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POST-COLONIAL STUDIES MEETS MEDIA STUDIES

A CRITICAL ENCOUNTER

From:

Kai Merten, Lucia Krämer (eds.)
Postcolonial Studies Meets Media Studies
A Critical Encounter

The book brings together experts from Media and Communication Studies with Post-colonial Studies scholars to illustrate how the two fields may challenge and enrich each other. Its essays introduce readers to selected topics including »Media Convergence«, »Transcultural Subjectivity«, »Hegemony«, »Piracy« and »Media History and Colonialism«. Drawing on examples from film, literature, music, TV and the internet, the contributors investigate the transnational dimensions in today's media, engage with local and global media politics and discuss media outlets as economic agents, thus illustrating mechanisms of power in postcolonial and neo-colonial mediascapes.

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Introduction

Kai Merten and Lucia Krämer

Premise and Aims

The basic premise of this volume is the assumption that Postcolonial Studies and Media Studies can and should challenge each other successfully to produce new insights. The reason for putting the book together is our conviction that the fields can enrich each other further than they have done so far. Although Postcolonial Studies has broadened its interest onto other media since the 1990s, literature is still over-represented as the discipline's subject of textual criticism, and the theoretical and analytic postcolonial terminology for engaging with other media is still being developed (cf. for that kind of criticism from a Media Studies perspective, Imre 2014). At the same time, the postcolonial approach is still underrepresented in Media Studies. This book brings the two fields together in the hope of working out overlaps, points of contention as well as productive interactions.

In a world of ever-increasing complexity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity are a central means of combining and exchanging ideas. As all those who have tried to collaborate with colleagues from other disciplines well know, however, combining fields that have diverse methodological, theoretical, thematic and ideological traditions as well as different subjects and aims is a challenging endeavour. It is rendered more difficult by the growing internal diversification of critical fields and academic disciplines, which is leading to ever narrower fields of specialization. Moreover, the external boundaries of many academic fields and disciplines are becoming increasingly porous, thus seemingly eroding difference and borders and encouraging overlaps but at the same time destabilizing fixed notions about what individual disciplines are and do.

Especially the instability of the term 'postcolonial' is by now nothing less than infamous. All those working or even moderately well-read in Postcolonial

Studies know that, as a consequence of this instability, it has become something of a topos, at least in book-length publications from the field, to outline the various meanings that have been ascribed to the term over the years and the criticism it has evoked. On this basis, authors and editors then position themselves and explain their own usage and interpretation of the term as well as the nature of their critical project. Although it would go too far to call 'postcolonial' an empty signifier, it has accrued so many meanings that, as Benita Parry has wryly observed, "the word has come to indicate a historical transition, an achieved epoch, a cultural location, a theoretical stance, and indeed in the spirit of mastery and impenetrability favored by Humpty-Dumpty in his dealings with language, whatever an author chooses it to mean" (2002: 72).

This introduction is no exception to the rule and starts with a brief discussion of the term in order to situate our project. This is not simply a matter of paying homage to critical tradition but necessitated by the particular theoretical and disciplinary inflection of the volume. For the subject matter dealt with in the various contributions to this book – ranging from the content and *gestalt* of selected media texts and the history of particular media to the production, usage and especially the dissemination of media and texts in industrial and media-political environments whose reach ranges from the local, regional and national to the international, transnational and global – is most readily associated with the disciplines of Media Studies, Communication Studies and Globalization Studies. We want to test what kind of new questions, ideas or even problems and contradictions a postcolonial point of view at such media phenomena might produce, and how Postcolonial Studies, on the one hand, and Media Studies, Communication Studies and Globalization Studies, on the other hand, might challenge each other to produce new insights. We have therefore asked our contributors to approach their topics with a critical eye on the fields of discussion and fresh perspectives that are opened up by complementing Media Studies analyzes with theoretical paradigms from Postcolonial Studies, and vice versa.

In a sense, the present volume thus joins a row of post-millennial studies motivated by the wish not only to preserve but to revive the 'postcolonial' and 'postcolonialism' as effective critical paradigms. This status had and has been called into question by critics who think that Postcolonial Studies as a discipline has been eclipsed by Globalization Studies. They doubt that the concept of postcolonialism is an efficient tool for coming to grips with the increasingly rapid transnational flows, rhizomatic exchanges and impulses of decentering in the face of global capitalism that Hardt and Negri have theorized as 'Empire'.

Some books wear their agenda to restore postcolonialism and Postcolonial Studies literally on their sleeves, in titles such as *Relocating Postcolonialism*

(Goldberg/Quayson 2002), *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (Loomba et al. 2005a) and *Rerouting the Postcolonial* (Wilson/Șandru/Welsh 2009a). Identifying the points of criticism that have been made against postcolonial criticism and theory and acknowledging the ambiguities at the heart of the discipline of Postcolonial Studies (cf. Quayson/Goldberg 2002: xi-xvi), they nonetheless assert their enduring potential. In their argumentation, they follow five main strategies. One, they emphasize the transdisciplinary potential of Postcolonial Studies by situating it at the intersection of various disciplines and by characterising it as a still developing and spreading set of intellectual enterprises rather than a bounded discipline (Wilson/Șandru/Welsh 2009b: 1, 2; Loomba et al. 2005b: 3, 4), much in line with Bhabha's description of postcoloniality as "less a name or a topic, and more a way of making connections or articulations across a range of topics and themes, a locus for theoretical and political reflection rather than a label" (Bhabha/Comaroff 2002: 30).

Strategy two is the critical observation that, due to this 'porous' nature of Postcolonial Studies (cf. Loomba et al. 2005b: 3; Wilson/Șandru/Welsh 2009b: 11), postcolonial thinking has spread beyond Literary and Cultural Studies, Sociology and Political Science into a multitude of fields, but that in spite of this, the resulting specialist niches have seldom entered into interdisciplinary communication or exchange (Wilson/Șandru/Welsh 2009b: 11), which therefore needs to be encouraged. This is the starting point for the collected edition *Postcolonial Media Culture in Britain* (Brunt/Cere 2011), for example, which attempts to establish the missing link between Postcolonial and Media Studies in order to "rescue media studies from cultural and political inertia in relation to postcolonial experiences and representations" (Cere 2011: 3).

A third strategy embraced by scholars to re-validate Postcolonial Studies lies in the expansion of its traditional fields of investigation, for example by addressing colonial encounters beyond the scope of European colonialism. Just as an expansion of this kind exposes the traditional Eurocentrism in postcolonial research, strategies of transcending the binaries of West and East, West and Rest and metropolitan centre and periphery can infuse the field with new vigour. Questioning and expanding what is commonly considered the canon of postcolonial literature and theory is considered a further strategy to achieve this effect (Wilson/Șandru/Welsh 2009b: 7, 9; Loomba et al. 2005b: 4, 33, 24-28).

A fourth way suggested by critics to revive Postcolonial Studies lies in what Rønning and Johannessen call "the concern with the particular" (2007: ix), that is an emphasis on temporal and geographical specificity in analyses of colonial situations. The demand for specificity extends not only to analyses of historical colonial encounters, moreover, but also applies to contemporary colonial or

imperial relations in the guise of globalization. This is manifest in warnings against, on the one hand, "a shallow embrace of the contemporary notion of the global" (Loomba et al. 2005b: 4), and, on the other hand, a simplistic equation of globalization with neocolonialism (Loomba et al. 2005b: 15; see McCallum/ Faith 2005: 3).

The widest-reaching strategy that critics have suggested for revitalizing Post-colonial Studies, however, lies in its restoration as a pragmatic, ethical and peda-gogical, rather than an abstract or theoretical project weakened by the textualist turn in Postcolonial Studies (cf. Parry 2002: 73). For them, it is as a materialist and historical enterprise, as a politics of solidarity that provides a bottom-up per-spective on exploitation and as an oppositional political agenda of resistance that Postcolonial Studies emerges as "more necessary than ever" (Loomba et al. 2005: 1, 5, 23; cf. Krishna 2009: 2). In this sense, Postcolonial Studies appears indispensable in the face of rampant neo-imperial ideologies (Wilson/Şandru/ Welsh 2009b: 6, 8) and the fact that the decentring tendencies of power and in-fluence in today's world order are clearly outweighed by its recentring tenden-cies (Xie 2006: 62-65).

The present volume tries to mobilize several of these strategies. It explores the transdisciplinary potential of postcolonialism by bringing together concepts and approaches from Media Studies, Communication Studies and Globalization Studies, on the one hand, and Postcolonial Studies on the other hand. By concen-trating on issues of media production, reception and distribution alongside textu-al analysis, we have tried to encourage temporal, geographical and cultural spec-ificity in our contributors' analyses. Even though the project is more analytic than interventionist and its motivation not quite as utopian as that of more openly politically committed postcolonial works, it is nonetheless motivated by the no-tion of the postcolonial as an oppositional, anti-hegemonic stance against the symbolic and material manifestations of inequality, oppression and exploitation resulting from colonialism or imperialism. In keeping with this, most of the arti-cles in the present volume focus, ultimately, on inequalities of power, be they in representations and negotiations of differences, asymmetric media flows, media policies or forms of media access, consumption and appropriation.

The volume thus presents twelve articles that combine the discussion of criti-cal concepts with case studies from the contemporary global mediascape. Even given the limited scope of this volume, they show that the field of Postcolonial Media Cultures (as one might call it) is potentially so large but, up until now, al-so so little cultivated (notwithstanding the work that has already been done as mapped out in the next section), that both Postcolonial and Media Studies should stake a claim to it in order to turn it into an interdisciplinary success story.

MAPPING THE RELATIONS OF MEDIA STUDIES
AND POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

Postcolonial Studies Meets Media Studies touches upon Media Studies in all the various aspects the term is usually thought of as containing, i.e. it engages with creative media practice as well as with media theory, and it also deals with Media Studies in its twofold institutional structure: one kind of Media Studies has a strong Social Science slant and is strongly related to, sometimes even synonymous with, Communication Studies. This brand of Media Studies deals with media as social phenomena, e.g. in their role of agents of social identity, in their power to establish and maintain communication within and between societies, or in their relationship to questions of ethics and political power. The second type is more strongly marked by Media Studies' historical (albeit sometimes hostile) kinship to Literary Studies and its (less fraught) relationship to Cultural Studies. It is interested in the 'texts' created in different media and genres, their aesthetics, production contexts, artistic conventions and therefore also, for example, in questions of representation raised in these texts or the social functions media and genres fulfil through their content. This kind of media research is often connected to both an analysis and a valorisation of what is commonly called 'popular culture' or 'mass media'.

So far, this type of 'cultural' Media Studies has dealt with concepts of Postcolonial Studies mainly in the initiative of 'internationalizing Cultural Studies' as a whole, in the eponymous anthology edited by Ackbar Abbas and John Nguyet Erni (2005). The editors aim to internationalize Cultural Studies by offering a range of geographically, methodologically and thematically diverse case studies under the headings of themes central to Cultural Studies, such as "Gender and Sexuality", "Popular Practices", "Cities and the Urban Imaginary" or, particularly important in our context, "Media Production and Consumption". In doing so, they abstain from both a "totalizing coverage" of global culture (ibid.: 8) and from a "dominant dogma, direction or method" (ibid.: xxvi) of how Cultural Studies should be pursued from an international perspective. Postcolonial Theory is a central methodological framework of the book, even if there are other methodologies involved such as anthropology. Therefore, even if it does not belong to Postcolonial Studies in the narrow sense, the anthology is strongly inspired by this field in its careful, differentiated and problematized attempt to relate Cultural Studies, with its origin in the English academia, to an "elsewhere" (ibid.: 2) in several senses. Related to this project is the demand, formulated in a related publication (Dines/Humez 2011: 7), of a multicultural perspective for the study of *national* popular or mass cultures. The most interesting book pub-

lication in this context is Brunt and Cere's *Postcolonial Media Culture in Britain*, already mentioned in this introduction, which develops a multicultural and postcolonial angle on British popular culture. *Postcolonial Studies Meets Media Studies: A Critical Encounter* is in some senses a companion piece to *Internationalizing Cultural Studies* in that it incorporates a far stronger Media Studies perspective.

Another field in 'cultural' Media Studies with strong affiliations to Postcolonial Studies is Film Studies. Film has proved the most popular research object in Postcolonial Studies after literature and has therefore already encouraged extended research activities on local cinemas and video industries worldwide. Leading on from there, a field of Postcolonial Film Studies with more general theoretical interests and more overarching concerns beyond the local has developed, the most prestigious exponent of which is Ella Shohat. Shohat has also been part of the critical movement which strove for the right definition of 'postcolonial(ism)' from the early 1990s and is hence an important voice in the definition of the field of Postcolonial Studies in general. Apart from this, she has been mainly interested in what she has termed, in two important collections edited together with Robert Stam (Shohat/Stam 1994 and 2003), 'multicultural media' (although the focus of these volumes is clearly on film). The fairly young area of Sound Studies, in contrast, has more or less neglected (or been neglected by) Postcolonial Studies, as Carla J. Maier complains in her essay on sound culture in this volume.

The initial spark for the more sociological brand of Media Studies to deal with Postcolonial Studies came from a 2002 volume of the journal *Communication Theory*, which was dedicated to "Postcolonial Approaches to Communication" as the paper by the editors Raka Shome and Radha S. Hegde was entitled. This article is still worth reading for scholars and students interested in this rapprochement, as it discusses the premises for such mutual involvement in clear and basic terms and has consequently taken central position in the first handbook article on Media Studies and Postcolonial Theory (Kumar 2014). What is more, in the shape of Global Media Studies, Communication Studies has developed a field in some proximity to Postcolonial Studies. In a sense, Global Media Studies exemplifies both the existing rapprochement of Postcolonial and Media Studies and the necessity of further research in that interface. Global Media Studies emerged from research both in Globalization Studies and Media Studies and has therefore been promoted from two disciplinary sides. This is the reason for its considerable academic success, which is testified e.g. by the *Global Media and Communications Handbook Series* starting with publishers Wiley-Blackwell in 2011. The terms 'global' and 'postcolonial' have been rubbing shoulders for

quite some time now, as can be glimpsed e.g. from Krishnaswamy and Hawley's influential 2008 collection of essays *The Postcolonial and The Global*. To an extent, Globalization Studies, by way of the very terms treated and perspectives taken, has inevitably always carried some postcolonial implications, so that Global Media Studies have been – or should have been – postcolonial from the very beginning. However, as Krishnaswamy wryly observes in the same collection, the two fields have often exchanged terms without sharing perspectives (2008: 2), and it is only recently that Postcolonial Studies has started taking issue with Global Media Studies.

Consequently, two major publications of Global Media Studies from a postcolonial perspective, Divya C. McMillin's *International Media Studies* (2007) and Ramaswami Harindranath's contribution on "Post-colonial Interventions on Media, Audiences, and National Politics" in *The Handbook of Global Media Research* (2012), drawing on a large body of earlier work by the author, both delineate an already existing research field and bemoan its relative absence. Both are correct in a sense, because even if some scholars of Global Media Studies are aware of the postcolonial implications and the valid postcolonial critique of what they are doing, this kind of research is quite scattered and still awaits the kind of conceptual and systematic overviews required by both scholars and students and represented by our volume. Another bone of contention is the term 'global' itself, which, despite being a point of contact between Global Media Studies and Postcolonial (Media) Studies, smacks for many postcolonial scholars (among them some of the contributors to this volume) of a lack of conceptual and perspectival differentiation or even of silently condoning Western cultural superiority and homogenization. What critique there has been of this homogenization, e.g. based on the Frankfurt-school inspired cultural imperialism paradigm, is in turn attacked from a postcolonial angle as being itself too homogenizing (cf. McMillin 2007: 42-46 or Harindranath 2012: 384).

Further perspectives demanded from Global Media Studies by a postcolonial approach are 'history' and 'situation': Global Media Studies must be aware of the (colonial) history of the media culture it analyses, present in the geopolitical situation (or situatedness) of each particular analytical example – token of the fact that all media and media usages are only accessible in specific sites. Concomitant with this historicisation is a postcolonial critique of the Western-centric notion of modernity, which posits the historical development of the West as a global pattern of cultural and social progress. Against this kind of homogeneous and monolithic modernity, Postcolonial Studies holds the notion of a field of asynchronous and differentiated modernities in the plural, which only in its entirety could be called 'global' (cf. Eisenstadt 2003, Appadurai 2005 and

Wollaeger/Eatough 2012). To achieve such situational and historical specificity, both McMillin (2007: particularly 134-178) and Harindranath (2012: 389) demand that postcolonially informed Global Media Studies analyze the specific media *receptions* in different areas of the world in a nuanced and contextually sensitive way. This kind of reception analysis confirms that media consumption is generally not passive but that many local contexts produce countermanding appropriations or even hostile rejections of globally powerful media products.

A final example critiquing Global Media Studies, and one that touches upon most of the positions summarized here, is Arvind Rajagopal's work. In his "Notes on Postcolonial Visual Culture" from 2011, he qualifies the claims of Global Media Studies by pointing out the specificity of regional contexts, but in doing so he refers to media theorists such as Marshall McLuhan and Guy Debord. Vis-à-vis the media-theoretical and media-historical *grand récits* of these theorists, he develops a succinct notion of postcolonial mediality and one that heeds the specificity of the (particular) postcolonial situation. For him, postcolonial mediality is characterized by the inclusion of religious media(lity) into the media realms conflictually negotiated in postcolonial societies. Therefore, he neatly fuses a sociological with a cultural perspective on media, while subjecting both to a postcolonial critique.

PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION

The present volume aims to contribute to and expand the disciplinary exchange just outlined. To this purpose it brings together scholars with an established track record in Postcolonial Studies, who here apply their approach to texts and media phenomena that are still a growth area in their field, with scholars from the fields of Media and Communication Studies who would not consider themselves as postcolonialists but have nonetheless agreed to test the potential of a postcolonial perspective stance and of selected theoretical paradigms from Postcolonial Studies for the work in their fields. Before outlining the resulting structure of the volume, however, we wish to point out what the volume does *not* try to be or do.

Most importantly, it is not meant to be exhaustive. The book has a keyword structure that maps what we consider especially important areas of the interrelational field of Media Studies and Postcolonial Studies, so that it can function as an introduction to this field for both students and scholars. Its approach is not encyclopaedic but openly selective, and the choice of key terms on which it is based was governed by the goal that the volume should be a meeting ground for scholars with different backgrounds. This led to a selection of rather open,

though not general, terms which denote concepts rather than specific media practices and which can serve as a contact zone (though not in Pratt's sense) for different disciplines. We have therefore deliberately avoided articles on concepts that are first and foremost associated with Postcolonial Studies or Postcolonial Theory, such as 'Orientalism', 'Hybridity', or the 'Subaltern'. This also means that while types of media (e.g. film, photography, Internet, television, literature, theatre, music, art, (mobile) telephony, radio, video games, DVD/Bluray), global genres (e.g. hip hop, bhangra, 'world music', telenovela, game shows), media institutions (e.g. CNN, Al Jazeera, literary NGOs, Mapping Global Media Policy project) or movements (e.g. Arabian Spring, Anti-ACTA Movement) and specific production and distribution environment (e.g. Hollywood, Bollywood, Nollywood, African video halls) are all analyzed and discussed in this volume, this always happens within a keyword framework where they either feature as examples mentioned more in passing or as the subject of longer case studies.

The concepts that we have selected for discussion pertain, with one exception, to three thematic fields, which also structure our book. Section one contains articles on the interaction of the global and the local in the global mediascape as well as its transnational dimensions. The articles in section two are devoted to questions of media politics and their implications. Section three highlights the status of media texts as commodities and of media as economic agents and posits them as objects of the cultural industries. The distinction between these three sections naturally cannot be entirely clear-cut. Their overlap mirrors the complexity of the interrelations at play on the levels of media production, distribution and reception. The last article in the book stands outside the three sections and complements their concentration on contemporary issues by a diachronic perspective that emphasizes the significance of Media Studies' branch of Media History for a postcolonial study of media.

The book opens with an article on one of the most central phenomena of the contemporary mediascape: media convergence. Terry Flew and Bonnie Rui Liu underline the intricate relation between communications media and empire-building that derives from communication technologies' indispensability for establishing and maintaining systems of power. The digital transformations of new media, which are often conceived in terms of media convergence, are only the latest significant development in a history of media employed in environments of highly unequal power relations. In development communication and global media politics, various theories and international political agendas have been championed over the decades to engage with these inequalities. Flew and Liu map the rise and fall between the 1950s and mid-1970s of the modernization paradigm, which conceived of media modernization in developing countries in

terms of an assimilation to Western conditions. It was shaken when demands arose for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), which in turn suffered several set-backs. The modernization paradigm, according to Flew and Liu therefore continues "to have a significant, if unheralded, role in thinking about both global media and the relationship between media and development". Flew and Liu impressively demonstrate this in a case study that examines the Information and Communications Technologies for Development (ICT4D) agenda, which was initiated as an attempt to bridge the so-called 'digital divide' between Western and developing countries. Discussing whether the ICT4D agenda is adequate to deal with the participatory communication typical of media convergence, the authors address postcolonial critiques of the agenda as well as convergent media's potential of enabling decentralization, participation and grassroots activity.

Flew and Liu's assessment of media convergence is followed by a piece on media globalization from Kai Hafez. We have asked for permission to reprint this piece because of its critical stance towards established concepts of media globalization, which Hafez, considers something of a "myth". Moreover, despite the growth of Internet connectivity and changes in broadcasting since the text was written, its arguments are still valid. Discussing the often so-called 'globalization', 'glocalization' and 'localization' of media and media products as well as the interconnectedness, changes and interdependence of media systems, the article draws particular attention to the ambivalences in international media exchange processes and thus presents a more nuanced and critical view of media globalization than allowed for by the dominant conversion and diversity theories.

Brian Creech and Anandam Kavoori introduce the novel concept of transcultural mediated subjectivity in their contribution to the volume. Situating their article in the field of Transcultural Media Studies, the authors adopt a perspective that investigates globalized modes of meaning-making alongside economic modes of international media production and distribution. The essay argues that material, semiotic, historical, geographic and political tensions are often given intelligible form through the production of transcultural media products that eclipse traditional global/local framings of international media and offer modes of expression that reveal hybridized, postcolonial identities existing within a mode of global exchange. Drawing on literatures of globalization and postcolonial media criticism as well as concepts of subjectivity, the authors theorize their concept of transcultural subjectivity, which they then illustrate by means of a case study of how journalist and Google executive Wael Ghonim became one of the central figures in the international media representations of the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings in Egypt. The nuances and contradictions within these represen-

tations illustrate that a transcultural understanding of media subjectivity requires attention and adherence to the conditions that such mediated figures as Wael Ghonim emerge in.

Uriya Shavit closes the first part of the book with an article on diasporic media, in which he explores how advanced media impact the relations between migratory communities and their homelands. Drawing on Media Studies as well as Postcolonial and Nationalism Studies, the article challenges concepts and emphases on the relation between migration, media and globalization. Local and national media have expanded far outside their traditional geographical scopes. In combination with an almost universal desire to consume mainly local and national-based media, this has led to an international media landscape that is made up of 'global villages' and sees new forms of diasporic media use. Drawing on empirical research, Shavit identifies two salient types of migrants, the 'lonely sojourner' and the 'passive transnational', on the basis of their distinctive patterns of media use. While studies on migration in the age of globalization tended to stress how distant communities come closer and how the impacts between peripheries and centres are enhanced, Shavit's examples illustrate that an intensification of exposure to homeland media from afar does not necessarily result in greater communal cohesion among migrants or in greater political involvement in the affairs of the homeland.

The perspective beyond individual nations or cultures as well as the concepts of the interrelatedness of nations and cultures that run through these first four chapters continue in part two of the book. However, the focus here is narrowed onto concepts relating to media policy. Barbara Thomass opens this section with an article on the possible mutual enrichments of Media and Postcolonial Studies in engaging with international and national media politics and their interrelations. Conceding that research on media politics has been dominated by Eurocentrism so far, Thomass systematically maps this field's subjects of investigation (media systems, markets, regulation; actors of national and international media politics; aims, fields and possibilities of media politics) with an eye to their potential for postcolonialist discussion or intervention. Thomass presents media "as a heavily contested field of power where structures, regulations, actors and their policies create a space of negotiations" whose outcome determines who holds the power of dissemination and representation. Inter/national media politics emerge from the article as an interdisciplinary meeting ground of Postcolonial Studies and a politically committed type of Media Studies, which would be united in the political goal of cultural diversity.

Rinella Cere, who has already joined together Postcolonial and Media Studies in her earlier work, contributes an article on the political concept of

hegemony to the section. Cere presents hegemony as the overarching principle in what she calls the 'postcolonial cognitive map for the study of media cultures', as hegemony and counter-hegemony ultimately pervade other key ideas of post-colonial media analysis, such as the colonizer-colonized relationship, hybridity, Orientalism and subalternity. Drawing on a variety of primarily audio-visual texts, among them most prominently several works by French film-maker Claire Denis as well as British television documentaries about the British Empire, Cere concentrates specifically on questions of representation and the ways they are shaped by hegemonic and counter-hegemonic positions and impulses.

Monika Mehta closes part two of the book with an article on media regulation that combines a Transcultural Media Studies perspective with questions of representation and the analysis of micro-practices of power. Mehta analyzes forms of media regulation on the national and international level and the ways in which they affect media texts when they are disseminated internationally. Taking Karan Johar's Hindi film *My Name Is Khan* (2010) as her example, she analyzes the uneven relations amongst states, nations, and film industries as they jostle to define citizens, nationals, and audiences and illustrates how the film in its theatrical and DVD versions, when crossing state boundaries, was certified according to specific state or non-governmental guidelines before it could be screened. *My Name Is Khan* and its representation of Muslims were tailored to meet 'national' demands through the application of censorship, rating guidelines and exhibition norms. In decentering the state and in moving beyond simple dichotomies of ruler and ruled, Mehta shows that multiple participants engage in this uneven play of power, contributing to discourses on cinema and censorship and 'cutting' the films in all kind of contexts, from the production room to various self-regulating bodies of national and transnational film industries. Mehta's paper draws attention to the importance of the distribution level in media communication, and by analyzing *My Name Is Khan* as an example of travelling goods (cf. Huck/ Bauernschmidt 2012), it establishes a link to the third part of this volume, which contains five essays on concepts relating to media texts as objects of the cultural industries.

Questions of ownership, adaptation and appropriation lie at the base of Lars Eckstein's essay on piracy, which he approaches from an explicitly postcolonial perspective. He discusses dominant discourses on piracy in the global North that range from condemning piracy as criminal theft, to discussing it in the light of freedom and creativity, to celebrating its anti-capitalist resistance. Eckstein argues for the necessity of re-orienting the discussion by suggesting that the two examples he investigates – the cassette culture of Indian popular music in the 1970s and 80s as well as the effects of piracy on northern Nigerian video culture

in the 1990s and 2000s – should instead be regarded principally as a basic strategy of obtaining access to global modernity. Eckstein proposes that we may best understand postcolonial piracy as a range of practices connected to older and new technologies which negotiate 'provisional compromises' between global designs of property, capitalism, personhood and multiple local "ways of being human" (Chakrabarty 2000: 70).

Carla J. Maier, in her essay on 'Sound Cultures', investigates sound as a set of complex social, and mediatized practices, which is culturally shaped rather than a natural given. Noting that explorations of sonic cultures are still underexposed within Postcolonial Studies, she presents two case studies to indicate ways by which this lacuna might be closed. Her analysis of Apache Indian's track "Arranged Marriage" points out how the sound practices of cutting, looping and layering create sonic constellations in which received cultural, social and gendered inscriptions are constantly contested and renegotiated. She also looks at the role of pirate radio practices as alternative spaces of musical expression and social participation for Black and Asian post-migrants in post-2000 London. In doing so, she outlines an example of a postcolonial cultural practice offering opportunities of cultural expression beyond a mainstream media industry that is still ethnically confining.

However, when the same industry attends to postcolonial culture, the result often cannot but be described as 'Commodification', as addressed by Oliver Lindner in his contribution. In literature, the phenomenon has already drawn the attention of scholars exploring how the canonical authors and texts of so-called postcolonial literature are deployed for financial profit by international publishers in turning their 'difference' into a selling point (cf. Graham Huggan's *The Postcolonial Exotic* (2001) or Sarah Brouillette's *Postcolonial Writers and the Global Literary Marketplace* (2007)). Lindner discusses the role of commodification within postcolonial media cultures in more general terms and presents the field as a whole as a growth industry. In doing so, he uses the concepts of 'exoticism', 'imperial nostalgia' and 'staged marginality' in order to analyze key factors that shape processes of commodification and to accentuate the role of cultural prestige and stardom in the marketing of postcolonial media culture. The film *Life of Pi* (2012) and Taiye Selasi's novel *Ghana must go* (2013) serve him as two quite different examples to illustrate specific mechanisms of the commodification of 'postcolonial' cultural texts and its crucial role for their circulation.

While Lindner widens the notion of 'commodification' to include non-literary media, Ana Cristina Mendes' essay, which ends the third section of the book, deepens the aspect of the marketing of postcolonial literature by applying a more thorough understanding of 'economy'. Using the methodology of the

'new sociology of literature' on the example of recent South Asian writing in English, Mendes shows the positionality of so-called postcolonial authors whose access to the global literary market is based on the decisions of editors and publishers in metropolitan centres like London and New York. Fascinatingly, economic aspects, such as Southern Asian 'tiger economies' and their setbacks, are centrally addressed *within* the texts also. Theirs, therefore, is a particularly ripe example of the global marketing of postcolonial literature, since global economic issues become pertinent both *in* the texts and *by* them – in what is an interesting collision whereby the texts economically are driven by the same logics of global capitalism they internally critique.

The volume closes with an essay by Sven Werkmeister that argues powerfully for the concept of a media history as a source of new insights on colonial and postcolonial histories. Werkmeister illustrates that the difference between Europe and its colonial 'other' has, since the seventeenth century, been shaped by a media difference that prompted Europeans, on the basis of their written culture, to define themselves as superior to 'primitive' people without writing; the alphabet was thus a central part of the legitimizing discourse of colonialism. While media history formed colonial and postcolonial history, however, colonial encounters in turn influenced the history of media, since they were inevitably characterized by interchanges of gestures, images, sounds and symbols. In Werkmeister's fascinating example of so-called 'primitivist' modernist writing, European literature comes to be challenged in its mediality by the non-alphabetical Other it has itself constructed. While non-European Primitivism is undoubtedly a discursive construction undertaken by European ethnographers, art historians, and fictional wsriters among others, Werkmeister shows how the colonial encounter comes to haunt a media system and media history that must be seen as global.

After this line-up of the book, we are happy to leave it to the readers to discover the various chapters for themselves. It remains for us to thank our contributors for their input and to express our gratitude to Chaniga Chaipan, research assistant at the University of Erfurt, whose energy, diligence and circumspection in putting the manuscript together were invaluable.

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