of feminism developed at that time – with their decidedly different political aims, models for gender identities and envisaged ways to change society as well as the existing power relations – the women's movement was not as 'global' as it tried or claimed to be. Already at the very beginning, women of color as well as LGBTQ people rightly criticized that they were not visible and did not feel properly represented in a women's movement that seemed to occupy mainly the essentializing speaking position of White heterosexual middle-class women.

There is a wide range of theoretical work that opposes an essential, homogenous unity of all women, as well as a binary system of gender and heteronormative frameworks. Examples include Indigenous feminisms, which insist on different epistemologies of gender and sexual orientation, and queer theory, which attempts to step out of normative binarism altogether (see, for example, Grande 2015 on Indigenous critiques of "whitestream feminism" and Xiang 2018 on a decolonial exploration of alternative, non-European trajectories of queer thought).

In this chapter, we will focus on two lines of resistance against the Eurocentric bias of the White women's movement discernible since the 1980s: intersectionality and postcolonial feminism. Like other social movements that challenged racism, colonialism, militarism and capitalism, these resistant feminisms share a focus on the articulation of difference, despite different agendas and different vocabularies. On the one hand, Black women in the West, like Heidi Safia Mirza, rightly criticized that "[t]he invisibility of black women speaks of the separate narrative constructions of race, gender and class: in a racial discourse where the subject is male; in a gendered discourse, where the subject is white; and a class discourse, where race has no place" (1997, 4). But, on the other hand, Black women are no homogenous group either. They are, among other things, also separated by their global location with regard to race, class, gender and other divisions, which are played out quite differently in places which had once been subject to Western colonialism, as women from the Global South pointed out.

These two strands of feminist intervention provided the basis for the theoretical development of intersectionality and postcolonial feminism, which we will take a closer look at in this chapter. While postcolonial feminism is mainly interested in the way women are represented in discourse and is located in Western academies as well as postcolonial locations, intersectionality is interested in identity categories and was first developed in Western locations (and here mainly in the US and the UK) before spreading to other places.

In this chapter, we will first look at the common roots of intersectionality and postcolonial feminism with a focus on the way gendered identities are perceived in both approaches before proceeding with an exploration of how they analyze oppression. The chapter closes with two readings, *Anowa* by Ghanaian author Ama Ata Aidoo and *Chiaroscuro* by Black Scottish writer Jackie Kay, demonstrating the usefulness of combining notions of intersectionality and postcolonial feminism in interpreting literary texts.

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Intersectional Feminism: Multiple Axes of Oppression

The term intersectionality, which is firmly rooted in Black feminist political activism, is used in a wide variety of contexts and disciplines for diverse political projects and has become the new buzzword in feminist criticism. But despite its apparent novelty, there is a genealogy of intersectional-like (to use Ange-Marie Hancock's term) criticism originating in Western Black feminism which can at least be traced back to Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech "Ain't I a Woman," but also to more recent thinkers. The Black feminist lesbian Combahee River Collective (1977), for example, focused not only on the interlocking oppressive systems of race, class and gender but also on sexuality and used identity politics as a tool of resistance. While Angela Davis analyzed the interconnections between *Women, Race and Class* (1981), bell hooks pointed out the double marginalization produced by sexism and racism in *Ain't I a Woman* (1981). The influential anthology *This Bridge Called My Back* edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1981) collected writings by women of color from different ethnicities and, last but not least, Patricia Hill Collins developed her concept of the 'matrix of domination' in *Black Feminist Thought (1990)*. What all these approaches share is their commitment not to reduce marginalization and oppression to only one factor, which in the case of feminism would be gender.

The term intersectionality itself is credited to Kimberlé Crenshaw who first introduced it in her famous 1989 legal essay "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." Crenshaw uses an illuminating metaphor to explain why the analysis of a single-axis framework of dominance is not sufficient:

> Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens at an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from a number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination. (Crenshaw 1989, 149)

She argues further that Black men determine the strategies of anti-racism, while White women dominate feminism, which results in Black women being made invisible – and not only in anti-discrimination laws. Therefore, it is important that intersectionality takes different forms of oppression and their interplay into account without prioritizing any one form of oppression over the other, which signals a move away from additive models (like the idea of triple jeopardy/triple oppression used in earlier forms of feminist analysis). While early intersectional critics mainly focused on the so-called 'master categories' of gender, race and class, the analytical categories that have been foregrounded in intersectional analyses in recent years are widely different and varied, depending on the subject of analysis. Thus, an intersectional analysis can confront several axes of social inequality and oppression (like gender, race, class, caste, ethnicity, sexuality, or age, to name only a few variables), while always working on two levels: the one of the individual or group, which is defined in a cultural context by race, class, gender etc., and the systemic level of social institutions and interconnected power constellations. The analytical focus of intersectional analyses recognizes, furthermore, that multiple identities are experienced simultaneously, which implies that they are not fixed but open to change according to different settings and over time. In short, it investigates lived identities and experiences as interlocked with systems of oppression.

To give you an idea which areas might be fruitfully explored with the heuristic tool of intersectionality, think about the interplay of ethnicity and gender in the case of violence against transgender people of color; or of the interlocked systems of gender and race oppression with regard to female slaves; or the entanglement of gender and class in capitalism (see also ch. 5), which sheds light on the disadvantages that working-class women face in the economy (Black working-class women would, of course, also be further disadvantaged because of race).

It is important to remember that intersectionality has two focal points, namely critical inquiry and critical praxis, which "can produce important new knowledge and/or practice" (Collins and Bilge 2016, 33) precisely by means of their synergy. Alongside with its transdisciplinary approach, it is most likely this alleged emphasis on political activism that transformed intersectionality within a very short time span into the favored instrument of feminist analysis. Emerging from an analysis of social identity categories, the project of intersectionality aims at making marginalized identities visible, while at the same time rejecting a simple margin-center dichotomy, as this would ignore within-group differences. Furthermore, it strives to reconceptualize the way we think about the relationships between the different integrated categories. As a result, there is no longer the possibility to "self-locate as *either* on a margin *or* in a centre" (Hancock 2016, 82) as nobody is purely oppressor or purely oppressed.

Intersectionality as an analytic tool, however, is also subject to criticism with regard to the way the different social divisions tend to be naturalized. As Jasbir Puar argues, a reification of the social categories, which are themselves products of regimes of epistemic violence (see ch. 14), will result in the problem that "intersectionality always produces an Other, and that Other is always a Woman of Color (WOC), who must invariably be shown to be resistant, subversive, or articulating a grievance" (Puar 2011). Focusing to a large extent on individual identities and the moments of oppression marginalized women have to endure, intersectionality is not always paying enough attention to the structural level of power. Thus, it might well play into the hands of neoliberal capitalism and render difference just one moment to be translated into consumption. Additionally, intersectionality deals mainly with local and present inequalities, thus losing sight of a historical and/or transnational perspective, which transcends the geographies of colonial modernity.

It has to be kept in mind, though, that intersectional theory provided the political project of early materialist feminist theories about race, class and gender with a new perspective in thinking these categories together. By making the multiple axes of oppression and their interconnection visible, intersectionality also offers a methodology that is compatible with deconstructionist readings prevalent in postcolonial feminism. The main difference between both theories is, as Ina Kerner argues, that

> [c]urrent intersectionality scholarship is strongly focused on stressing, describing, and theorizing multiple forms of *inequality* among different subgroups of women. Postcolonial theories, in comparison, have from their beginning not only focused on *power* relations among women, but have also emphasized reflections upon *interactions* among feminists – stressing their dissatisfaction with how the dispersed project of (global) feminism has been run. (Kerner 2017, 847)

For the project of feminism nothing is gained, however, if these two theoretical perspectives are just pitched against each other, especially when we take into account that postcolonial feminism has also consistently tried to use an intersectional perspective, as we will show in the following subchapter.

Postcolonial Feminism: The Politics of Representation

Postcolonial feminism has never been just an adjunct to postcolonial theory, but developed as a theory in its own right. Emerging from within feminist anti-colonial activism, which challenged the gender-blindness of anti-colonial movements, and the endeavors of 'Third World' and diasporic academics concerned with feminist and postcolonial theories, it is concerned with the position and representation of women and other marginalized groups in the discursive formations and power structures put into place by Western colonialism and their lingering effects. Thus, it explores the intersections of (neo)colonialism with gender, race, nation, class and sexualities in the context of women's lives with the ultimate aim to change oppressive power structures enacted in the name of race, nation (see ch. 2) and empire (see ch. 16).

This feminist project was especially important as early postcolonial theory, like Edward Said's discussion of Orientalism (see ch. 6) or Homi Bhabha's notions of mimicry and hybridity (see ch. 10), did not provide an analysis of women as colonizing or colonized subjects, while Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin claimed that women "share with colonized races and peoples an intimate experience of the politics of oppression and repression, and like them they have been forced to articulate their experiences in the language of their oppressors" (1989, 174). Statements like this show clearly that the gendered dimension of colonialism is absent from these theories, a shortcoming that was addressed by postcolonial feminists who stressed that gender is also a form of colonial 'Othering.'

On a more practical level, postcolonial feminism was also decisive in introducing postcolonial literary texts written by women into university and school curricula (another form of representation in which women from the Global South were marginalized). Starting with the retrieval of women's literary texts, postcolonial feminist scholars also reread colonial novels (i. e. canonical European literature) to show their complicity with imperialism and their stereotypical ways of portraying female characters.

An important early example for this is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's re-reading of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, which had been claimed to be proto-feminist by Western feminist critics. Spivak, on the other hand, showed in her influential article "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1985) that Jane's position results partly from silencing and marginalizing Bertha Mason, the first creole wife of Rochester who is kept in the attic and represents the rise of imperialism. Bertha Mason later was the focus of Caribbean writer Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a writing back (see ch. 18) to *Jane Eyre* from Bertha's perspective. Spivak reads Rhys's text alongside Brontë's novel "to demonstrate that this process of marginalisation has a wider emblematic status for the production of white subjectivity in general" (Lewis and Mills 2003, 10).

This is not to say that the interests of postcolonial feminists are mainly based on a solely historical or literary trajectory, but rather that they try to track the subjugation of 'real' and 'literary' women from the moment of the colonial encounter onwards with an emphasis both on colonizers and colonized. By doing so, postcolonial feminism does not simply reject the endeavors of Western feminists, but rather wants to show how they (at best unwittingly) reproduce and are thus part of oppressive power structures (like in the *Jane Eyre* example). Thus, postcolonial feminists engage in laying bare the discourses which lead to specific forms of oppression

subjugating women in (post)colonial locations by making use of deconstructionist methodologies, which are also informed by a kind of intersectional framework as well as the insights of Black feminism. As Anne McClintock argues in *Imperial Leather*, "race, gender and class are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other; nor can they simply be yoked together like armatures of Lego. Rather they come into existence *in and through* relation to each other" (McClintock 1995, 5).

In her influential article "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" (1984), Chandra Talpade Mohanty challenged Western feminists and their approach to studying the situation of women in the Global South. While they might have had the intention to 'help their suppressed sisters,' they instead produced essentializing images of women in various Third World locations, which inadvertently mainly served the purpose of showing the degrees of liberation allegedly reached by women in the Global North. Mohanty's analysis rests on the correct assumption that there is a big difference between 'women' and 'Woman,' the first referring to actually living beings while the second is confined to the representation of females (in her example in Western texts).

The 'Third World' Women who are analyzed and discussed in this kind of feminist scholarship are an effect of discourse rather than having an existent, identifiable reality. Mohanty argues that 'Third World' women were represented as perpetual victims of patriarchal structures like "the veiled woman, the powerful mother, the chaste virgin, the obedient wife etc. These images exist in universal, ahistorical splendor, setting in motion a colonialist discourse which exercises a very specific power in defining, coding and maintaining existing first/third world connections" (Mohanty 1984, 352). Instead of perpetuating this kind of oppressive discourse, she advocates a kind of analysis which takes the specific local and historical situation into account and as a result postulates a feminism that favors the concept of situated knowledge over so-called objective knowledge which can only result in epistemic violence (see ch. 14). For postcolonial feminists it is important to focus on the ways that identity is produced within specific power configurations in specific contexts.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak also addresses the problems inherent in representing 'Third World' women in her groundbreaking article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), which ties the question of representation to agency and voice. The subaltern of the title is a term taken from Antonio Gramsci's work and denotes someone outside of hegemonic power structures. While the subaltern as such is not gendered, Spivak argues that "the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (1988, 287), as every representation is subject to the epistemic violence of hegemonic Western discourses which postulate Western ways of knowledge as the only valid ways. This, of course, is not supposed to imply that this subaltern woman has no authentic voice or cannot speak, but rather that she does not have a subject position outside imperial discourse as it is only the latter that constructs her as a subject in the first place. With regard to claiming some form of agency, Spivak postulates the idea of a strategic essentialism, which allows for a strategic assumption of essentialist identities to empower women from diverse locations to fight for specific interests in temporary alliances and marks their entry into discourse as speaking subjects. At the same time, she is defying the idea that the subaltern woman as a bearer of meanings and experiences outside of Western discourse becomes a simplified icon that can all the easier be marginalized.

In the wake of Spivak's and Mohanty's work there were numerous books and essays which provided postcolonial feminist analyses aimed at the deconstruction of discourses in various representational fields ranging from Othering, the entanglement of femininity with the construction of nationalist (anti-colonial) symbolism, discussions of gendered (post)colonial spaces to rethinking Whiteness and many more. All these investigations share a commitment to a distinct focus on political change. Additionally, postcolonial feminism has a decidedly transnational outlook that provides analyses of the way in which imperialism and colonialism have shaped and organized capitalism and still play a role in today's global geopolitical power relations.

The idea of transcending boundaries is of major importance for the direction in which postcolonial feminism is heading now – a transnational feminism that destabilizes the boundaries of nation, race and gender and is attentive to the uneven flows of culture and capital. Intersectional theory could be helpful here in highlighting the conglomerate of oppression visible in the diverse moments when identity is created as 'Other.'

In their seminal anthology *Scattered Hegemonies* (1994), Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan argue for a transnational feminism that "articulate[s] the relationship of gender to scattered hegemonies such as global economic structures, patriarchal nationalisms, 'authentic' forms of tradition, local structures of domination, and legal-juridical oppression on multiple levels" (1994, 17). This deterritorialization of power structures permits fragmented identities and strategic alliances across borders to critique and ultimately overcome asymmetries and inequalities as well as the Western patriarchal construct of the nation-state (see ch. 2), which is an outcome of European imperialism. In the next subchapter we will explore how these feminist theories can be put into dialogue when reading literary texts.

Representing the 'Other' Woman: Ama Ata Aidoo's, *Anowa* (1970)

Ama Ata Aidoo was born in Ghana in 1940 and raised in the Fanti royal household (like all Akan peoples, the Fanti determine inheritance and succession by matrilineal descent, a fact that becomes important later on when we discuss the role of women). Apart from being one of the most prolific and versatile writers in Ghana, she is also one of the best-known African writers outside the continent. Next to collections of poetry and short stories, she wrote two highly influential theatre plays, *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965) about the troubles of an African American woman who moves to Ghana with her Ghanaian husband, and *Anowa* (1970), which we will discuss in more detail in a moment, as well as the novels *Our Sister Killjoy* (1977), one of the few African novels featuring a lesbian relationship, and *Changes* (1991), which deals with polygamy.

Right from the beginning of her writing career, Aidoo participated in discussions about African feminisms and published a number of important essays on the topic, among these "To Be a Woman" (1984) published in Robin Morgan's influential anthology *Sisterhood Is Global* and "The African Woman Today" (1992). Like many African writers and critics, she rejected Western feminist ideas, not least because she mostly perceived their liberal manifestation. Writers like the British-Nigerian novelist Buchi Emecheta consequently pronounced to be an "African feminist with

a small 'f'" (1988, 175) or came up with their own ways of theorizing the oppression and subordination of women. Alice Walker's and Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi's concept of Womanism is one example here, but also Molara Ogundipe's Stiwanism with its accompanying socialist political analysis.

Aidoo sides with Mohanty in stating that Western feminists have a stereotypical idea of what it means to be a woman in Africa:

> She is breeding too many children she cannot take care of, and for whom she should not expect other people to pick up the tab. She is hungry, and so are her children. In fact, it has become a cliché of Western photojournalism that the African woman is old beyond her years; she is half-naked; her drooped and withered breasts are well exposed; there are flies buzzing around the faces of her children; and she has a permanent begging bowl in her hand. (Aidoo 1992, 319)

To counter these images, Aidoo believes feminism to be an important political project, but it needs to be a feminism that fits the specific circumstances of the African women whom it purports to understand and discuss.

Anowa, which was already published in 1970 but only first performed in London in 1991, has become one of the plays most widely discussed in the contexts of postcolonial theater and African women writers. By means of looking to the past in order to better understand the present, it provides a decidedly African perspective on British colonialism in Ghana while also giving a voice to African women and addressing the intersections of colonialism, gender, class and economic exploitation (for an extended earlier discussion of the play see also Bartels 2012, 243–47).

The challenge to hegemonic discourses is also visible in the composition of the play because Aidoo employs African musical instruments, which symbolize the characters, juxtaposed with a version of English that uses verse, prose, proverbs, mime and song to achieve the overall effect of an Akan rhythm. Additionally, she employs the dilemma tale of the disobedient daughter, which is used here in a subversive manner to deconstruct notions of normative femininity. Dilemma tales are a traditional form of orature used by the Akan to debate socially relevant topics, but usually do not provide unequivocal answers. Instead they ask the questions that need to be discussed and are generally delivered by female storytellers, an instance of female agency which Aidoo highlights when she recounts how she became familiar with this tale: "My mother 'talks' stories and sings songs. *Anowa* [...] directly grows out of a story she told me although as the play has come out, she cannot even recognize the story she told" (James 1990, 19).

Anowa is set in the 1870s, some thirty years after the Bond treaty, which was signed in 1844 by the Fanti who hoped to secure protection against the Ashanti, another Akan people, and signaled the permanent arrival of a British presence at the Gold Coast, as Ghana was called at that time. Ultimately, the Treaty led to the British colonization of Fanti territory within the later Gold Coast colony. With the Fanti being represented as active agents and not as hapless victims, it becomes abundantly clear that they (somewhat unwittingly) played a decisive role in submitting their own territories to colonial rule. While the loss of self-determination concerns the whole community and represents part of a deliberately 'forgotten' history, theirs is also in another respect not a black and white story of innocent victims of colonial oppression. As it turns out, signing the treaty is not the last in a series of 'unfortunate' decisions because "there is a bigger crime" (102), an allusion to the Fanti involvement in the slave trade.

In the play, which consists of a prologue and three phases, this information is imparted right at the beginning with the help of The-Mouth-That-Eats-Salt-and-Pepper, a character of choric storytellers similar to the corrective narrator figure in the dilemma tale who also interprets events. But in *Anowa* this character has a special form because it consists of two different voices, an old man and an old woman, who appear in the prologue and at the end of each phase, and comment not only on the events but also air the conflicting views within Fanti society. In this context it is also interesting to note that the old man, who is talking mostly in verse, shows sympathy with the misguided signing of the treaty as well as with Anowa's plight, while the old woman, who, as a representative of the common wo/man uses colloquial language, is immediately ready to condemn Anowa for defying traditions. Combining their voices into one character cleverly works to overcome binaries.

Alongside the repercussions the treaty had on the whole community, on a second level Aidoo is concerned with individual choices and the reactions they evoke. The figure in whom both these topics come together is Anowa, the eponymous central character, who, like the disobedient daughter in the dilemma tale, chooses her own husband, Kofi. In order to provide the audience with background information to understand the dilemma, the first phase, "In Yebi," focuses on the workings of Fanti culture and their interpretation of gender roles. While marriage and motherhood might represent the ultimate aims for rural women, it becomes clear that the associated female gender role is far from passive. Not only do matrilineal structures ensure that women (like Anowa's mother Badua) determine or at least play a part in all relevant decisions, but there is also an alternative for women unwilling or unable to fulfill these gender expectations as they may become priestesses. Anowa, though, decides not to adhere to any tradition and follow her own principles where the choice of her future husband is concerned because "She listens to her own voice/Laughs at her own jokes and/Follows her own advice" (102), as the Old Man puts it. This results in her severing the relationship with her mother and the whole village, but also highlights that she has some form of agency and voice, even if they come at a price.

Phase Two, "On the Highway," represents a transitory moment, a phase of in-betweenness, which initially seems to provide the possibility of the emergence of new definitions of male and female identities. At first, Kofi and Anowa are working side by side in a partnership based on equality and trust, while Anowa experiences the freedom to be different. She is at her most happy and spirited in this phase, but Kofi is increasingly drawn to trading with the British to increase his profits, even if this means becoming actively involved in slavery. As Anowa is opposed to trading and exploiting other humans, their relationship soon deteriorates. In the wake of this, Kofi declares that "I shall be the new husband and you the new wife" (111). This sentiment, which might point to a new definition of male and female gender roles by lifting patriarchal oppression, in the end turns out to just signify that Kofi is gradually accepting the gender roles favored by the British, as "the new wife," at least in the way Kofi understands her, would have to subscribe to the domestic ideal. Here, Aidoo clearly hints at the deterioration of female Fanti gender roles as an effect of British colonialism. Anowa, however, rejects this construction of a female identity, and as a result becomes "too different" (112) for Kofi's taste. Patriarchy and colonialism intersect at this point to transform her into the 'Other,' a "wayfarer [who] does not belong" (115). Carol Boyce Davies rightly argues that Anowa thus "activates in a pre-colonial context what would now be called postmodernist notions of displacement, deterritorialization or homelessness" (1994, 65).

The third phase, "In the Big House," illuminates the way colonialism has changed male and female identities into new hybrid ones. In this context, space resumes to be an important element of representation. While the highway was a liminal space liberating the characters from the pre-colonial patterns of the village's everyday life, the setting of the third phase, Kofi's opulent new house in Oguaa (Cape Coast), the center of colonial trading operations, combines African and Western elements which hint at the entanglement of colonial and male dominance, but fails to provide a safe place for Anowa. Most telling in this respect is the portrait of Queen Victoria next to one of Kofi and the painting of a crow, "the totem bird of the Nsona clan" (117). All the newly acquired wealth, however, comes at a price: Kofi has presumably lost his masculinity and virility, an impotence which can be read as a symbol of the damaging effects of British colonialism on the African male, and has exchanged it for a limited local power. Anowa, on the other hand, rejects everything Kofi stands for and cannot conceive children, a severe 'fault' in a woman supposed to continue the lineage. As a result, she is slowly but surely going mad, if madness means that her actions are unintelligible to the people around her. Anowa's dream at the beginning of Phase Three links the individual and the collective by not only providing a reason for Anowa's barrenness but also by stressing the link between global exploitation and corruption:

> I dreamt that I was a big, big woman. And from my insides were huge holes out of which poured men, women and children. And the sea was boiling hot and steaming. And as it boiled, it threw out many, many giant lobsters, boiled lobsters, each of whom as it fell turned into a man or woman, but keeping its lobster head and claws. And they rushed to where I sat and seized the men and women as they poured out of me, and they tore them apart, and dashed them to the ground and stamped upon them. (119)

With Anowa being depicted as a 'Mother Africa' figure, her dream refers directly back to the past of the Atlantic slave trade when Africans were sold from the forts at the coast (see also ch. 9). While the triangular slave trade is slowly losing its importance in the present of the play, internal slavery is still growing strong and Anowa feels connected to and responsible for the slaves whose misery she wants to end. Thus, she refuses to give birth to children who will only end up in captivity. Instead, two young slaves, an emblematically nameless boy and a nameless girl, have to refer to her as mother. If we look at the construction of female subject positions, it becomes obvious that the girl, in comparison to Anowa, is not only oppressed by patriarchy and colonialism, but also by slavery, which results in her not even being 'worthy' of a name. Aidoo cleverly connects a gender analysis with one of class and the corruption of power in an emerging capitalist society that is at the same time subject to colonial oppression. Of course, the dream also serves as a moment of foreshadowing with regard to the ending when both, Kofi and Anowa, commit suicide.

While this might seem, at first glance, to be a mere repetition of the ending of the dilemma tale, *Anowa* shows that it is not only the individual choice of the heroine that leads to unhappiness, but that the whole community is implicated. The Old Man has realized that not only Anowa might be at fault: "Who knows if Anowa would have been a better woman, a better person if we had not been what we are?" (127). Ultimately, Anowa's suicide does not make her a failed feminist heroine but underlines her role as an in-between wayfarer whose progressive ideas cannot yet be appreciated and who thus embodies a critique of the way women's identities are constructed in Fanti society.

Writing against Notions of One-Dimensional Oppression: Jackie Kay's, *Chiaroscuro* (1986)

Jackie Kay was born in 1961 to a Nigerian father and a Scottish mother but given up to adoption so that she grew up in a White Glaswegian family. She has written poetry, theater plays and fiction, with the poetry collection *The Adoption Papers* (1991) and the novel *Trumpet* (1998) on the fictional jazz artist John Moody probably being her most famous works. *Chiaroscuro*, which was commissioned by the *Theatre of Black Women* in 1985 and first performed at the Soho Poly in 1986, was her first theater play and the first play by a Black British dramatist widely praised by the mainstream media. It is decidedly feminist in outlook and takes up many of the issues important to Black British feminists at the time like the connection between patriarchy, colonialism and sexuality in a racist and heteronormative society.

The play, which consists of two acts, was inspired by Ntozake Shange's choreopoem *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* and combines poetry, naturalistic dialogue, dance and music with a minimalist setting and epic theater techniques in a move that transgresses conventional realist forms still going strong at that point in time. The title *Chiaroscuro*, which refers to a painting technique using light and shade to produce depths, already hints at the difficulties the characters face in constructing an identity.

The four female characters are all Black British citizens and invoke Britain's colonial past as they feel marginalized in a society that defines itself as White and as a result does not leave space for different subject positions. In order to position themselves, all women recount the story of their origin from a matrilineal perspective, which is connected to their receiving a name, while also making plain the rejection migrants are facing. This process of naming is fraught with difficulties, though, as the women have to assert their names from the borders of British citizenship. Aisha, who traces her roots back to India, was called after her grandmother "who was born in the Himalaya at dawn" (59). While her parents came to Britain to work hard without ever being accepted as citizens, Aisha is afraid that her roots are somehow lost and that, in India, "I'd stick out a mile, or worse they'd call me English!" (62). Yomi, who is the only heterosexual character in the play and also a mother, was born in Nigeria and named after her great grandmother who was born without a tongue but could paint evocatively. Both characters share a history of migration, which results in their desire to define 'home' as a place outside of Britain (as the example of Aisha illustrated) where they might finally belong to overcome the rootlessness resulting from their being rejected as British citizens.

The other two characters, Opal and Beth, cannot trace their origins in such a singular manner as both were born in Britain of 'mixed' parents. Beth was named after her great-great-great-great grandmother who was taken to America as a slave, but despite being raped and having her children and her African name taken away from her she "was one strong woman; she was like Sojourner Truth or Harriet Tubman" (59). That notwithstanding, Beth also struggles to achieve a sense of belonging, which becomes visible when she recounts that she dumped items of (beloved) Western popular culture like her records of Joni Mitchell and "bought the black records that had never sat on my shelves" (73). Opal, on the other hand, does not even know how she got her name because she grew up in an orphanage and was most likely named after the opal earrings a nurse wore. For Kay, the issue of naming is very important because names entail the possibility to locate oneself: "I have

been obsessed with naming. What do we call ourselves as lesbians and black women? How did we get our names? How do we assert our names? What are our past names?" (82).

Equally important are the objects, a cushion, a photograph album, a black doll and a mirror, that are part of the women's heritage and which they take out of a chest that "functions as the past and also as the chest in the human body. In order to breathe, these four women have to get things 'off their chest'" (82). In this context, the cushion represents the characters' childhood as well as their potential to be mothers, the photograph album stands for the personal and political histories of Black women, the black doll serves as a representation of Black women and the abuse they have to suffer in a sexist and racist society and the mirror highlights the difference between the perception of one's own self and that of the White society, which keeps Othering the women in all kinds of different situations. The objects are also used to show the multiple axes of oppression that the women are faced with and change hands at the end of the play in a symbolic gesture, which underlines that Aisha, Yomi, Beth and Opal might have come some way with accepting the past and altering the present but that this doesn't present a final resolution, as each character is "in a flux, reassessing her identity, travelling back into memory and forward into possibility" (82).

By staging the histories and life-stories of these four very different Black women, Kay is careful to underline that they are not a homogenous group, which can be essentialized to the trope of the "Black British (Lesbian) Woman." While 'race' and sexuality, although both no stable categories, are both embodied, 'race' is inscribed on the outside of the body and is treated as a political category. While Aisha sometimes has to fight for inclusion and states that "it pisses [her] off when Afro-Caribbean women tell [her she has] no right" (70–71) to claim this identity, Yomi has internalized a racist discourse resulting from colonial ideas of 'pure blood' and miscegenation. Thus, she uses terms like "half-caste" (70) and implies that women like Beth and Opal, who have a White parent, suffer from a lack. Being confronted with the adverse reactions of her friends, she has to learn that the political identification as 'Black' is more than a theory to be ridiculed.

Beth tries to explain their common marginality with the following example: "Look, when I walk down the street and some NF thug wants to beat me up – what does he see, white or black? Is that a theory too?" (70). Everyday racism is something all four women are subject to. Thus, we learn in an enactment that Opal was harassed by a patient (she is a nurse), but in the end gets to take the blame as well: "We've had quite enough feeling for the one evening, Nurse Black" (74). It is telling that Yomi takes on the role of the White employer in this segment because she is the one initially least reflective on the issue of racial discrimination.

Being Black is definitely one axis of oppression that all four women share, but for Beth and Opal, who become a steady item in the course of the play, their sexuality works in tandem with their skin color to deepen their marginalized position. In a White heteronormative society, they are regarded as 'perverts,' a designation that Opal struggles with and which makes her reluctant to live her relationship with Beth openly. But even before discovering that she was regarded as 'Other' due to being a lesbian, she felt not at one with herself because she had internalized White Western beauty standards: "My face was a shock to itself. The brain in my head thought my skin white and my nose straight. It imagined my hair was curly from twiddling it. Every so often, I saw me: milky coffee skin, dark searching eyes, flat nose. Some

voice from that mirror would whisper: *nobody wants you, no wonder*" (65), a feeling that was reinforced by the fact that she did not have a family and did not even get into foster care. When she haltingly starts to accept her sexuality as well as her Blackness at the end of the play, this symbolizes a process of healing initiated by narrating her personal history and defying hegemonic discourse.

Even Beth, who tries to deal with her sexuality most openly, feels that she cannot take Opal to the wedding of an old school friend because "My Mum knows her Mum. My Mum will be there too" (70). The four characters need some negotiating and sharing of their histories before all of them, including Yomi, come to terms with sexualities that are not heteronormative. This is beautifully staged in Opal's final song, which again alludes to the urgent desire of naming Black lesbian experience by putting it in a transnational perspective:

I want to find the woman
who in Dahomey 1900
loved another woman
tell me what did they call her
did they know her name
in Ashanti, do they know it in
Yoruba do they know it in patois
do they know it in Punjabi
do they know it in Arabic
do they know it in Hindi
do they know it in Cantonese
do they know it in English. (79)

The personal memories and wider historical events like British colonialism, the history of slavery or non-heteronormative love relationships are interwoven to allow for a subversion of hegemonic discourses and fixed identity categories through a counter-narrative. Change seems only to be possible if the personal past is remembered and official history contested. Thus, injuries as well as injustices are voiced and retold in the context of a history of capitalism, migration, diaspora (see ch. 8), race and sexuality, which is played out on women's bodies. Any change seems to be only temporary, though, and needs to be continuously defended and re-enacted, as the ending of the play goes right back to the beginning with the four women entering the stage and taking up their initial positions.

The two readings illustrate that, despite their slightly different agendas, intersectionality and postcolonial feminism fruitfully complement each other when analyzing literary texts from a feminist point of view. While postcolonial feminism makes the discursive representation of women like Anowa or the four women in *Chiaroscuro* visible and highlights the way they are continually 'Othered,' intersectionality provides an understanding that the various identity categories cannot be perceived in isolation as they are deeply entangled and produce a joint effect resulting in different forms of marginalization and oppression.

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16 *Interlude:* Empire

Empire is a crucial term in postcolonial studies. Michael Doyle defines 'empire' and the related concept of imperialism thus:

> Empire is [...] a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire. (1986, 45)

In postcolonial studies, the term has been applied to a wide range of contexts of domination. Empires have been categorized as ancient or modern (e. g., the Holy Roman Empire and the Spanish Empire, respectively), colonial or postcolonial (the Portuguese Empire and global *Empire*), empires of rule and empires of settlement (the Soviet Union is an example of the former; the French Empire and British Empire were both), pre-industrial and post-industrial empires (the Incan Empire and the Japanese Empire).

While imperial processes may span centuries, scholars in postcolonial studies have frequently focused on the study of imperialism during the so-called "age of empire" (Hobsbawm 1989), commonly referring to the period between 1875 and 1914. By the end this period, European powers held "roughly 85 percent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions, and commonwealths" (Said 1994, 8). The age of empire is marked by the increasing technological disparity between powers, emerging forms of mass organization (such as institutions and bureaucracy), as well as an enhanced imperial capacity to kill, developed by European powers in the many continental wars (Hobsbawm 1989; Mishra 2013, 28, 47). The novel feature of 19th-century imperialism is the emergence of scientific racism (with close ties to the emergence of antisemitic fascism in the 20th century). Europeans came to consider a large part of the world as inferior: backward, infantile, and in need of conversion to European civilization – as well as to capitalism (Hobsbawm 1989, 79; Mishra 2013, 34). Massively and forcefully exposed to doctrines of European cultural superiority, many colonized people struggled with internalized racism and the reification of Eurocentric cultural hierarchies (Mishra 2013, 58). Others directly opposed Westernization or specific aspects of imperialism, and worked to shape anti-imperialist resistance movements. The decades following the world wars are considered to be the time of waning of the European empires, followed by formal decolonization in the 1940s-1980s.

Neo-imperialism usually refers to imperialism after the period of formal decolonization. The study of neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism, for instance, addresses the fact that many of the colonial resources are still owned or extracted by European businesses, or that European financial governance functions by indebting former colonies (Slaughter 2007). There are also more subtle forms of neo-imperialism, such as news dependency – the tendency of countries in the Global South to depend on both news values and news production from the Global North.

Recently, the term 'empire' has been used by politicians and theorists to describe the power of the United States of America and its military presence abroad, especially in the Middle East. Noam Chomsky cites instances of the US political elite appropriating the name of empire to accentuate the global and historical impact of

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the American ruling class. According to Chomsky, the US advocacy of free trade and market expansionism perpetuates global entanglement in which other places become dependent on US trade policy in ways that are, despite the official rhetoric, massively asymmetrical and exploitative. This recent focus on the contemporary US, however, also reveals that the postcolonial trajectory of narrating empire and imperialism as outlined above has been characterized by gaps and omissions of its own. Scholars have, for example, claimed that this narrative has tended to sideline some of the historical and ongoing colonial and imperial processes in the Americas, such as the enslavement, murder, and displacement of Indigenous peoples, early forms of slavery and indenture, and the historical and ongoing imperialism of US "unincorporated territories" (Mignolo 2000; Byrd 2011; Doyle 1986).

In their seminal work *Empire* (2000), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri describe 'Empire' as a postmodern form of global political sovereignty, a new form of decentralized authority with a Eurocentric genealogy that is not clearly based in any one state. Hardt and Negri describe Empire as a virtual machine, collectively governed by powerful nation-states, as well as international agents like the UN, NATO, the IMF, WTO, large corporations and NGOs. Crucially, this Empire cannot be controlled by any one agent. Although Empire does not endorse imperialism in the initial sense – and might have played a role in ending it – it still thrives on military and economic expansion and exploitation (Hardt and Negri 2000, 43).

While Hardt and Negri's conception remains an authoritative reference in postcolonial studies, some of its aspects have been substantially challenged, particularly the singular platform of the Empire they propose. Partha Chatterjee observes that, despite increasing pressure for uniformity in international relations, there is little consensus between major economic players globally. This is demonstrated by currency rivalries, conflicts over major resources such as oil, and the (re-)emergence of new global powers such as China (Chatterjee 2004, 4157). Chatterjee and others argue that the shapeshifting imperial strategy of managing foreign places by appeal to democracy and human rights is still effectively utilized by *contesting* governmentalities.

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17 Postcolonial Futures

Postcolonialism often seems to be concerned with the past. While a critical view of the past, and in particular a critique of the history established by imperial powers, is a crucial part of postcolonial work, a simplistic reduction of the 'postcolonial' to dealing with the past is itself the result of colonialism's temporality, of colonizers' strategic use and conceptions of time. As many postcolonialist critics have argued, colonialist temporality hinges on presenting the colonizers as the embodiment and harbingers of linear conceptions of 'progress,' 'modernity,' and 'history' and the colonized as 'backward,' 'primitive,' or 'outside of history.' By associating colonized people perpetually with pre-modern pasts, any kind of progress in colonized or formerly colonized societies is perfidiously linked to colonialism's intervention. In a similar vein, Johannes Fabian has famously argued that Western anthropologists frequently study those they see as Other with an implicit assumption that they do not share the same level of development and are not situated at the same point in time, a strategy he called the "denial of coevalness" (Fabian 1983, 31). Scholars speak of the use of time as an instrument of distancing and power as 'chronopolitics.'

But even in cases where former colonizers have begun to develop a self-critical awareness of the global devastation their societies have created via colonialism, and of the strategic and damaging use of time in this process, colonization is often referred to as something that happened (only) in the past. This move blinds us to the ways in which coloniality's hierarchies and power structures can continue to exist even in those spaces where colonialism has officially ended, and it obscures the ongoing colonization existing in contemporary settler colonies (and with it, the question of responsibility for colonialism in the present). In versions of history that establish colonialism as a thing of the past, colonized or formerly colonized people are sometimes envisioned as dead and extinct, as in US-American notions of the 'vanishing Indian.' The notion that Native Americans were vanquished in the past and have ceased to exist as peoples denies the ongoing challenge that Native Americans rightfully pose to the settler colonial state and excludes Indigenous peoples from conceptions of the future.

Alternately, some European or American scenarios of the future predict catastrophic futures for the formerly colonized, as in discourses about the African continent as a space intrinsically doomed by poverty and disease. Other discourses refuse to connect migrants' or refugees' aspirations to a future in the countries of former colonizers with colonialism's creation of global inequalities. In all these scenarios, the future holds no place for the colonized or formerly colonized. As Afrofuturist artist Ayodamola Tanimowo Okunseinde (Ayo) has argued, such exclusion from the future is both violently and brutally physical (operating, for example, in US police murders of African Americans) and representational, as expressed in the absence of Black or Indigenous characters in mainstream science fiction (qtd. in Kuttner 2017).

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Thinking Beyond Colonialism

Postcolonial theories, political practices, and forms of cultural expression have addressed the politics of colonialist temporality in a variety of ways, creating postcolonial visions of futurity that critique colonial versions of the past and envision or imagine postcolonial futures. It is also in this sense that we initially introduced, in this volume, our own usage of postcolonialism as thinking and acting 'beyond' colonialism (see ch. 1).

Russell West-Pavlov has traced the ways in which postcolonial theory and fiction confronts "forms of temporality identified as specifically European and imperialist, and the ways it proposes alternatives that may elude this imperial time" (2012, 158). Such "imperial" time is identified as either the notion of time as an arrow, a linear, abstract, and universal factor existing independently of human construction, or the notion that even though time is a human construct, it can nevertheless be split into measurable units of comparable length, establishing a universal standard. Writers and scholars have pointed out that such conceptions of time, while being just one model among many, were posited as norm in imperialist endeavors and served to discredit alternatives (West-Pavlov 2012, 159). However, in attempting to re-establish these 'other' temporalities, West-Pavlov argues, postcolonialism can run the danger of re-enforcing the colonialist binary of the 'pre-modern' and the 'modern.' Referencing the work of Dipesh Chakrabarty, Achille Mbembe, and Edouard Glissant, West-Pavlov advocates working with the notion of "a plurality of heterogeneous temporalities" that exist not per se, but in relation to their specific environment, and that include both human and non-human actors and factors:

> I suggest that in order to resolve this binary, it is necessary to abandon the sequence it relies upon altogether, whose underlying structure is that of segmented absolute time. In its place, it would be helpful to take up a notion of overlapping, non-segmented temporal planes which credit many actants with agency. In this way, such putatively pre-modern elements such as nature religions, mythological beings, or ancestral spirits might be understood differently, along with many other human, non-human, organic and non-organic, material and immaterial actants whose being would be that of the continuous becoming of the world. (West-Pavlov 2012, 165–66)

An imagined future that both recovers alternative conceptions of time and sets these in relation participates in the project of decolonization.

In a settler colonial context, such a project helps to envision a future that, in the words of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "unsettles" the settler state and "is accountable to indigenous sovereignty and futurity" (2012, 35). This also includes creating visions of polity that, as we have argued in our chapter on "Indigenous Sovereignties," go beyond conceptions of the independent nation-state as the only imaginable outcome of decolonization and the only proper site of a people's sovereignty (see ch. 13). In her study *Non-Sovereign Futures*, Yarimar Bonilla argues that the establishment of formally independent nation-states has not protected Caribbean populations from neo-imperial pressures. She quotes the words of Guadeloupean activist Raymond Gama, who argues:

> Right now the only slogan we have is independence. That is why we do not cling to it – we know it is empty. You can have independence and be *dans la merde*. That is why we are not committed to any slogan – we are committed to life. We want to transform our lives, even if

it's under the French flag. [...] We want sovereignty but only if it comes with social transformation. (qtd. in Bonilla 2015, 3)

While Guadeloupe, an overseas region of France, has never achieved formal independence, the labor movement described by Bonilla envisions alternative ways of decolonization that are voiced by Gama as a future that is not yet completely articulable:

People like us, the little populations [*les petits peoples*] who were integrated into the big collectives [*les grands ensembles*], are currently in the process of creating new relationships. But we don't yet have the transcript for the future [...] We are creating something that has already been promised but has never been seen. Only we can imagine it because we feel it, we live it, even if we don't have the concepts with which to define it. (qtd. in Bonilla 2015, 3)

Such political movements are inextricably linked with other forms of cultural expression, including literature. Danika Medak-Saltzman (Turtle Mountain Chippewa) has argued that contemporary political movements of Indigenous resurgence (which reject Indigenous accommodation with the settler state on the state's terms and instead advocate the necessity of centering Indigenous epistemologies) are related to a recent increase in Indigenous futurist cultural expression (2017, 147). Imagining a future in literature, for example, can function as an impetus to political action: if the reader's own present becomes the futurist narrative's past, then the reader 'returns' from the narrative (set in the reader's imagined future) into her own present (the narrative's past) and can begin to act on this present to bring about or prevent the future envisioned in the narrative. In addition, forms of cultural expression help to push the limits of what is thinkable and unthinkable, possible and impossible, in the first place. As famously voiced by the Afrofuturist artist Sun Ra: "Everything possible has been tried and nothing has changed. What we need is the impossible" (qtd. in Price 2016, 50).

Postcolonial Futurisms: Imagining the Impossible

Among cultural forms that engage with the future, futurism holds a prominent place. Futurism is commonly associated with a group of Italian artists of the early twentieth century. In the words of Kristina Baudemann, the movement "particularly celebrated the future as a grand narrative of progress, technology, and human evolution" (2016, 124). The movement glorified speed, war, and the submission of women, and various members became associated with fascism and imperialism. The postcolonial futurism we want to briefly introduce here is of a different kind. Even though such cultural expression exists in various different places, we will concentrate here on Afrofuturism and Indigenous futurism, which is the work of African, Afro-diasporic and Indigenous artists, digital artists, musicians, performers, filmmakers, and writers.

Within these broader movements, it is onto literature (and, in one case study, music) that we want to shine a brief spotlight to emphasize its potential to imagine and bring about postcolonial futures. As various critics have remarked, this work does not envision a radical break with the past, but rather seeks to connect the past – in this case, often a past that includes colonization – with a present still shaped

by colonialism and a future that attempts to refashion the past and present in creative and liberating ways. Many writers insist that futurist elements exist in their respective cultures in various forms that have been ignored by Western critics (for example, in myths, folk tales, or forms of prophesy), and many concentrate on productively engaging with the experience of alienation brought about by colonialism or enslavement. Both in narrative content and in literary form, such works experiment with, and revive, alternative temporalities.

In the global literary landscape, such work also reverberates with approaches not directly associated with the postcolonial: queer theory, for example, radically questions the "straight time" expressed in images of the future symbolized by heterosexual procreation – or, in the words of Lucinda Ramberg, "the straight time of domesticated gender, capital accumulation, and national coherence" (2016, 225–26). A similar critique of mainstream images of futurity is voiced in disability studies (see Obourn 2013). In history, some researchers have begun to foreground the analysis not only of human experience in the past, but (building on the work of Reinhart Koselleck) have tried to trace the "horizons of expectation" of people in the past, thus the futures they implicitly or explicitly imagined and which drove their actions (see Engerman 2012).

Most significantly, the works we highlight resonate with the French philosopher Jacques Derrida's notion of the future perfect. For Derrida, this conception of the future does not treat the future as clearly embedded in causal relationships and thus as calculable or predictable. Rather, the idea that 'something will have happened' expresses the incalculable element one must risk in engaging with the future. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida begins to envision a new international that can only be described with questions, and whose outlines are faint, open, and best described in a certain, radical mode of awaiting that also constitutes an engagement with otherness and with the impossible:

> Awaiting without horizon of the wait, awaiting what one does not expect yet or any longer, hospitality without reserve, welcoming salutation accorded in advance to the absolute surprise of the *arrivant* [...] from whom or from which one will not ask anything in return and who or which will not be asked to commit to the domestic contracts of any welcoming power (family, State, nation, territory, native soil or blood, language, culture in general, even humanity), *just* opening which renounces any right to property, any right in general, [...] [an] opening [...] to the event as the foreigner itself, to her or to him for whom one must leave an empty place, always, in memory of the hope [...]. (1993, 65)

On the webpage *The Mother's Nature*, Afrofuturist performer and artist Ayodamola Okunseinde is introduced with the following words: "The thing about creativity is that as soon as you start to create *anything*, take that first step, you become aware that you have no idea where you will be, or what you'll be holding when you emerge from that dark forest into the light" ("Ayo the Afronaut" 2018). It is this ability to imagine and sustain the impossible that drives the work of Afrofuturists and Indigenous futurists.

In literature, the genres most closely associated with this sort of writing are science fiction and speculative fiction. Although there is a vibrant scholarly debate about the differences between these two forms, we will use the term 'sf' to designate them both, and to denote, in the words of Darko Suvin, "a literary genre or verbal construct whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the *presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main device is an imaginative*

framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" (qtd. in Roberts 2006, 1). Suvin argues that such work exhibits some kind of "novum." As Adam Roberts explains, "[t]his novum might be something material, such as a spaceship, a time machine or a communications device; or it might be something conceptual, such as a new conception of gender or consciousness" (Roberts 2006, 1).

Simplistically speaking, while science fiction is often associated with a glorification or at least a focus on technology, science, and (space) exploration, speculative fiction is frequently set on earth, designed to explore "where we are now, what we are doing now, and to consider where some of our current behaviors and unattended problems might take us" (Butler 2000, 337). As various writers and critics have observed, mainstream sf displays resonances with social Darwinism and imperialism and has thus not been all too popular with Indigenous, African, or Afro-diasporic writers. The futures imagined in such writings are White, and the aliens often bear resemblances to White imaginations of people of color. Danika Medak-Saltzman speaks of "the procolonial, prosupremacy of (certain) humans, proextractive, procapitalist, and promasculinist elements of these narratives that present the natural world and (certain) peoples as needing to be tamed, exploited, civilized, removed, or vanquished" (2017, 140).

Caribbean Canadian novelist Nalo Hopkinson observes that Western sf has been characterized as "adventure stories in which white people use technology to overpower alien cultures. Small wonder that black writers haven't been drawn to it in large numbers – we've been on the receiving end of colonization, and for us it's not an entertaining adventure story" (1999, 590).

Nevertheless, Hopkinson has written innovative works of sf because the genre allows her "to imagine the impossible" (1999, 593). She points out that her work is concerned with the effects of slavery on the African diaspora, which "still continue," touching "the past, the present, and the future" (1999, 592). While acknowledging this past, Hopkinson observes, sf enables her to work with these effects in creative ways: "If black people can imagine our futures, imagine – among other things – cultures in which we aren't alienated, then we can begin to see our way clear to creating them" (1999, 593). Thus, there is not only an overlap between colonialism and mainstream sf, but also – more productively – between postcolonialism and the sf created by writers in a decolonial or postcolonial vein.

Afrofuturism and Afro-Diasporic SF

British-Ghanaian writer and theorist Kodwo Eshun's text "Further Considerations on Afrofuturism" ties together concerns of the African continent with the more Afro-diasporic themes of much Anglophone Afrofuturism. Placing his initial focus on the African continent, Eshun observes that Africa has become "the object of futurist projection" (2003, 291) in various disabling ways that seek "control through prediction" (2003, 289): On the one hand, a "futures industry" is saturating African markets with consumer products and images of happy diversity, "corporate utopias that make the future safe for industry." On the other hand, Africa is becoming the object of "predatory futures," dire predictions of famine and disease in studies created by NGOs and multinational corporations (Eshun 2003, 292). Eshun argues that both the urgency of commemorating those who suffered from enslavement and the fail-

ure of various African postcolonial utopian projects have created a "wariness" of the future in many Black artists. Thus, "[f]or contemporary African artists, understanding and intervening in the production and distribution of this dimension constitutes a chronopolitical act" (Eshun 2003, 292). He continues: "Afrofuturism, then, is concerned with the possibilities for intervention within the dimension of the predictive, the projected, the proleptic, the envisioned, the virtual, the anticipatory and the future conditional" (Eshun 2003, 293).

Mark Bould states that the term Afrofuturism is generally ascribed to Mark Dery, who coined it to describe "speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the context of 20th-century technoculture – and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future" (qtd. in Bould 2007, 182). As Alondra Nelson states,

> AfroFuturism looks across popular culture – jazz, hip-hop, and techno music; experimental film; graffiti art; new photography – to find models of expression that transform spaces of alienation into novel forms of creative potential. In the process it *reclaims theorizing about the future* (2000, 35).

While sf writing that puts Africa at the center of its focus and critically and creatively imagines alternative futures for African societies is experiencing a new surge in African literatures of various languages (see Rettová 2017), Eshun's description of Afrofuturist sf takes up themes associated with the Anglophone African diaspora. Building on African American sociologist and writer W. E. B. DuBois' 1903 concept of "double consciousness," which describes the experience of a split identity, of perceiving oneself not merely as a subject, but simultaneously as the object of a racist gaze, and of attempting to reconcile an "African" and an "American" identity, Eshun, like many other Black writers, posits alienation and estrangement as the central experiences negotiated in Black sf. This estrangement, finding oneself confronted with an alien environment and culture, is built into many sf stories from the start, but receives a decisive twist in the work of Afrodiasporic writers. Quoting from the work of Greg Tate, Eshun writes: "Afrodiasporic subjects live the estrangement and alienation that science fiction writers envision. Black existence and science fiction are one and the same" (2003, 291).

Turning this alienation into a livable future is the work of Afrodiasporic sf: Its "specificity lies in assembling conceptual approaches and countermemorial mediated practices in order to access triple consciousness, quadruple consciousness, previously inaccessible alienations" (Eshun 2003, 298). Slavery becomes addressed as apocalypse or alien abduction, as for Afrodiasporic writers, "[t]he alien encounters and interplanetary abductions people experienced as delusions in the Cold War present had already occurred in the past, for real" (Eshun 2003, 299). In this way, the work of writers like Octavia Butler, Nalo Hopkinson, or Samuel Delany makes visible the colonial histories that mainstream sf often obscures and begins envisioning the Black futures other writers have treated as an impossibility.

Kowdo Eshun's main field of inquiry into Afrofuturism, however, is not literature proper but Afrodiasporic electronic music. This is not surprising, given that in literary sf, African and Afrodiasporic science and technology are key to the message, but not really built into the medium and its sensory capacities itself. This is different for what Eshun calls the "sonic fiction" of Black music.

Adventures in Sonic Fiction: Burial and the Spaceape, "Spaceape" (2006)

In his 1998 book *More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction*, Eshun focuses on the Afrodiasporic musical legacy originating in Jamaican dub culture in the late 1960s. Abandoning the notion of the organic song for the entirely recycled and technologically mutated track, dub avatars like King Tubby stripped down original recordings to their bare backbone of drum and bass using newly arrived Japanese four-track tape machines. They then defamiliarized the rhythm grooves and added additional sound layers using delay, hall, reverb and other effects. The vocal tracks of reggae and other songs were likewise 'versioned,' morphed into multiple vocal traces haunting the new drum and bass pulse. The sonic science of dub was a major influence on the turntable techniques emerging from New York in the late 70s, and their transformation into digital hip hop sampladelia in the 1980s and 1990s. The synthetic principles of versioning directly informed Jamaican dancehall and sound system culture which, when travelling to the UK, diversified into the sonic cultures of hardcore, jungle, UK garage, twostep, dubstep and later transformations.

For Eshun, the sonic fiction of all these musics is instrumental in deconstructing the category of the human installed by the European Enlightenment (see ch. 7), by embracing an ontology of (extraterrestrial) alienation, mutation and assemblage. It is vital to stress that Afrofuturism is worlds apart from the proto-fascist ideology of Italian and other Eurocentric futurisms in this context. Instead of pursuing superhuman arrogations, Afrofuturism is, by way of contrast, informed by the foundational experience of never having been categorized as human in the first place, be it by the racist philosophies of the Enlightenment or the commodifying logic of Atlantic capitalism. Eshun notes that

> the idea of slavery as an alien abduction means that we've all been living in an alienation since the eighteenth century. The mutation of African male and female slaves in the eighteenth century into what became negro, and into an entire series of humans that were designed in America. That whole process, the key behind it all is that in America none of these humans were designated human. It's in the music that you get this sense that most African-Americans owe nothing to the status of the human. There is this sense of the human as being a really pointless and treacherous category. (1998, 192–93)

Afrofuturist musics therefore seek technological, de-subjectivized modes of creativity, forms of communication beyond communicative reason, and forms of agency which transcend, undermine, and, in its most radical forms, destroy the legacies of Empire dressed up in the humanistic rhetoric of the civilizing mission and paternalistic assimilation. A key to these goals is the implosion of the Cartesian dualism of body and mind underwriting Western philosophy. For Afrofuturists, "decolonizing the mind" of colonizers and the colonized alike, to use Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o phrase (1986, see also ch. 4), crucially works through an infection of the body. One of the key tropes in Afrofuturism, therefore, is the "virology" of Black musics.

The virology of Black musics has been theorized from a range of different angles. African American poet and critic LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka, for instance, speaks of the contagious "changing same" of Black music irresistibly working on the body (Jones 1967, 180–211). Ishmael Reed expanded on this in his 1972 novel *Mumbo Jumbo*, set in 1920s Harlem: In Reed's fiction, an aggressive virus called "Jes Grew"

that is disseminated through the sounds of select jazz and ragtime artists ("Jes Grew Carriers," or "J. G. C.") threatens the standardized control of mainstream culture. The virus is protected by the voodoo-practicing protagonists PaPa LaBas, Black Herman and their allies, and relentlessly fought by a White supremacist conspiracy called the Wallflower Order and their executive arm, the Knights Templar.

In *More Brilliant than the Sun*, Eshun extensively discusses a more recent example of Black music virology from the 1998 compilation *Interstellar Fugitives* (1998) by the Detroit second wave techno collective Underground Resistance (UR). The sleeve notes of the album unfold a gripping Afrofuturist tale in which Detroit becomes, in the words of Steve Goodman, "a vast rhythmachine, with mechanically pulsed affective waves rippling intensity across the urban skin, carrying sonic parasites to hijack your nervous system" (2010, 156). Like the jazz artists in Reed's New York of the 1920s, Detroit in the 1990s hosts carriers of viral force, "digital Ebola guerilla operatives with reinforced rhythm awareness capabilities." They spread the potent R1 gene "communicat[ing] through secret coded rhythm patterns based around the drum that is common in all human societies." Most dangerous are carriers of a mutation

> that was created during a period of time ranging from the 1400s to the late 1800s in the colonized areas throughout the world and especially in the Americas. The cousin which we will call z (for zero) to signify its complete erasure from history was the result of illicit genetic breeding experiments performed on enslaved human stock of the R1 gene. (Underground Resistance, 1998)

Drawing on elements of science fiction, genetics and Black revisionist history, Underground Resistance stage an epic battle, not unlike that in Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo*, between the forces of Babylon and the viral sounds of *Interstellar Fugitives*.

This selective trajectory of dub virology as analyzed by Kodwo Eshun in *More Brilliant than the Sun* and, more recently, by Steve Goodman (aka Kode9) in *Sonic Warfare* (2010, 155–62) is vital to better understand the track and lyrics we wish to briefly discuss in this chapter. It takes us from Black music virology in New York in the 1920s, Kingston in the 1970s and Detroit in the 1990s to the sonic fictions of postmillennial London.

"Spaceape" is the result of a collaboration between the Black British spoken word, sound and video artist Stephen Samuel Gordon aka The Spaceape, and dubstep artist William Emmanuel Bevan aka Burial. The track appeared in 2006 on Burial's critically acclaimed, self-titled debut album released on Steve Goodman's Hyperdub label.

On "Spaceape," The Spaceape drops a lyrical Afrofuturist manifesto in dread-style Jamaican patois that is processed into a warping, eerily mutated sonic flow, over the minimalist, unpolished dubstep pulse of Burial's composition, eclectically sampled from video games, films, YouTube clips and morphed into signature bass and sub-bass frequencies, syncopating hi-hats, war-of-the-world-style horns and glistening noise. It is vital that readers tune in and expose themselves to the "sensory language" of the recording rather than just follow the printed lyrics in this book to experience the full viral force of the track (available on YouTube and related sites: e. g. https://genius.com/Burial-spaceape-lyrics).

The sonic fiction of "Spaceape" versions Reed's "Jes Grew" virus and the interstellar scenario of genosomatic contagion projected by the Underground Resistance, however, with significant differences. The Spaceape's lyrics open thus:

victims themselves of a close encounter
desperate abductors, constructers become infected, vexed
by an alien virus, so alien, so viral
living spaceapes, creatures, covered, smothered in writhing tentacles
stimulating the audio nerve directly
you wanna come flex with me?

Let us first turn to the carriers of viral sonic infection intimated by the lyrics: the "living spaceapes," referenced both in the title of the track and in the persona of the performing poet.

It is vital to know, here, that the late Stephen Samuel Gordon did not conceive of his stage and studio avatar The Spaceape as hailing from outer space. Unlike other Afrofuturist poet-musicians like Sun Ra, who claimed his origins from Saturn, or Dr. Octagon from Jupiter, The Spaceape performed not as an extra-, but as an intra-terrestrial alien, claiming his origins from the depths of the Atlantic Ocean – hence "creatures, covered, smothered in writhing tentacles." Without explicitly referring to Atlantic slavery and the Middle Passage (the passage in the triangular trade on which millions of Africans were forcefully transported to the Americas, see also ch. 9), he explained in an interview that "spaceapes" are indeed the resurrected African dead dumped overboard the Atlantic slave ships: "That's the Space Ape innit, really. That's this thing – the alien beneath the sea, it comes up, it's a hostile alien. [...] The Space Ape is part of the whole tribe left adrift, man. That's where it is. That's where it's coming from" (The Spaceape in Van Veen 2015, 99).

As post-human zombies reanimated from Black Atlantic death, spaceapes return to haunt the living, carrying the infectious, alien virus engineered by dub technology which, against all odds, conquered the popular music planet from Kingston, Jamaica. In the words of The Spaceape's long-time collaborator Steve Goodman (aka Kode9):

> Like Reed's jes grew, the dub virus [...] operates on the extended timescale of a postcolonial clash of civilizations, in which the ghosts of slavery and forced migration return to haunt the European spirit. The colonized of the empire strike back in stealth mode through virosonic infiltration. (2010, 160)

However, we would like to propose that the lyrics of "Spaceape" draw a more nuanced and complex scenario than Goodman's rhetoric (paraphrasing music critic Ian Penman) of a "clash of civilizations" and the "empire strik[ing] back" (see ch. 16) would suggest. "Spaceape" significantly differs from the Manichean battles of a Black underground vs. a White supremacist order unfolding in the fictions of *Mumbo Jumbo* or *Interstellar Fugitives*.

The very first lyrical phrasing of "Spaceape" complicates the stories and histories of Black Atlantic victimization. "Desperate abductors," in The Spaceape's sonic fiction, are "victims themselves of a close encounter." Within the sonic fiction of the Black Atlantic origins of The Spaceape, "abductors" literally references White slavers (possibly also their African collaborators), and their intimate entanglements in the "close encounters" of enslavement, the Middle Passage, and plantation slavery. The profound argument, here, is that the dehumanization of the Atlantic slave trade worked both ways – by dehumanizing African slaves, the slavers thoroughly dehumanized themselves. Chattel slavery, as the original sin of European Enlightened humanism, thoroughly hollows out the idea of the human and turns it into a "really pointless and treacherous category" for all sides.

This argument can be expanded upon. As we have variably argued in the introduction to this volume as well as in the section on the Black Atlantic in ch. 9, it has been persuasively shown by Black Atlantic critics like C. L.R James, Paul Gilroy, Ian Baucom and others that the slave ship was in many ways the nucleus, and the Caribbean slave plantation the laboratory, of the modern world system as we know it. They brought forth the invention and hierarchical ordering of races, the idea of disenfranchised labor and standardized mass production, monoculture, the relentless commodification of man and nature, mass surveillance; they are the foundations of corporate capitalism and (neo)liberal ideology alike. In our interpretation, "victims themselves" takes on this encompassing sense, too: The entire planet has become victim "of a close encounter," as "desperate abductors" were equally the "constructors" of the capitalist world system that has grown from Atlantic slavery.

The "alien virus, so alien, so viral" carried by spaceapes challenges this world system by deploying a new, technologically enhanced "sensory language" "stimulating the audio nerve directly." The second verse continues:

hallucinating senses individually, insidiously
are in any combination, rhythmically
shifting gears, focus upon intensity
wait, big people a talk nobody try fuck with I-man clarity
mind starts slippin to familiar tracks
bending warping, interfering with the facts
sensory language leaves us with no habit for lying
we are hostile aliens, immune from dying

As the resurrected undead of Atlantic slavery, themselves "immune from dying" a watery death, spaceapes are agents of the repressed colonial origins of capitalist modernity. Imbued with "memories of the future" (Kode9 and Spaceape 2007), they see through, with "I-man clarity," the self-deceiving narratives of racial discrimination, through the liberal defenses of inequality and exploitation, through the grand narratives of Empire "from Manifest Destiny to Terra Nullius to Orientalism" (Klein 2016, 12) invariably justifying the sacrifice of humans and nature for capital. For The Spaceape, the rational discourse of the Enlightenment is fundamentally corrupted by the original death of Atlantic slavery and other deaths following in its wake, so that not only the category of the human, but rational language itself has turned into a "pointless and treacherous category."

The solution to this impasse is the development of an alien, viral "sensory language" which undercuts all the "lies," dressed as "facts" of "big people a talk." The mutated, morphed, de-humanized and de-subjectivized sensory language of dub virology "leaves us with no habit for lying," as it communicates directly to the nervous system of the body, "rhythmically shifting gears, focus upon intensity […] bending warping, interfering with the facts" of Empire (see ch. 16). The collaborative sonic fiction of Burial and The Spaceape thus opens up new ways of communication, new ways of social relation and ultimately envisages new sonic communities to come: viral communities beyond Empire in which "chaotic cultural dissemination in more and more elaborate circuits […] dispatched in provisional and unfinished forms […] is the regulative norm" (Gilroy 2001, 252; see also Eckstein 2015). The last quotation is from Paul Gilroy's book *Against Race*, in which he otherwise expresses sincere reservations against the de-subjectivizing thrust of electronic, post-Reggae Black musics. "The citation and simulation of [older Black Atlantic

vernacular] cultures" (such as in dub versioning or hip hop sampling), he remarks, "do not reproduce their extensive ethical investment in the face-to-face, body-to-body, real-time interaction," which is crucial for the antiphonic ethics of Black music, but lead instead to a "regression of performance" (Gilroy 2001, 251–52). We do share some of Gilroy's analogue nostalgia. And yet: we resonate with The Spaceape's alien viral assault, vexed audio nerves trembling, trapped in our own histories of desperate abductors, constructers, but ready to come flex.

Indigenous Futurism and Indigenous SF

Let us turn from the sonic fiction of the African diaspora to intimations of the future in First Nation discourses in the Americas. Indigenous studies and postcolonial studies share a concern with decolonization, but also a history of mutual distrust or neglect. Summarizing the academic history of American Indian studies, Jodi Byrd observes that the discipline arose simultaneously with, but independently of, postcolonial studies as a critique of existing settler states and an intervention into "the settler narratives of multicultural liberal democracy that refuse to acknowledge that colonialism, genocide, and theft of lands, bodies, and cultures have defined the rise of new world nation-states and empires" (2011, xxxi). Despite the common chronology of Indigenous and postcolonial studies, Byrd writes that "it is still notable how little the two fields have been in conversation" (2011, xxxii). Our inclusion here of Indigenous futurisms is not meant to gloss over the important differences (see Byrd 2011, xxiii–xxxiv) or to appropriate Indigenous studies for the 'postcolonial.' Rather, it is meant as a contribution to the attempt to bring both fields into a conversation that cautiously opens up joint perspectives on decolonizing the future.

In settler colonial contexts, Indigenous peoples have faced especially hazardous chronopolitics leveled at them by the state. While settler colonial states employed a large number of strategies to ensure that Indigenous descent lines were broken and Indigenous cultures were destroyed, settler states like the US or Australia nevertheless hinged – and hinge – the legal and official recognition of Indigenous personhood or Indigenous rights on Indigenous proof of 'racial' authenticity or the maintenance of cultural continuity and continuous inhabitance over time. As Russell West-Pavlov writes about the *Mabo* cases in Australia (see ch. 13):

> Paradoxically the land rights legislation demanded as proof of ownership the very sorts of continuity which had been virtually obliterated in the long two-hundred year war of attrition against Indigenous culture and the confiscation of Indigenous territory upon which it was based. (2012, 170)

This insistence of proof of continuous Indigenous land use (which had been constantly interrupted by settlers) forced Indigenous peoples into lives frozen in time and prescribed for them a lifestyle White settlers defined as traditional: "Hegemonic European culture demanded, in a post-traditional epoch, as fossilized historical artefact or as legal evidence, the very authenticity whose demise it had actively brought about" (West-Pavlov 2012, 171).

In the US, in addition, the state declared that recognition as Native American necessitates proof of the infamous "blood quantum." This requires Native Americans to provide the settler state with evidence that they possess a certain percentage

of "Indigenous blood," measured by their descent from people categorized as "Native American" by the state at some fixed point in the past. While some Native nations have included this colonial requirement into their own tribal membership criteria for their own (decolonial) reasons, most Indigenous scholars have pointed out that this means that each generation of Native Americans will have proof of less and less Indigenous "blood quantum." Thus, although Native Americans have a score of creative, dynamic membership criteria beyond this requirement invented by the settler state, the blood quantum policy legally effects a form of genocide and prevents Indigenous people from applying Indigenous definitions of belonging when requesting status and recognition from the settler state (see, for example, Medak-Saltzman 2017, 144; Rifkin 2017, 6; for the Hawai'ian context, Kauanui 2008). Movements of Indigenous resurgence have thus pointed out that concentrating on recognition by the settler state is futile and self-defeating, an act that helps to prevent Indigenous futures.

In contrast to this freezing of Indigenous people into the past by the settler state, many Indigenous scholars and writers argue that Indigenous cultures have always developed theories and practices of the future (see Medak-Saltzman 2017, 139). Grace Dillon (Anishinaabe) observes that Indigenous models of "sustainable forms of medicine, agriculture, architecture, and art" (2012, 7) not only challenge Western conceptions of science, but are in themselves active interventions into the future. Building on Dillon's work, Kristina Baudemann emphasizes Anishinaabe writer and theorist Gerald Vizenor's concept of survivance, a creative disruption of colonial chronology and an insistence on Indigenous presence which, in Indigenous futurist art, "reveals the artistic authority over the material and inscribes futurity into the text or painting" (Baudemann 2016, 127). Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) explains how her thinking and acting is always shaped by the consideration of several generations:

> The idea of my arms embracing my grandchildren, and their arms embracing their grandchildren is communicated in the Nishnaabeg word *kobade*. According to elder Edna Manitowabi, kobade is a word we use to refer to our great-grandparents and our great-grandchildren. It means a link in a chain – a link in the chain between generations, between nations, between states of being, between individuals. (2017, 8)

In her study of Indigenous futurist artists, Baudemann connects Indigenous futurism with other postcolonial futurist movements:

> Indigenous futurisms on the one hand re-define sf and on the other hand open up North American Indigenous literatures for speculative fiction. Furthermore, these stories add to a global movement of marginalized and post-colonialized peoples, most notably in Afrofuturism, whose stories of alternate worlds and time travel, and whose perception of the future as a whole, cannot find expression in the plots of classic sf. (2016, 126)

As Indigenous writers and critics observe, Indigenous people have often found themselves at the wrong end of mainstream sf stories – and historical realities – of exploration and apocalypse (Medak-Saltzman 2017, 140). Thus Grace Dillon writes:

> It might go without saying that all forms of Indigenous futurisms are narratives of *biskaabiiyang*, an Anishinaabemowin word connoting the process of "returning to ourselves," which involves discovering how personally one is affected by colonization, discarding the emotional and psychological baggage carried from its impact, and recovering ancestral traditions

in order to adapt in our post-Native Apocalypse world. This process is often called "decolonization," and as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Maori) explains, it requires changing rather than imitating Eurowestern concepts." (2012, 10; see also Baudemann 2016, 127)

Our second close reading explores an Indigenous vision of future decolonization and of the ways in which Black and Indigenous struggles for decolonization may connect.

Dreams of the Future: Cherie Dimaline, *The Marrow Thieves* (2017)

In her recent dystopian young adult novel *The Marrow Thieves*, Métis writer Cherie Dimaline imagines a post-apocalyptic future. Set in the second half of the twenty-first century in what used to be Canada, the novel describes a world in which settler colonialism, coupled with capitalist exploitation, has led to global ecological destruction, political upheaval, and the death of millions of the world's inhabitants. This story is told to the protagonist Frenchie, a young Métis boy who has lost his family and is on the run, by Miigwans, an Anishinaabe man who cares for a group of young Indigenous fugitives who stem from various Indigenous nations and who have become Frenchie's "patchwork family" (150).

In the chapter "Story: Part One," Miigwans relates the story of North American colonialism and Indigenous resistance and loss. Among the atrocities Miig highlights is the creation of residential schools, to which Indigenous children were forcibly removed in the 19th and 20th centuries in an attempt to assimilate them to Western culture and separate them from their own language, communities, and history. This removal, as well as the often abusive treatment the children received at the hands of the church- and government-run institutions, still reverberates as a deeply felt trauma through many Indigenous families and communities in Canada today and has historical parallels in other settler colonies, such as the US or Australia. In Miig's words, "We suffered there. We almost lost our languages. Many lost their innocence, their laughter, their lives" (24). Miig takes the story beyond the catastrophic destruction of displacement and forced schooling to a time (perhaps the time of the novel's publication) of Indigenous regrouping, rebuilding, and resurgence. This time, however, is followed by global pollution, water wars, earthquakes, the melting of ice in the north, the sinking of large parts of the land into the sea, and widespread human dislocation and death. Indigenous people, in this story, lose their land a second time, this time not only via dispossession, but because of an ecological catastrophe brought on by the settlers.

It is in "Story: Part Two," however, that the narrative moves beyond this analysis of settler colonialism into a new scenario of oppression and resistance. In North America, the White survivors of ecological catastrophe refuse to bring about systemic change and, as a consequence, become sicker and more depleted. Like the virus that attacks White people in some Afrofuturist narratives, a special form of sickness is envisioned as the settler's future in Dimaline's work. White people – settlers – lose the ability to dream, which causes severe mental illness and political upheaval among them. In order to restore the capacity to dream, White scientists develop a system in which they suck the DNA out of the bone marrow of Indigenous

people, since Indigenous people have retained the ability to dream. Building detention centers/killing stations after the model of the old residential schools, White society abducts Indigenous people, uses them for forced labor, and brutally extracts their bone marrow, causing them to die agonizing deaths. All protagonists in the book have lost loved ones and family members as they are driven to flee into the northern woods, hiding from so-called Recruiters coming to remove them to the schools.

This speculative plot is striking in a number of ways. In analyses of the history of settler colonialism in North America, scholars have argued that there are three main entangled systemic positions: that of the settler occupying the land by removing and destroying the Native, that of the slave who is given no right to possess land or self, functions as commodity, and is stripped of human status, and that of the Native who is being eliminated because he/she stands between the settler and access to the land (see Tuck and Yang 2012, 1; 7). Racialization for African and Indigenous people in North America thus functioned along opposing, but equally brutal, lines:

> Black people's enslavement produced an inclusive taxonomy that automatically enslaved the offspring of a slave and any other parent. In the wake of slavery, this taxonomy became fully racialized in the "one-drop rule," whereby any amount of African ancestry, no matter how remote, and regardless of phenotypical appearance, makes a person Black. For Indians, in stark contrast, non-Indian ancestry compromised their indigeneity, producing "half-breeds," a regime that persists in the form of blood quantum regulations. As opposed to enslaved people, whose reproduction augmented their owners' wealth, Indigenous people obstructed settlers' access to land, so their increase was counterproductive. In this way, the restrictive racial classification of Indians straightforwardly furthered the logic of elimination. (Wolfe 2006, 388)

According to this analysis, these different positions within the colonial system at times also led to tensions between African American and Indigenous liberation struggles, since former slaves who fought for the right to hold land and become included into the state without being racialized were, in the view of many Indigenous people, becoming complicitous with the settler state, thereby contributing to the continuing occupation of Indigenous land. Dimaline's story, however, blurs these lines between Indigenous and Black people in the settler triad: like former slaves, Indigenous people are now a "commodity" exploited for their bodies, and they are captured and transported to the schools as "cargo," a term reminiscent of the slave trade (Dimaline 2017, 102). Frenchie's father reminds him that White people "don't think of us as humans" (203). As commodities that are denied human status, Indigenous people flee north, reminiscent of African American slaves fleeing from the US South to the Northern states or Canada (6). Arguably, Dimaline's text itself retains an implicit logic of racialization, since Indigenous people's capacity to dream is presented as being lodged in their DNA. However, it is this very mark of physical difference that leads to their near-destruction at the hands of Whites, and the narrative also suggests that these dreams can travel between generations in other ways when Miig states that those who are killed die in the hope that "we left enough dreams behind for the next generation to stumble across" (90).

Dimaline's shuffling of the positionalities in the settler-slave-Native structure produces a story that threatens Indigenous people with extinction, but it also results in their building of new coalitions with people of color and, cautiously, White supporters: Frenchie and his group form an alliance with two Black women from Guyana, who used their jobs in White northern hospitals to save and transport Indige-

nous patients to safety "through a series of friends and allies" reminiscent of the Underground Railroad (226). The group also works with a White informant, Father Clarence, who provides them with vital information. It is the system, not White people as such, that needs to be destroyed (54), and Indigenous people, too, can betray others to this system. Among the Indigenous members of the group, who come from various Indigenous nations, there are no strictly genetic membership criteria beyond the intrinsically racialized capacity to dream. Rather, belonging is created via earning each other's trust, living together, retaining Indigenous cultures, passing on and sharing knowledge, and attempting to find the "key" that can destroy the system. The young adults in the novel are given a sustaining day-to-day education by their elders that stands in stark contrast to what awaits them in the White schools. The dehumanization of Indigenous people is, moreover, countered with an awareness of the limitations of the category 'human' itself, as trees, water, animals, and dead ancestors and loved ones meaningfully interact with the protagonists and become connected to their sense of personhood.

Fleeing north, however, is not enough to destroy the existing structures, and Frenchie becomes part of a group that remains to set up resistance. It becomes clear that fighting commodification and racialization is not the ultimate goal of this resistance, but only the first step to decolonization, which must ultimately mean a return to one's ancestral land in order to heal it and be healed by it (Dimaline 2017, 193). At first, the "key" to this struggle seems to be the elder Minerva, an old woman who burns down an entire school through song when her captors try to extract her bone marrow. Minerva is a symbol of cultural survival, since she has retained many traditional stories and practices and, most importantly, her Indigenous language. Calling on "her blood memory, her teachings, her ancestors," she pulls the dreams of all those who lived before her into her song, sung in "words in the language that the conductor couldn't process, […] words the wires couldn't transfer" (172). Language and dreams are thus connected to the Indigenous past and the continuous line of ancestors, and language also opens up the future, as in Miig's hope that when one dies, one leaves enough dreams behind for the next generation. When Minerva is murdered, however, the group needs to find a new "key." It is only at the very end of the story that they discover him. Unexpectedly, he is not a traditional elder, but a "half-breed" named Isaac, a gay man, a poet who "dreams in Cree," who speaks the language both in its very old and very new forms, who creates with words, and who turns out to be Miigwans' long-lost husband (101, 227–28).

Dimaline has pointed out that the way in which she imagines the survival and regrouping of her Indigenous protagonists is meant to envision Indigenous futurity and creative cultural resurgence for young Indigenous readers. Setting her story in the future, however, also carries a message for settlers:

> I wanted to put aside, even for a moment, that sense of defensiveness or the tendency to shut down that can come with talking about a difficult history – for example, attempted genocide – so there is a real learning or personal emotional involvement that can happen. I wanted people to come away saying, 'I would never let that happen,' or, more correctly, 'I would never let that happen again.' ("How Cherie Dimaline" 2018)

Thus, the temporality of the novel facilitates decolonization both for Indigenous and for settler positionalities.

As Dillon, Medak-Saltzman, Baudemann and others have pointed out, decolonization thus entails centering Indigenous experiences of the future and grounding

one's stories in Indigenous cultural traditions and epistemologies. In the words of Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee), Indigenous sf writers explore questions such as,

> What would fantasy fiction look like with women, Indigenous people, queer folks, and other stereotyped or marginalized communities at the centre rather than the margins? Do our imagined secondary worlds have to look to Europe and its patriarchal and colonial legacies for inspiration, or can we look to the deep roots of *this* land and the cultures, perspectives, lineages, genders, and histories embedded here? (Heath Justice 2018)

In envisioning futures that delegitimize and decolonize the settler state, Indigenous writers thus also at times delink from European conceptions of temporality. Recently, critic Mark Rifkin has suggested that simply including Indigenous people into Western notions of time and presence cannot be enough to bring about decolonization, since these temporal frames are particular to European traditions and work to sustain the settler state: "an emphasis on coevalness tends to bracket the ways that the idea of a shared present is not a neutral designation but is, instead, defined by settler institutions, interests, and imperatives" (2017, viii). Rifkin thus questions the notion of an "inherently shared time" between settlers and Indigenous peoples (viii). Suggesting a frame of temporal orientation that characterizes various Native communities, Rifkin writes:

> Native peoples remain oriented in relation to collective experiences of peoplehood, to particular territories (whether or not such places are legally recognized as reservations or given official trust status), to the ongoing histories of their inhabitance in those spaces, and to histories of displacement from them. Such orientations open up 'different worlds' than those at play in dominant settler orderings, articulations, and reckonings of time. (2017, 3)

Similar to West-Pavlov, Rifkin asserts that "Indigenous temporalities may conflict with, or simply be heterogeneous to, settler time" (2017, 16) and argues:

> Thinking in terms of a plurality of processes of becoming that interact with each other in complex ways shifts the discussion of temporality from an insistence on the sharedness of *now* (as well as implicitly of *then* and *will be*) toward a consideration of what constitutes a temporal formation and how such formations might engage with and alter each other without becoming – or being plotted on – a singular timeline. (2017, 17–8)

In *The Marrow Thieves*, it is Minerva's language, but also the way she can look into the future and the way she summons a long timeline of dreams and ancestors, that cannot be "processed" or "conducted" by the settlers' machine. Her language, her timeline, and her science are pitted against settler translation, history, and technology as "The wires sparked, the probes malfunctioned" and the settler "system failed" (Dimaline 2017, 173). In this way, Indigenous "temporal sovereignty" has been an essential part of Indigenous resurgence and decolonization.

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18 *Interlude:* Writing Back

"The Empire Writes Back" was a phrase originally used by Salman Rushdie in a newspaper article published in *The Times* in 1982 as a pun on the movie *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin adopted the phrase "writing back" from Rushdie and defined it as postcolonial writers engaging in the power of imperial discourse, not by writing 'for' the center but 'against' the assumptions of the center to a prior claim to legitimacy and power. In *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* (1989), the three authors prescribe the re-appropriation of discourse and history through the rewriting of canonical texts of English literature to the concept of 'writing back.' They regard it as a field that is ironic, satirical, subversive and crucially concerned with undercutting, revising, or envisioning alternatives to reductive representations in the colonial mode.

Writing in the postcolonial context is symbolic for authority and liberation from the dominant European culture, because it implies having a voice, taking control of a narrative, its interpretation and its communication. In the classic concept of 'writing back,' postcolonial writers rewrite canonical texts, questioning and undermining their social, political, historical, cultural, or ideological assumptions and writing themselves into the canon. The main objective is transformation by disrupting discursive features of history that are seen as one and central (European, Western), demonstrating the limitations of this perspective and developing a pluralistic view on history through the revelation of new cultural horizons. Therefore, what is also known as "canonical counter-discourse" (Terdiman 1985) is a form of resistance through appropriation and transformation in contradiction to Eurocentric literature. Authors do not simply respond to canonical texts but attempt to re-write them in order to expose their ignorant cultural assumptions, subvert the values and political assumptions of their original form and return, in the words of Bill Ashcroft, the colonial "'gaze' of the imperial text" (2001, 34).

As Ashcroft observes, such "'canonical counter-discourses' are not 'histories' but they show the process of historical re-visioning at work" (2001, 102). Writers who come from formerly colonized countries write in colonial languages, adapt and change them, demonstrating the counter-discursive potential of the tools appropriated from the colonizers and the fulfilment of their own subversive needs. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611) has proven to be one of the most fruitful and variable texts to be used. Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête: d'après 'La Tempête' de Shakespeare – Adaptation pour une théâtre nègre* (1969) and George Lamming's discussion of the play from the point of view of Caliban in *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960) show that engaging and appropriating the imperial language can be a powerful strategy of subversion. With Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), 'writing back' to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), and Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), which is a response to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) (see ch. 15), the representation and view of the Other is reversed, thus questioning and reassigning the constructed imperial binary of 'good' and 'evil,' restructuring European 'realities' in post-colonial terms and questioning the philosophical assumptions which shape what is defined as the 'center' and the 'periphery.'

In traditional postcolonial theory, postcolonial literatures are characterized with an inevitable tendency towards the subversion of the West. The dominant notion

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that postcolonial literature 'writes back' to the Western metropolis has been criticized by authors and scholars from the global South, since it is questionable to suggest that Anglophone Literatures are inevitably characterized by a postcolonial rewriting of Western master texts (Mwangi 2009, 2). In their opinion, this concept should be overthrown because it reduces postcolonial writers to 'writing back to the center' and reinforces and reinstates the West in being the main 'center.'

Furthermore, it is problematic to present literatures from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean etc. as dominantly an anti-art in relation to European literature, because on the one hand, it creates the notion of this literature being primarily hostile, reactive and resentful. On the other hand, it reinforces the idea that postcolonial literatures are exclusively concerned with colonial history and its political consequences. Literatures from the global South demand to be viewed as positive self-affirmations that are not blind to internal causes of problems within their own societies (Mwangi 2009, 2). They do not want to be perceived as only writing back to the Western metropolis, but also as writing back to themselves in order to address their own issues. In this perspective, postcolonial literatures have proliferated into a plethora of topics and genres, and have thus inscribed themselves into the corpora of an emergent 'world literature' (see ch. 3). 'Writing back' can thus only be seen as one aspect of postcolonial literatures.

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19 Coda: Futures of the Postcolonial

In 1999, leading postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak published a book titled *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. The obvious allusion to the philosophical legacy of the European Enlightenment (see ch. 7) – especially to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Critique of Pure Reason* – appear to signal Spivak's ambition to continue, complement and probably rectify that tradition by introducing a further variant of 'reason' that, unlike Kant's transcendental universals, is clearly situated in time and space, namely in the postcolonial. Following this paratextual cue, any reader has good reason to expect from Spivak's book a deconstruction of the Eurocentrism that underpins Enlightenment universalism through the application of postcolonial critique; and, to be sure, to some extent this is what Spivak offers: postcolonial reason operating as critique.

More centrally, however, the book formulates a critique *of* postcolonialism and culminates in a full dismissal of the paradigms that inform the academic practice of postcolonial studies at least in the US and Britain. In fact, Spivak had submitted the manuscript to her publisher with the programmatic title, *Don't Call Me Postcolonial!*, and "had to be restrained from conferring that title on her work" (Moore 2011, 341 Fn 47). More recently, Spivak has specified her reasons for disowning postcolonialism by locating it in the past and asserting its irrelevance for the present and future: "I have no longer a postcolonial perspective, I think postcolonial is the day before yesterday" (2013, 54).

Postcolonial Critiques of the Postcolonial

Radical and brusque as this rejection may appear at first, a second glance reveals that there is nothing specifically new about Spivak's gesture. To the contrary, we may take this statement from a canonized key figure of postcolonial studies as symptomatic for the tendency in the field to continuously question its own legitimacy, relevance and future: 'symptomatic' because Spivak's disclaimer is far from unique but rather a routine gesture in a field whose practitioners, as Sangeeta Ray wryly comments, appear to "enjoy self-flagellation" so much that "to think of postcolonial studies is to think in terms of crisis, death and futurity" (2017, 195).

Crisis, death *and* futurity form a strange triad indeed: The future of the discipline appears to hinge on its precarious and moribund condition. As we would like to discuss in this short postscript, the constant reflection of the discipline's shortcomings and inadequacies as well as the prognostication of its imminent obsolescence and demise have been inextricable ingredients of postcolonial discourses – and, paradoxically, a prerequisite for the constant self-renewal (and hence the future) of postcolonialism. To be sure, this postcolonial penchant for self-interrogation is not at all restricted to the second decade of the 21st century, in which the paradigms of the postcolonial have been "increasingly displaced by invocations of the 'global' and 'world'" (Bhagat-Kennedy 2018, 336), where the preoccupation with 'postcolonial writing' tends to give way to the study of 'world literature' (see ch. 2), and where notions of 'planetarity' appear to supersede the critique of neo-colonial glo-

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balization. "Whither postcolonialism in an increasingly fragmented and transnationally configured, globalized world?" asks Graham Huggan (2013, 20), but the question has been a leitmotif of the field more or less since its very inception: From the formal beginnings of postcolonial studies in Western academia, "[b]oth the *post* in *postcolonial* and the persistence of the *colonial* in helping us understand the past or the contemporary dynamics of our world have been debated at great (and, some would argue, unnecessary) length" (Loomba et al. 2005, 2).

We would like to briefly sketch some of the more important strands of self-critique that have accompanied (and propelled) postcolonial theory and practice from its inception as an academic field in the 1980s. Early on, Marxist theorists like Benita Parry, Timothy Brennan or Aijaz Ahmad have severely interrogated the perceived culturalism of a dominant current in postcolonial studies in the wake of Edward Said's *Orientalism*. From this angle, 'mainstream' postcolonial criticism appeared problematic in its dismissal of "Marxism as foundational, indifferent to culture as well as to non-European cultures, and wedded to metanarratives" (Parry 2012, 342). In return, Marxist critics took postcolonial theory to task for its alleged tendency to render "concrete and material problems of the everyday world" as "problems of subjectivity and epistemology":

> While capital in its motions continues to structure the world, refusing it foundational status renders impossible the cognitive mapping that must be the point of departure for any practice of resistance and leaves such mapping as there is in the domain of those who manage the capitalist world economy. (Dirlik 1994, 356)

As a consequence, critics in this line of thought urge a rigorous re-centering of the field around the critique of global capitalism in order to safeguard postcolonial theory from unwitting complicity with the forces of neoliberalism. Due to their lack of attention to the concrete material reality of globalization, but especially to the highly flexible, syncretic and differential structures and dynamics of contemporary capitalism,

> postcolonial critics, who advocate a politics of difference, fluidity, and hybridity in order to challenge the binaries and essentialism of modern sovereignty have been outflanked by the strategies of power. Power has evacuated the bastion they are attacking and has circled around to their rear to join them in the assault in the name of difference. (Hardt and Negri 2000, 138)

If through a Marxist lens, postcolonialism runs the risk of involuntarily playing into the hand of capitalism, a second line of critique has consistently pointed out that the postcolonial mainstream cannot overcome the very Eurocentrism it purports to combat. After all, postcolonial theory relies heavily on Western theories and schools of thought (Marxism prominent among them) but has hardly ever drawn on 'Indigenous' epistemologies.

Within the post-structuralist framework that became so crucially important for postcolonial theories from the mid-1980s onwards, non-Western colonized cultures and knowledge systems could only be theorized as "historically muted subjects" (Spivak 1988, 295) that colonial domination had rendered incapable of speaking (for) themselves. Non-Western cultural formations were hence not accessible to dialogic engagement. Instead, since colonized knowledge systems were deemed as effectively erased by the epistemic violence (see ch. 14) of colonialism, the task of the postcolonial scholar could consist only in "tracing the itinerary of the silencing" (Spivak 1988, 308).

For many Indigenous populations around the globe, this postcolonial line of thought has appeared highly questionable for two main reasons: First, it tends to overestimate the impact that European colonization from the 1500s onwards allegedly has had on the colonized to the point of complete obliteration and effacement. The resilience, resistance and persistence of Indigenous populations all around the post/colonial world is thus denied and disappears from view, paradoxically leading to postcolonial theory inflicting a new form of victimization on those very communities on whose behalf it aims to formulate itself. Secondly, therefore, postcolonial theory unwittingly reproduces the colonialist ideology that places Indigenous cultures in the past and denies their persistence of alternative cultural practices, forms of knowledge production, and ways of world-making (see Cooppan 2000, 7–9; Byrd and Rothberg 2011, 2). A further self-defeating consequence of postcolonialism's residual reliance of Eurocentrism is the relatively narrow temporal scope that limits the field to the past 500 years, that is, the period of Europe's global hegemony. Due to this historical restriction, postcolonialism effectively reproduces "the attitude of modernity: It [...] ignores the premodern and defines the modern attitude largely as a European event" (Mishra and Hodge 2005, 376).

Last but not least, more recently the question of the imminent collapse of the 'natural' environment on a planetary scale has led postcolonial critics to give voice to yet another dismissal of the postcolonial as useless for the analysis of and intervention into the 'anthropocene' and its impacts: Exemplarily, Dipesh Chakrabarty asserts that "climate change challenges [...] the analytic strategies that postcolonial and postimperial historians have deployed in the last two decades in response to the postwar scenario of decolonization and globalization" (2009, 198).

Under conditions of global warming, the postcolonial preoccupation with (colonial) difference and the assumption of multiple ways of being modern appears inadequate and has to be abandoned, as Chakrabarty suggests, in favor of a new universalism: "Climate change poses for us a question of a human collectivity, an us, pointing to a figure of a universal [...] that arises from a shared sense of a catastrophe" (2009, 222). Situated theory, under these conditions, can no longer derive from the insistence on historical specificity and difference so characteristic for postcolonial studies; it will rather have to engage in the new universalism of species thinking and deep history as it situates itself in the totality of the web of life.

While Chakrabarty thus disclaims the viability of postcolonialism for the critical engagement with the ecological crisis, other critics retort that he clearly "overestimates the degree to which anthropogenic global warming marks a historical break" (During 2012, 331) and that his emphasis on the history-transcendent impact of climate change would indeed obscure the degree to which that event is an anthropogenic catastrophe derived from a long chain of human decisions and their implementations. Instead of abandoning postcolonial studies, therefore, critics should in that vein attempt

> to render the work of the humanities at large, and postcolonial studies in particular, a force of nature: one indeed capable of attending, simultaneously, to the shorelines, littorals, and border-zones of recorded history and, in so doing, to the crises and dangers affecting the planet's continents and coastlines. (Baucom 2012, 18–19)

Futures of the Postcolonial

Widely discrepant as these various critiques may appear, they definitely hold in common the charge that postcolonialism systematically misses the point, whether this point be global capitalism, the marginalization of the Indigenous, the relevance of pre-colonial and pre-modern realities, or the ongoing destruction of the environment. However harsh these charges, self-critiques and even obituaries may sound, they have enabled postcolonial studies to constantly reinvent itself precisely by virtue of its readiness to question its own premises and practices. Ironically, the recurrent announcements of postcolonialism's demise have so far invariably helped it to reshape, update and revitalize itself.

Ania Loomba concludes the revised third edition (2015) of *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, her by now classic introduction to postcolonial theory (first published in 1998), with a chapter titled "The Future of Postcolonial Studies." In this newly added conclusion she identifies "some new directions postcolonial studies has either taken, or must take" in order to remain open to the future. Loomba highlights four distinct areas that by and large correspond to the ones we have enumerated above:

> the environment; the history and present of indigenous peoples and societies; premodern histories and cultures; and the ongoing colonisation of territories, labour and peoples by global capitalism. All of these demand fresh thinking about colonial history, the shape of freedom, racial hierarchies, gender dynamics, and community. (Loomba 2015, 264)

This assessment is underwritten by the assumption that the future of postcolonialism is dependent on its openness and capacity to address those burning issues of species-wide concern that literary critic Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, in a different context, has called "world themes" (2008, 138). On this count, postcolonial theory and practice will have a future only when they manage to engage with the "world themes" of ecological and economic justice, multiple modes of democracy and sovereignty including Indigenous ones, and the "enlargement of the time frame of our self-understanding" (Baucom 2012, 18) by way of a rigorous rethinking and pluralization of global modernities.

Many of the major contributions to postcolonial studies in the past five to ten years have in fact focused on either of these four areas. Landmark works like Upamanyu Mukherjee's *Postcolonial Environments* (2010), Vivek Chibber's *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (2013), or Jodi Byrd's *Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (2009) all produce powerful contributions, each from a postcolonial angle, to the debates on the anthropocene (Mukherjee), global capitalism (Chibber), or the persistence of Indigenous modes of world-making (Byrd). Thereby they exemplarily buttress Loomba's claim that postcolonial studies has already begun to take "new directions."

We decidedly agree with the postulate that it is these directions that a future postcolonial theory and practice must take, but we are equally convinced that the reverse is just as true: Just as postcolonialism must address "world themes" if it wants to have a future, by the same token "world themes" can only be addressed from a perspective that emphatically involves the postcolonial. Therefore, however important such contributions as Mukherjee's, Chibber's or Byrd's may be, the future of postcolonial studies may not only lie in the genuinely postcolonial analysis of globally pressing problems but perhaps just as much in what we might call the postcolonial infiltration (or less militantly put, the inspiration) of critical theory as such.

In this perspective, the postcolonial project would in future consist to a large extent in the 'postcolonialization' of theory in general. Already, in fact, "the power of the postcolonial perspective has spread across almost all the disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, from classics to development theory to law to medieval studies to theology" (Young 2012, 22). To be very clear, this is not meant to propagate a hostile takeover or some kind of contest between various disciplines or schools of thought. It is rather the signal of a decisive accomplishment of the past four to five decades of postcolonial studies; namely to have established as indisputable the post/colonial dimension inherent to all major issues and problems of the global present and future. Through this lens, neither neoliberal globalization nor climate change, neither the waning of democracy worldwide nor the massive resurgence of racism and nationalist chauvinism can be appropriately addressed without the paradigms of postcolonial theory; nor, however, can they be adequately analyzed with postcolonial paradigms alone.

We would like to briefly return to two representative pieces from the body of current critical theory which we have discussed in more detail in ch. 12 on "Postcolonialism and Ecology": Rob Nixon's *Slow Violence* and Naomi Klein's "Let Them Drown." Neither of these authors is a 'postcolonial critic' in the strict sense of that term, nor do their works usually get labeled so. And yet it is undeniable that postcolonial thought proves an integral and indeed indispensable component of both these pieces.

In *Slow Violence*, ecocriticism and postcolonial theory are inextricably interwoven. For Nixon's book delineates how slow environmental violence is tied in with imperial relationships past and present and thus offers analyses of ecological devastation as integral aspects of colonial domination. The major sources of inspiration for Nixon's account of the "environmentalism of the poor" include Rachel Carson, a US-American nature writer in the first half of the 20th century; Ramachandra Guha, an Indian sociologist and environmentalist; and Edward Said, one of the key figures of postcolonial studies. In Nixon's understanding, Said is specifically important for a viable theorization of environmental crises because of his notion of 'worldliness' that posits an inextricably entangled, interdependent and holistic world. This holism, however, is itself the product of a historical development whose prime motor, for Said, is empire (see ch. 16):

> So vast and yet so detailed is imperialism as an experience with crucial cultural dimensions, that we must speak of overlapping territories, intertwined histories common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and on the peripheries, past as well as present and future; these territories and histories can only be seen from the perspective of the whole of secular human history. (Said 1993, 72)

In this understanding, imperialism is itself not only a 'world theme' that affects "the whole of secular human history"; it is in fact a 'world-making' force through whose impact the interconnected, 'global' world as we know it has emerged in the first place. Given this, it should not come as a surprise to find the hierarchical and exploitative logic inherent to empire deeply inscribed into its product, the world, including the "cheap nature" (Moore 2015, 116) that has resulted, as an exploitable pool of resources, from the massive interventions that European imperialism has continuously performed on the global ecosystem from the 16th century onwards. The hegemonic relation to nature as a passive given waiting to be 'improved' through agro-industrial engineering is, in this perspective, informed by the colonial

divide that organized the hierarchical discrimination of populations and 'civilizations.' Nixon's work amply delineates how this colonial approach to both nature and the marginalized majority of the planet's human population persists in the present.

In her short essay "Let Them Drown: The Violence of Othering in a Warming World," Naomi Klein, too, aligns ecocriticism and postcolonial theory by going back to Edward Said. In her account of the current climate crisis, governments in the Global North refuse to work towards a reduction of CO_2 emissions in full view of the catastrophic consequences this policy has for the "fossil fuel sacrifice zones [that] dot the globe" (Klein 2017, 36), but especially the Global South, the abode of the majority of "sacrificial people" (Klein 2017, 39), whose livelihood and often even physical habitat gets destroyed by pollution, deforestation, land grabbing, or reckless resource extraction. To relegate whole regions and their inhabitants to wholesale devastation, Klein argues, is possible only on the premise that the most severely affected areas and populations have already been framed as somehow less important and thus potentially 'sacrificial.'

Such geopolitical fantasies that divide the world into zones of more and zones of less value are present-day outcrops of older, genuinely colonial "theories of human hierarchy" (Klein 2017, 45), in particular, racism. As Paul Gilroy argues in a different context, contemporary racisms are immediate heirs to the legacy of colonialism as they rehearse the ideology of 'superior' and 'inferior' groups of people. These distinctions, for Gilroy, "revive a colonial economy in which infrahumanity, measured against the benchmark of [...] imperial standards, diminished rights and deferred recognition" (Gilroy 2005, 10). This "deferral of recognition," couched in the construction of the "infrahuman" status of the racialized Other, is a necessary prerequisite for the current policy of "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey 2010, 312), which finds its most blatant expression these days precisely in the destructive resource extraction that Klein so persuasively links with colonial ideologies:

> this kind of recklessness would have been functionally impossible without institutional racism, even if only latent. It would have been impossible without Orientalism, without all the potent tools on offer that allow the powerful to discount the lives of the less powerful. These tools – of ranking the relative value of humans – are what allow the writing off of entire nations and ancient cultures. And they are what allowed for the digging up of all that carbon to begin with. (Klein 2017, 37)

The "colonizer's model of the world" that was premised on the division of the world into an "active" and "inventive" core and a range of merely "passive" and "imitative" peripheries (Blaut 1993, 17) is obviously very much alive and kicking as an instrumental ideological "potent tool" to ensure the ongoing pillage of the planet's resources, both human and non-human, biotic and abiotic, at the hands of neoliberalism's "crisis-creation machines" (Klein 2007, 58). Any intervention into this process of plunder and "disaster generation" (Klein 2007, 58) will have to assault its neo-colonial underpinnings. It will, as a consequence, have to draw heavily from that tradition that has developed many of the most succinct and useful critical tools of anti-colonial thought: postcolonialism.

In this understanding, the aspiration of a postcolonialism of the future is synonymous with the insight that an equitable, sustainable, livable and, yes, pleasurable future will have to be a postcolonial future: one that will have 'moved beyond' the colonial trajectories of ordering the world into sacrificial and benefiting zones, and

that instead will be premised on alternative, more convivial modes of world-making that we, at this point, cannot foresee. Yet however unavailable and unpredictable the future may be, we still insist that it is to a significant extent a 'fact' in the etymologically literal sense of that term as 'something made': It is not solely but by and large the outcome of decisions and measures people take (or don't take) in the here and now. The present is in that sense the site of a contest of various and highly different versions of possible futures that people imagine, anticipate, fear, or aspire to. In that contest, postcolonial versions of the future for sure have an important say. As they strive for a further decolonization of the planet, they are indispensable tributaries to what Arjun Appadurai has called "the work of future-making" (2013, 298).

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