Rethinking receptivity in a postcolonial context: recasting Sembène’s *Moolaade*

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Abstract
The main challenge confronting African postcolonial societies is the failure of political, social, and cultural transformation to confront and transcend the limitations imposed by historical and contemporary contingencies. Hence the task of postcolonial theorists is to develop conceptual resources for a more sustained evaluation and analysis of the challenge. In this article, I recast Sembène’s film, *Moolaade*, in a new relief to foreground the core issue of the postcolonial condition. I proceed to reappropriate Kompridis’s concepts of ‘reflective disclosure’ and ‘receptivity’, which he develops from Heidegger’s ‘world disclosure’, to devise what I term ‘postcolonial receptivity’. I then argue that postcolonial receptivity is an important concept that lends more intelligibility and coherence to the African quest to transform social and political forms of life.

Keywords: Africa; Heidegger; Kompridis; Moolaade; Ousmane Sembène; postcolonial condition; postcolonial receptivity; receptivity; reflective disclosure

It does not need to be over-emphasised that African postcolonial societies are confronted with a host of problems. The problems centre on, but are not limited to, how to achieve democratic forms of politics; how to fulfil citizens’ aspirations for social justice and equality; and how to make governments and leaders responsive to citizens’ demands for accountability and equal citizenship. It would be unfair to say that these problems are particularly African, but it would still be understandable if one argues that scholars in African studies urgently need to find better ways to confront these problems. In other words, African scholars face not only the challenge of how to articulate the African postcolonial condition, but also how to insightfully transcend the condition. What I term the African ‘postcolonial condition’ relates to how the present forms of life of African postcolonial society should share with their pre-colonial and colonial pasts, and how they should continue into the future given what appears to be the incommensurability between the past(s), present(s), and the desired-for-future(s).1

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In this article, I seek to show how Nikolas Kompridis’s proposal for the renewal of critical theory can offer African scholars a new way to think about the postcolonial condition. Kompridis’s analysis of critical theory is broader than my present interests, and as such I am going to specifically focus on his critical reappropriation of Heidegger’s ‘world disclosure’ from which he develops the concepts ‘reflective disclosure’ and ‘receptivity’. My particular interest in the import the concepts carry in a postcolonial setting leads me to develop what I term postcolonial receptivity. By extending the purview of Kompridis’s concepts to argue for the value of applying the concept of receptivity to a postcolonial setting, I am suggesting that the concept can illuminate attempts by postcolonial theorists to re-envision the transformation of social and political forms of life of the postcolonial world.

Kompridis has made a major contribution to, and had a profound influence on, debates about receptivity. His book, *Critique and Disclosure*, opened up a flurry of lively and critical commentary that has undoubtedly enriched our understanding of the concept of receptivity. The concept has also recently been heavily scrutinized in a special issue published in this journal. In the editor’s introduction, Kompridis described the articles in the issue as dedicated to an elaborate analysis of ‘a politics of receptivity’, and to how different practices of receptivity can contribute to a renewal of democratic politics. He further argues that the articles seek to correct a failure by most political theorists to register receptivity ‘as something distinctly political’—a failure which results in the tendency to see receptivity as something merely ethical. Once it is misconceived in this way, receptivity becomes something ‘distinct from politics, something whose introduction into politics would surely have depoliticizing effect’, thus lending an impetus to the authors to correct the perception by arguing for the need to reconceptualise receptivity as something occupying ‘the very centre of a transformed democratic politics’.

Inasmuch as I find this to be an innovation of immense importance and something to be commended in contemporary political debates, I also find the postcolonial world conspicuous by its absence in these debates. However, judging by the interests and academic backgrounds of the contributors, it would be unfair to expect them to have discussed the importance of receptivity in the postcolonial context. In an attempt to fill this void, I propose a postcolonial reading of receptivity, throwing a challenge to postcolonial theorists to reconsider the practice of postcolonial theorising. It is hoped the article will not only broaden the notion of receptivity by taking it in a new direction, but it will also enrich postcolonial analysis by bringing in novel ways of re-envisioning possibilities for democratic politics, thus rethinking the prospects of inventing methods of transcending the postcolonial condition by reinvigorating the prospects of what Kompridis terms ‘beginning anew’.

**KOMPRIDIS’S ‘REFLECTIVE DISCLOSURE’ AND ‘RECEPTIVITY’**

In this section, I attempt to answer two main questions: What is receptivity? What is receptivity towards? The question that animates Kompridis’s articulation of the
receptivity paradigm is: ‘How do we renew and transform our social practices and political institutions, when they break down or are challenged in such a way as to preclude going on as before?’ From this, it can be argued receptivity is central to the exercise of critique within a context of social and political crisis. Kompridis’s receptivity paradigm is a ‘constructive project’ in which he systematically analyses Heideggerian ontology. He appropriates Heidegger’s concept of ‘world disclosure’, and also fuses it with a determined attempt to redeem or renew ‘critical theory’ of the Frankfurt School.

Kompridis also takes issue with Habermas’ reformulation of the Frankfurt program which not only ‘has produced a split between new and old critical theory so deep that the identity and future of critical theory are at risk’, but has also erroneously propelled the program into the direction of an abstract rational universalism that is contemptuous of cultural pluralism and threatens to indiscriminately and collectively burst all provincialities asunder thus rendering ‘meaningless the question of getting right the proportion of continuity and discontinuity in the forms of life we pass on’. Kompridis argues against Habermas’ narrow reformulation of critical theory as a form of universal and communicative rationality that is triumphal ‘over all that is provincial’, and as such he argues that ‘a provinciality-destroying reason is a meaning-destroying reason, since eliminating all that is merely provincial is eliminating all that does not survive the judgment of universal validity’. Below, I seek to explicate the relevance of what Kompridis sees as the implication of Habermas’ communicative rationality and also the threat of its universal import on cultural provinciality and particularity.

Kompridis’s critique of Habermas’ communicative rationality can be fully understood by focusing on Heidegger’s concept of *Dasein* which means the condition in which humans exist; an ontological condition of ‘being-in-the-world’ or ‘thrownness’ insofar as it entails the fact of being at a specific time and place. This is a state of existing within a specific tradition whose system of practices provides meaning to the forms of life therein. Thus being human entails being the type of entity for which specific things and practices matter; it happens in the context of a particular form of life. Being a member of this cultural group or of this gender is an act of ‘thrownness’ into a form of life that both discloses and forecloses the world of possibilities to the member. Thus ‘thrownness’ entails how subjects are available in a lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*): it is to exist in an already pre-existing and pre-reflective system or world of meaning; an already ‘holistically structured, and grammatically regulated understanding of the world’ in which our thought and reasoning is already embedded. The world discloses itself in an already predetermined cognitive setting and the way one understands the world is a particular form of understanding that is mediated by the specific lifeworld that one already exists in. As such, the concept of *Dasein* has strong implications for meaning. Given that we are what we are because of the world we are thrown into, ‘meaning’ refers to that in terms of which the human subject can understand something—an action, practice, feeling, or thought. In this way, ‘meaning’ is circumscribed or inexplicably tied to a pre-existing background set of conditions which form a horizon for the manifestation of our everyday
understanding such that the things we experience become intelligible insofar as they stand in specific relations with each other and to us. Hence understanding the world as a horizon allows us to appreciate its ‘meaning-giving’ capacity. The implication of this is that Habermas’ communicative rationality and its tendency to take a universal standpoint threatens to dethrone the subject’s lifeworld and the ‘local’ or ‘provincial’ ways of knowing that the lifeworld both discloses and fails to disclose.

Habermas’ insistence on a procedural conception of reason runs the danger of rendering as naïve, irrational, and non-normative the pre-existing and pre-reflective background to which Heidegger ascribes intelligibility, meaning-enhancing potential and also world-disclosing possibility. Thus Habermas’ approach impoverished critical theory by abandoning modernity’s future-oriented vision and time-consciousness. Hence any philosophical approach that does not take seriously humans’ relation to the past and their ‘openness to historical experiences’ and traditions is threatened with an inability to adequately understand how the past acts as a horizon for the accomplishment of humans’ prospects for the future. This takes us to Kompridis’ move to integrate ‘world disclosure’ into a more sustained conception of how rationality and critique can restore the confidence of our agency as modern subjects who need ‘to acquire world-disclosing possibilities’ or are already ‘in possession of the capacity for disclosure’.

Heideggerian ontology dangerously suggests that we are subjects who simply inherit pre-existing background conditions upon whose meaning-making potential our thoughts and actions heavily rely. In the same way, the ontology takes us as subjects who simply pass on present forms of life to a future-present that is going to be predetermined by what we pass on. The danger that this ontology carries can be understood in two ways. First, we are characterized as subjects to whom the world is uncritically disclosed; subjects who passively accept whatever discloses itself to us. Second, we cannot describe ourselves independently: any predicate to an ‘I’ or a ‘We’ owes an existential indebtedness (Schuld) or a sense of obligation to an ontology without which we are not able to start any form of self-definition and self-understanding. Thus being-in-the-world is a form of complicity with the world because the limitations imposed by our background conditions on our agency as humans become characteristic of what it is to be human. In this way, practices found in my form of life, despite how unjust, cruel or insensitive they are to my fellow species and/or to nature, become just a part of being-in-the-world. As such, critics take the Heideggerian ‘being-in-the-world’ as a form of ‘irrationalism’ as it depicts humans as ethically and politically neutral and devoid of agency; that is, as if our ‘being-in-the-world’ makes us passive pawns in a game whose rules, meaning, and even results are predetermined by the pre-existing background conditions. The question now is how does Kompridis’s account of reflective disclosure and receptivity circumvent this danger? Below, I will attempt to highlight how he does so.

Kompridis’s concept of ‘reflective disclosure’ is meant to develop an intersubjective account and dialogical process by which a human subject arrives at new foundations of meaning. Thus to counteract against the critique of irrationalism, he takes disclosure out of its unreflective closet and provides it with a new impetus.
for reflective critique. He does this by describing being-in-the-world as a condition of listening: Dasein ‘as a being-with which understands’; a being which ‘can listen to others’.16 The capacity to listen to others is the openness to an other when an other confronts us; our ability to open up to an other—its thoughts, its feelings, its emotions, its actions—such that the thoughts, feelings, emotions and actions that ordinarily would not be meaningful or fail to make sense to us, become sensible to us around this time. In this way, reflective disclosure becomes an act of espousing a new perspective from the point of view of an other.17 In order to fully appreciate where Kompridis is coming from and the direction he is heading, we need to understand what he identifies as the three levels at which receptivity to an other operate. I turn my attention to the analysis of these levels below.

According to Heideggerian ontology, being a human subject that exists in the world carries an epistemic relation between me (as subject) and the objects (e.g. the study room, chair, desk, book, and computer) that I encounter or that disclose themselves to me. I encounter them, and this encounter matters as such, because of the ‘antecedent conditions of intelligibility without which no such meaningful encounter is possible’.18 The subject’s experience of the things and its epistemic relation to them is always already given as the subject is imbued within a pre-reflective context that is holistically structured and linguistically equipped.19 For example, as subjects already within a pre-reflective context, we do not search or investigate what such objects as ‘study room’, ‘chairs’, ‘books’, and ‘desks’ are for. Rather, we enter the study room, sit on the chair, rest our arms on the desk, read the book, and type on the computer, etc. because these actions on objects are intelligible within a shared system of everyday practices which exist within our form or forms of life. The actions and objects ‘show up as something’; and ‘the shared practices into which we are socialized provide a background understanding of what counts as an object, what counts as a human being and what makes sense to do—on the basis of which we can direct our actions towards particular things and people’.20 The background understanding already discloses these objects as specific objects for a specific purpose, thus it lends the objects a potential to make sense. The world discloses itself to us pre-reflectively and we are receptive to it in the ways we attune ourselves to the everyday practices that populate our form or forms of life. Hence at a pre-reflective level, receptivity is ‘a condition of having a “world” at all’.21 At this level, it is something like being a gadget in its ‘default settings’: it is not yet attuned to perform more complex tasks. I will further clarify this point below.

At the second level is ‘a form of receptivity that is coupled with disengaged curiosity, an intense engagement with something or someone that leaves lots of room for disengagement’.22 For example, when we disinterestedly listen to a conference talk we are attentive participants who are exercising openness to ‘the assumptions, tensions, anxieties, and random musings that come to the fore as we sit’ but this is a case of ‘just openness’ that eludes normativity insofar as leaving the venue, or failing to listen or a refusal to be answerable are responses that ‘cannot be held against us’.23 This form of receptivity is only ‘mindful’ insofar as one is conscious of oneself and has an awareness of one’s attentiveness. In other words,
one is involved in ‘observing oneself attending to oneself’. Though this form of receptivity involves the necessary component of openness, it is not significant for our purposes of establishing a source of normativity and foundations for practical agency. This leads to the third level of receptivity Kompridis describes as ‘reflective receptivity’.

Reflective receptivity is a normative attitude that enhances the subjects’ practical agency. For Kompridis, reflective receptivity is an active rather than passive or thoughtless exercise; mindful rather than ‘unmindful’ openness. He makes an effort to distinguish between receptivity and openness by bringing to the fore the two notions of ‘mindful’ and ‘unmindful’ openness. While openness is a necessary condition for receptivity, receptivity should not be reduced to openness: a mind ‘open to all possibilities would be a mind unminded, rendered incapable of judging anything, precisely because a mind to whom everything mattered equally would be a mind to whom nothing mattered’. Being open to all views and possibilities is a type of ‘unminded openness’ or ‘indiscriminate openness’ which makes the subject submit ‘to anything that comes along’ and it results only in ‘untenable relativism’ and ‘also leads to impassivity’. Thus in and for itself, openness cannot fully exhaust all there is to receptivity.

The move to attribute ‘normative power’ to receptivity is to allow our practical agency to be grounded on something that exerts force in legitimizing action. This justifies a conception of receptivity that entails awareness to new normative demands that create new duties and obligations on us towards the other, thus instilling in us a new self-understanding. In this way, receptivity is a form of exercising freedom that obtains ‘when we spontaneously and accountably make room for the call of an other, rendering intelligible what may have been previously unintelligible’ and thereby realizing how the call of an other imposes upon us a set of normative demands for change, thus being receptive is ‘the work of going on differently in relation to an other or to others’; it is a way ‘to manifest freer relation to ourselves, thereby making actual what was possible’. Hence becoming reflectively receptive is a transition from a pre-reflective stage (through disengaged curiosity and indifference) to the stance of mindful and reflective receptivity which is the highest form of receptivity. The latter is the ability to become answerable to a ‘silenced’ other. Silence here is not necessarily literal, but involves how we attune ourselves to the suppressed voices and pay attention to the silenced and invisible subjectivities so as to give them voice for their plight to be heard, seen, and known. In this vein, a politics of receptivity becomes central to democratic politics insofar as it invokes the issue of voice and how to voice intelligibly in the available media of public discourse.

By lending normative force to the call of ‘an other’, reflective receptivity assumes a new status insofar as it requires us to attune ourselves to the voices and cries that we have been failing to promptly respond to before. This also allows us become generously responsive or what Kompridis terms ‘becoming answerable’, which entails that ‘we allow ourselves to be unsettled, decentered, thereby making it possible to occupy a potentially self-critical and illuminating stance’. Putting emphasis on
disclosure should not, however, overshadow the fact of foreclosure. While reflective disclosure allows for the disclosure of alternative possibilities, we should be wary that forms of (re)disclosure can take a dominating form by masking and disguising themselves ‘in such a way as to foreclose the disclosure of alternative possibilities’.\textsuperscript{30} For that reason, we can say that Kompridis’ valorization of provincialities and the local is not uncritical of, and oblivious to, the ways some of the practices contained therein are potentially oppressive, a factor which would have conflated receptivity with passivity or submissiveness\textsuperscript{31} had he not strategically maneuvered through it.

**RECEIVING MOOLAADE**

In the above section, I attempted to provide broad outlines of Kompridis’s conceptions of ‘reflective disclosure’ and ‘receptivity’. In this section, I set to give a brief synopsis of the film *Moolaade*. This will serve as a background of my analysis of the relevance of the film to postcolonial politics. I take *Moolaade* as an unmistakable condemnation of the custom of female genital cutting (FGC).\textsuperscript{32} Set in the small rural and Islamic village of Djerisso, Burkina Faso, the film opens up with the escape of six girls from an FGC ceremony.\textsuperscript{33} Two of the escapees disappear from the scene while the other four enter Ciré’s homestead and approach Collé, one of Ciré’s co-wives, with a plea for protection. A few years earlier, Collé and Ciré had disallowed the circumcision of Amastou, their only surviving child who had been delivered through a Caesarian section. Previously, the couple had lost two of their daughters through the effects of FGC.

Collé offers her household as refuge to the young girls by invoking a *moolaade*, an ancient pre-Islamic practice of offering protection to the weak and vulnerable, which involves erecting a strand of yarn across the enclosure of the homestead.\textsuperscript{34} By this act, the *Salindana* (the ritual priestesses) cannot step inside the homestead to take out the initiates. In the same way, the homestead now symbolizes a space of freedom within which the girls may remain but cannot go beyond. Transgressing the *moolaade* invites death at the behest of the avenging spirits, and once invoked, the spell of the *moolaade* cannot be revoked by anyone else besides the initial invoker. When the *Salindana* and mothers of the escapees come to demand the initiates back, Collé uncovers her lower body garments to show the Caesarean section scars which were the effects of her own cutting. She declares that the pain she underwent (that is, pain during her own FGC, pain of losing her babies at birth, and pain of a Caesarean section during Amastou’s delivery, and also the pain she currently endures during sex) was not to be suffered by the girls. The stark confrontation of the practices of FGC and the *moolaade* that ensues brings Collé into conflict with the village elders and the *Salindana* who are outraged by what they perceive as a woman’s utter defiance to, and stealth usurpation of, their power.

To resolve the conflict, the male-dominated village council meets in the public square to deliberate. Owing to their chauvinism, they blamed the radio for peddling
new and bad ideas which had given rise to women’s recalcitrance to patriarchal authority. They ordered all the radios to be surrendered for burning. The radios are piled together outside the mosque, some of them still turned on, and set ablaze. Ciré is also ordered to publicly flog his wife, not only as a way to force her to revoke the spell but also as a public display of his manhood. The positionality of the public square is a tellingly symbolic depiction of the ensuing conflict and appropriately fits as a disciplinary site for a defiant Collé: it is situated between the mosque and an anthill. The mosque stands for Islamism, the bedrock of the purification ritual in whose name Collé is being disciplined; the anthill symbolizes the antiquated social practice of the moolaade, an enigma whose invocation by Collé has created the stalemate. Despite the phallic imagery imputed in the architectural design of both the mosque and anthill, the juxtaposition of the two ‘oppositional signposts’ portrays the antithetical images of the two conflicting customs and how they size up each other in a contest for supremacy. The anthill invokes the legend of moolaade whose authority the elders and the Salindana threaten to transgress, while the village mosque invokes the elders’ misogynistic characteristics to which the Salindana lends support and to which the majority of women and a few male sympathizers are opposed.

In the contested space of the public square, Ciré reluctantly whips his wife. The whole congregation is divided between the men and the Salindana who urge Ciré to hit harder and to tame her, and Collé’s women supporters who defiantly urge her to stoically endure and not revoke the spell by uttering ‘the word’—the redemptive word that would revoke the spell. Mercenaire, an itinerant trader who sells wares at his local makeshift shop, cannot bear the violence. He intervenes by grabbing the whip. For his opposition, he pays the price with his life at the hands of the village elders. The wrath of the elders stems not only from his intervention but also because of Mercenaire’s occupation as a trader: he peddles ideas and artifacts of a loathed modernity which seeks to subvert patriarchal power. By trading in such things as radio batteries and condoms, which are perceived to publicize dangerous freedoms, Mercenaire’s actions expedite his own demise.

As the drama unfolds in the public square, the Salindana sneak into Collé’s homestead and tempt Diattou, one of the refugee girls, to leave the sanctuary. She is cut and bleeds to death. News breaks also that two of the girls who had escaped with the refugees had drowned themselves rather than face the horrific ritual. The deaths are a rude awakening which prompts all women to rally behind Collé to confront the village council and to give the ultimate resolution that no girl will ever be cut. Collé castigates the elders for being fearful of the radios and also for murdering Mercenaire. She also hands over the Salindana’s ritual tools, which are thrown into the blaze together with the radios. The most chilling moment that seals the fate of the FGC comes with Collé’s declaration that the Grand Imam had announced that purification is not a requirement in Islam as each year millions of uncut women go for pilgrimage to Mecca. Apparently Collé had heard the announcement on the radio that one of her-wives had hidden thus sparing it from burning.
RECASTING *MOOLAADE* THROUGH KOMPRIDIS’S REFLECTIVE RECEPTIVITY

In this section, I undertake a critical re-reading of Ousmane Sembène’s film, *Moolaade*, through Kompridis’s concepts of ‘reflective disclosure’ and ‘receptivity’. This helps to bring Kompridis’s analysis to bear in theorizing about postcoloniality. The questions that will inform my critical re-reading include: What can receptivity mean in a postcolonial context? What is its social and political significance for the postcolonial world? What insights does a practice of receptivity potentially offer to the self-understanding of postcolonial subjects? How might it alter their sense of themselves of agents? In asking these questions, I consider the film to be a very rich tapestry woven with both symbols of hope and images of suffering, and also interlaced with a cautious message about the precarious nature of postcolonial societies as they are faced with a contest between either moving on as usual (as we are and have been) or going on differently (realizing that going on as usual or remaining the way we are or have been is no longer a viable option). I will argue that if postcolonial theorists can tap from the film’s depiction of postcolonial society as a complex configuration of conflicting cultural values and traditions, they can bring to light the main problem facing the postcolonial world. The problem can be expressed as follows: How can African postcolonial societies transform themselves and be able to confront and also transcend the limitations imposed by their colonial histories? I present the concept *postcolonial receptivity* as a response to this question. The rest of the article is an attempt to defend the idea of receptivity and how it stands up to the postcolonial challenge.

Collé’s recalcitrance against FGC derives from her ability to listen to an alternative source; a source her fellow villagers are not receptive towards. Her receptivity to the girls’ plight is beyond the pre-reflective and disengaged curiosity forms: it is reflective receptivity that lends normative force to her practical agency. The act of casting the *moolaade* is ‘a practice of attentiveness’ and ‘mindfulness’ that emerges from the realization that as a society, they cannot go on as usual with the practice of FGC and the untold suffering it causes. Hence Collé’s resolve to protect the girls emanates from her ability to take a ‘self-critical and illuminating stance’ that was made possible by how she allowed herself ‘to be unsettled’ and ‘decentered’ by the girls’ plea for protection. The act of casting the spell of the *moolaade* provides condition of both possibility and also intelligibility. It is a condition of possibility that actualizes or makes realizable the protection of girls from the harmful effects of FGC. It is also a condition of intelligibility insofar as it renders expressible and coherent ‘the presence of conditions of voicelessness’ in society, thus making Collé *answerable* to ‘the painful inarticulacy of those for whom right is not presently assertible’. The condition of intelligibility entails ‘the condition of making sense of things and others’ which is achieved by listening to or giving the things and others ‘a hearing’.

The enactment of the *moolaade* is an incident of reflective disclosure with a self-decentering effect on Collé because it enlarges and transforms not only her self-understanding, but also the cultural practices of her community. Once cast,
the spell of the *moolaade* creates a crisis: on one side, it threatens to upset the balance of power that had been inherited for generations; on the other, Collé’s recalcitrance to the demand to revoke the spell imperils whoever dares to transgress the *moolaade* as the threat of avenging spirits captivates everyone. The stalemate brought about a dissonance in the community: to follow the practice means leaving the girls ‘uncut’ whereas following the purification rite means the girls have to be ‘cut’. In this way, *moolaade* is a reflective disclosure that critically discloses ‘new meaning, perspectives, interpretive and evaluative vocabulary, modes of perception, and action possibilities that stand in strikingly dissonant relations to already available meanings and familiar possibilities, to already existing ways of speaking, hearing, seeing, interpreting, and acting’.40

Being receptive to the girls and the practice of *moolaade* is a ‘cognitive undertaking’41 with a self-decentering effect insofar as it requires one ‘to surrender something of oneself’42 and by so doing it facilitates the disclosure of new and untried possibilities. The idea of ‘surrendering’ points to how the disclosure is not a predetermined act because what *an other* is going to demand of an agent cannot be established prior to the demand itself. Thus it is by the demand that the agent will (re)define and (re)discover herself. It is in this light that Kompridis argues that being reflectively receptive is an act which ‘facilitates self-discovery, since it enables movement from an old to new understanding’ thus enabling ‘the enlargement of the realm of possibility, and, at the same time, a transformation of sensibility’.43 In this way, the disclosure of the practice of casting the spell as a way of offering refuge to the vulnerable is a possibility whose success depends on its ‘world-illuminating’ possibility, thus pointing to ‘the problem-solving power of disclosure’.44

Collé does not assume that giving refuge to the girls was the endgame. Rather, it is the beginning of an attempt to raise the dangers of FGC; to take FGC and put it as an issue on the community’s social agenda; to constitute a ‘public’ around it hence initiating a public discourse about FGC.45 The *moolaade* initiates a public discourse whose direction and possible outcome cannot be predetermined. Neither is Collé’s agency going to be exercised in a familiar direction. Rather, the form of agency that discloses to Collé is reconfigured (and is also reconfiguring), transformative and critical. I will explain each. Where ordinarily agency is assigned qualities of heroism and epic feat, the form of agency that counts in reflective receptivity is one that pushes agency in a new and ‘unfamiliar direction’.46 Collé’s agency carries her into the unknown; it drives her rather than being driven; it is not only decentering but also reconfiguring. In the same vein, such agency is transformative insofar as it opens us to the possibility of thinking anew about ‘human beings as cooperative facilitators rather than as heroic creators of new disclosures and new beginnings’ thus helping to ‘free us from the mistaken idea that new disclosures and new beginnings are the work of some artistic “genius”, human or otherwise’.47 Casting the spell is a critical form of agency which involves being mindfully receptive to the reasons of *an other*. Such a critical form of agency utilizes critique in order to ‘meet the challenge of reopening the future [and also to enlarge] the space of possibility’.48
By exercising her agency in the disclosure of the new possibility to protect the vulnerable through invoking an old custom that lay dormant, Collé confirms how receptivity stems from the human capacity to form what Hannah Arendt terms an ‘enlarged mentality’.\(^{49}\) Arendt’s idea of enlarged mentality which is a rendition of Kant’s ‘enlarged thought’ relies on the Kantian insistence on ‘public use of reason’. According to Kant, a person with an enlarged mind is one who has capacity for common sense (\textit{sensus communis}); a concept which highlights a subject’s ability to liberate itself from the excessive effects of self-interest.\(^{50}\) In this way, Kantian ‘enlarged thought’ diverges from his ‘Golden Rule’ which imposes the requirement that one’s actions be in conformity to (thus in non-contradiction with) one’s own standards. In \textit{Critique of Judgment} Kant presses the point that mere agreement with one’s standards is inadequate as one should also take a broader conception and ‘think from the standpoint of everyone else’.\(^{51}\) Arendt also sees Kantian formulation of enlarged thought as important in providing the possibility for a feedback loop: while thinking depends on one’s use of public reason, it also simultaneously ‘feeds back into public life in its turn by questioning authorities and accepted assumptions’.\(^{52}\)

Kant’s idea of the ability to \textit{think from the standpoint of everyone else} is in line with Kompridis’s idea of the politics of receptivity as ‘rethinking and revising the standard of publicity’ which involves ‘the struggle to find that voice, and the voicing that articulates what could not be articulated before’, thereby initiating a struggle which ‘enlarges the horizon of moral and political significance’.\(^{53}\) This ability to enlarge the horizon of moral and political significance involves both imagination and thinking from an impartial standpoint. It is ‘becoming attuned to what and to whom we were unable to be receptive’\(^{54}\) thus seeing the standpoint of another as expressing to the subject ‘a practical agency’ or ‘a practical “normative power”’\(^{55}\) that allows the agent’s response. Collé’s ability to think from the standpoint of \textit{an other} is a form of receptivity which involves an imaginative experience or what Arjun Appadurai terms ‘the work of the imagination’.\(^{56}\) In \textit{Moolaade}, the work of the imagination involves how Collé takes a critical stance by making sense of the plight of the girls and other women; to give them an ear and voice; and also to understand their interests as placing normative demands on her to take decisive action. In such a community, the demands seem unintelligible, but her reflective receptivity to the self-disclosure of the \textit{moolaade} as a new possibility which had not been tried renders intelligible what had been previously deemed as unintelligible.

**CONCLUSION: FROM RECEPITIVITY TO POSTCOLONIAL RECEPITIVITY**

In this concluding section, I attempt to establish a point of intersection between receptivity and the postcolonial condition by addressing how the former makes the latter more intelligible. In this way, I seek to show how receptivity may help the postcolonial world to transform its own self-understanding and to re-envision alternative possibilities. In saying this, I do not intend to discount the ability of
everyday practices of the postcolonial world to disclose possibilities. Rather, I seek to argue that there is a sense in which the disclosure of possibilities that currently exists forecloses or drives out other possibilities of disclosure thus concealing the disclosedness of possible alternative worlds. In this way, a world disclosure that endangers other worlds by foreclosing their (re)disclosure through colonizing their ‘logical space of possibility’ should be understood as totalizing. It is a totalizing disclosure because it conceals the disclosedness of a plurality of local worlds from which we can derive ‘an alternative range of possibilities and alternative sources of normativity’. The questions that I seek to address are: In the film Moolaade, what are the totalizing practices that foreclose and suppress alternative range of possibilities and alternative sources of normativity? How do they render voiceless and inaudible their (re)disclosure? I will proceed to highlight how these questions play out in postcolonial thought or theorizing.

_Moolaade_ highlights the ambivalence of FGC as both cutting and purification. As cutting, it condemns the victim to death. Real death suffered by Diattou; and also social death as is experienced by Collé. While she survived real death, Collé still carries the physical scars of the Caesarean operation. By revealing the scar left on her body after the Caesarean section to the Salindana, Colé demonstrates how her own body is a living symbol of the devastating effects of FGC. She also has mental scars as she lost two children. Further, she still experiences intense pain during sex. As purification, FGC is a normative source of identity as it defines what it means to be a woman in Djerisso village: it provides an impetus to the questions ‘Who am I? ’; ‘What is the meaning of life? ’; ‘What values should I uphold?’ Those who refuse the purification suffer social death which manifests itself in their condemnation as bilakoro, that is, impure women, social outcasts unfit for marriage. The bilakoro are occupants of ambiguous and imprecise space; subjects whom Victor Turner terms “liminal” entities because they are ‘neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial’. Collé bears the burden of her daughter’s liminality, and suffers to affirm the same for the refugee girls. She struggles to challenge the identity which renders the girls inadequate, invisible, and voiceless in the village’s social structure. She challenges the normativity of the identity bestowed by the purification rite. This normativity is totalizing and inimical to that liminality. By foregrounding and affirming liminality as another legitimate way of becoming and being-in-the-world, Collé challenges the social inscription of the girls’ identity as abnormal, thus decentering purification as the normative basis for incorporation into society. In this way, she points to the possibility of liminality as an alternative source of normativity. However, to say that Collé’s act is an affirmation of an alternative source of normativity is not to suggest that a search for alternative sources of normativity is always propped up by an anti-essentialist approach to culture.

Collé’s receptivity to _an other_ can be critically analyzed from William Connolly’s perspective of ‘politics of becoming’. Connolly describes this as the ‘paradoxical politics by which new cultural identities are formed out of unexpected energies and institutionally congealed injuries’; a form of politics that ‘emerges out of the energies,
suffering, and the lines of flight available to culturally defined differences in a particular institutional constellation'. The bilakoro is a form of becoming that emerges out of the energies of suffering inflicted by apparatuses of power within the institutional constellation of the village structure. It is a form of identity which beckons to Collé as an alternative source of normativity. By being answerable to it, by foregrounding the liminality of bilakoro and presenting the case that the girls ought to be received and incorporated into society as they are, Collé ‘succeeds in placing a new identity on the cultural field’ and thereby manages to disrupt and change ‘the shape and contour of already entrenched identities as well’. Ibrahima, the son of the village chief and university graduate who has recently returned from France, retains his television set despite the order by the elders to have it burnt along with the radios. Despite his father’s threats that he is going to disinherit him, he also continues to associate with Amastou, the bilakoro. By bluntly telling his father that who he intends to marry is his own business, Ibrahima lends support to a new politics of becoming initiated by Collé. By breaking with tradition, Ibrahima pursues Connolly’s ‘line of flight’ which crystallizes the bilakoro as a legitimate alternative identity.

Understanding receptivity as a way of making the world intelligible by opening our experiences to alternative sources of normativity is central to the way in which we think about the postcolonial condition in two ways. Firstly, the postcolonial condition is a challenge of how we can renew and transform our social institutions and political processes and practices. It is a challenge which can only begin to take place by initiating a process of ‘beginning anew’. To realize this, there is a need to both resist totalizing practices that foreclose other forms of disclosure and also to nurture sensibilities that render us mindfully attentive and attuned to the disclosure of alternative possibilities.

The second point relates to the ways in which postcolonial theory has been applied and interpreted. As a field of study that focuses on politics and culture, subjectivity and identity formation, and how the interplay of knowledge/power is imputed in all this, African postcolonial theory is steadily weakening because of theorists’ failure to innovatively search for new perspectives to enrich their debates. The search for innovative ways has been animated by the preoccupation with authenticity which has strengthened the fear to look for alternative sources to lend a new impetus to postcolonial critique. The fear has resulted in postcolonial theory ill-equipped to attune itself and being receptive to the intellectual resources that can be tapped from other areas of study.

Hence I argue that postcolonial theory requires self-renewal and transformation of its own self-understanding by opening up and being attuned to the disclosure of novel forms of interpretation of its own world and also by the incorporation of new vocabularies. This approach is epitomized by the stance taken by the protagonist when she appropriates moolaaade. By appropriating the practice, Collé exercises a form of receptivity which ‘facilitates discovery and self-discovery, since it enables movement from an old to a new understanding’ thus further enabling ‘the enlargement of the realm of possibility, and at the same time, a transformation of sensibility’. In a similar vein, thinking about the postcolonial condition requires receptivity to new ways
of how we can renew and transform our inherited pasts and also how we can correct ‘the proportion of continuity and discontinuity in the forms of life we pass on’.

The possibility of being attuned to or being receptive to alternative sources to confront the postcolonial challenge is what I term postcolonial receptivity. What I term the postcolonial challenge is the problem of how present social and political conditions of postcolonial societies can be confronted and re-articulated by looking at the relationships between pasts and presents. In short, the postcolonial challenge is the reflective response to the postcolonial condition or the question of how postcolonial societies should continue into their desired-futures, and which pasts and other forms of life they have to look to in their ‘continuation’. I seek to foreground postcolonial receptivity as a concept that occupies a central place in the quest for postcolonial theory’s self-understanding and also for the transformation of postcolonial social and political institutions and practices. Hence postcolonial receptivity is a form of understanding that enhances not only the conditions of possibility of transforming social and political conditions of life in a postcolonial setting, but also the conditions of intelligibility of life therein. Given the social and political conditions in the postcolonial world, and enormous challenges that these present, there is need for postcolonial subjects ‘to foster and practice new forms of freedom, agency and critique’ by which to renew or transform social and political institutions.

Postcolonial receptivity comprises of a set of practices and forms of critique that yield in forms of reason to engender the possibility of ameliorating against the threats posed by inaction or unmindful action. It should also nurture forms of pluralism that resist the totalizing practices and totalizing disclosures of alternative ways of being and becoming. In this way, postcolonial receptivity critically questions how some forms of theorizing postcoloniality have foreclosed alternative ways of understanding the postcolonial condition by destroying the logical space for their articulation. Therefore, postcolonial theorizing has been left unable to visualize the possibility of transformed politics. In this way, we have not been able to courageously and studiously question the way we have been carrying on the business of politics and political theorizing. This partly explains why we have allowed some forms of violence and oppression to continue with impunity.

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NOTES

1. As a conceptual tool of critique, the African ‘postcolonial condition’ has received a more detailed analysis in the area of postcolonial literature. See, for example, Phyllis Taoua’s essay, ‘The Postcolonial Condition,’ ed. Abiola Irele. The Cambridge Companion to the African Novel
Rethinking receptivity in a postcolonial context

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 209–26; and essays in *The Post-Colonial Condition of African Literature*, eds. Daniel Gover, John Conteh-Morgan and Jane Bryce (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000). In my view, the full potential of this concept can be achieved if it gets much broader analyses.

2. The book *Critique and Disclosure: Critical Theory between Past and Future* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006) has attracted a very significant amount of critical and insightful responses. In its November 2011 issue, the journal *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 37, no. 9, published a symposium which features four reviews of the book and a response from the author. Further, there are also other reviews and commentaries that highlight the book’s merits. See for example, Fred Dallmayr on Notre Dame Philosophical Review, http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/23901-critique-and-disclosure-critical-theory-between-past-and-future/; Patrick Gamez, *Symposium* 13, no. 2 (2009), also available at http://www.c-scp.org/en/2010/06/22/nikolas-kompridis-critique-and-disclosure.html.

3. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Introduction to the Special Issue “A Politics of Receptivity,” *Ethics & Global Politics*, 4, no. 4 (2011): 203. All four original articles are proceedings of a ‘Politics of Receptivity’ workshop organised by Kompridis and held at University of Western Sydney, Australia, from 16th to 18th May 2011. They are as follows: Aletta Norval, ‘Moral Perfectionism and Democratic Responsiveness: Reading Cavell with Foucault’, 207–29; Jennifer Nedelsky, ‘Receptivity and Judgment’, 231–54, Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Receptivity, Possibility, and Democratic Politics’, 255–72; and Romand Coles, ‘The Neuropolitical Habitus of Resonant Receptive Democracy’, 273–93.

4. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Introduction to the Special Issue “A Politics of Receptivity”’, 203.

5. Ibid.

6. Nikolas Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure*, 192. Part of my argument is that what Kompridis calls ‘the problem of beginning anew’ can be used to address the ‘postcolonial condition’. For Kompridis, ‘the problem of beginning anew’ involves a reflective response to the question: ‘how do we “go on”? To where do we go on? What do we take and what do we leave behind? What of ourselves do we continue, what discontinue? Where or what do we look for orientation? Do we look to the past? Or do we look to other forms of life?’ (Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure*, 8–9). Kompridis’s questions are central to the postcolonial condition insofar as they address a society’s relationship to itself, its past and present and also its hoped-for future(s). Looking at these questions, Kompridis argues, involves critically analysing ‘the proportions of continuity and discontinuity in the forms of life’ that we not only reflectively pass on but that we also self-critically inherit from the past(s) (Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure*, 9).

7. Nikolas Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure*, 1.

8. Amy Allen, ‘The Power of Disclosure: Comments on Nikolas Kompridis’ *Critique and Disclosure*. *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 37, no. 9 (2011): 1027.

9. I need to emphasise here that while my analysis of Kompridis’s notion of receptivity may call for reference to the essential works and philosophical thought of Heidegger, I am not going to allow myself to be immersed in the complex Heideggerian philosophy. I follow Fred Rush’s strategy of explicating Kompridis main ideas ‘without any essential reference to Heidegger’ and I also adopt his cue that ‘[o]ne might think quite sensibly that there is really no reason to get bogged down to the intricacies of Heideggerian phenomenology unless one has to do so’ (Fred Rush, ‘Reason and Receptivity in Critical Theory’, *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 37, no. 9 (2011): 1047).

10. Nikolas Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure*, 17.

11. Ibid., 233.

12. Ibid., 233–4.

13. Ibid., 33.

14. Nikolas Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure*, 26.

15. Ibid., 296, note 14.
16. Ibid., 65 (emphasis in original).
17. I use the concept ‘an other’ to point to the definitional criteria used by ‘insiders’ in the subjective processes of inclusion or exclusion. The practice of receptivity is an attempt to broaden the definitional criteria so that they include ‘outiders’ who would otherwise be left out should the criteria remain stringent.
18. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Receptivity, Possibility, and Democratic Politics’, 259 (emphasis in the original).
19. Ibid., 259.
20. Hubert Dreyfus, ‘Being and Power: Heidegger and Foucault’, International Journal of Philosophical Studies 4, no. 1 (1996): 2. See also Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Receptivity, Possibility, and Democratic Politics’, 259–60.
21. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Receptivity, Possibility, and Democratic Politics’, 262.
22. Ibid., 263.
23. Ibid., 263.
24. Ibid., 263.
25. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘On Critique and Disclosure: A Reply to Four Generous Critics’, Philosophy and Social Criticism 37, no. 9 (2011): 1066.
26. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Receptivity, Possibility, and Democratic Politics’, 263. See also Kompridis, ‘On Critique and Disclosure: A Reply to Four Generous Critics’, 1066.
27. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Receptivity, Possibility, and Democratic Politics’, 264.
28. Ibid., 267.
29. Ibid. Kompridis develops the role of receptivity by drawing from Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essay ‘Experience’. Here, Emerson argues receptivity is made possible by ‘the mode of illumination’, a phrase which entails openness and unpredictability of the subject’s response to what confronts it. Unlike the satisfactions of desire where the response is guaranteed (as when thirst instructs the subject to drink water or cold instructs her to go to fire), receptivity as a form of normative answerability that results from our occupation of a self-critical and illuminating stance entails that we cannot know yet where our response leads to or yields in. Thus the mode of illumination precludes the subject from making predetermined predictions about how desires are satisfied. Instead the mode of illumination ‘requires persistence’, it is ‘a lingering kind of thinking, lingering long enough in thought to allow a previously unvisited region of life (of the lifeworld) to give “further sign to itself”’ (Nikolas Kompridis, Critique and Disclosure, 204–5).
30. Nikolas Kompridis, Critique and Disclosure, 221.
31. Ibid.
32. The phrase FGC is highly emotive as it invokes a misogynistic undercurrent that is consistent with the wide range of international organizations which have strongly lobbied to end the practice. The defenders and adherents of the practice call it ‘purification’, a term which both misleadingly undervalues the effects of the practice by sanitizing it and also carries euphemistic connotations. My intention of using this specific phrase is to capture the spirit in which Sembène’s film depicts the practice. The equivalent of FGC is ‘female genital mutilation’ (FGM). Other scholars, however, prefer to use such terms as ‘female circumcision’, ‘genital modification’, ‘rite of female circumcision’, ‘female genital surgery’, ‘excision’, ‘infibulation’, or ‘clitoridectomy’—all in an attempt to both avoid the misogynist connotation, thus affirming their ethical neutrality, and also to show the severity of the removal of the genital part. While I consider the practice on young girls as wrong, in this article I am not particularly interested in the finer distinctions between these terms, despite their importance. For a more detailed analyses of these terms, see, for example, ‘World Health Organization Report, Female Genital Mutilation’, Media Fact Sheet no. 241 (February 2010), http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/ (accessed October 9, 2011); and Fuambai Ahmadu, ‘Ain’t I a Woman Too?: Challenging Myths of Sexual Dysfunction in Circumcised Women’, eds. Y. Hernlund and B. Shell-Duncan, Transcultural
Bodies: Female Genital Cutting in Global Context (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 278–310.

33. I owe a debt of gratitude to Anisha Gautam who not only alerted me to the danger inherent in identifying the FGC practice as Islamic but also suggested the literature which argues that the practice predates Islam. For example, Aileen Kennedy argues that while the origins of the tradition are unknown, they are thought to go over 2,000 years and certainly pre-date both Christianity and Islam (Aileen Kennedy, ‘Mutilation and Beautification: Legal Responses to Genital Surgeries’, Australian Feminist Studies 24, no. 60 (2009): 211).

34. In Ousmane Sembène’s Wolof language, the word moolaade means ‘protection’ or ‘sanctuary’.

35. Jude Akudinobi, ‘Durable Dreams, Dissent, Critique, and Creativity in Faat Kiné and Moolaade’, Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism 6, no. 2 (2006): 186.

36. In my view, the film adequately captures what I described above as the ‘postcolonial condition’ or the ‘condition of postcoloniality’—a problem of how forms of life of a postcolonial society should relate to their pre-colonial, colonial pasts and their postcolonial present and also their envisaged futures. This problem can be brought closer to what Kompridis describes as the ‘problem of beginning anew’, which involves a reflective response to the question: ‘how do we “go on”? To where do we go on? What do we take and what do we leave behind? What of ourselves do we continue, what discontinue? Where or what do we look for orientation? Do we look to the past? Or do we look to other forms of life?’ (Kompridis, Critique and Disclosure, 8–9). These questions are key to the postcolonial condition insofar as they address a society’s relationship to itself, its past and present and also how its hoped-for future involves ‘the proportions of continuity and discontinuity in the forms of life’ (Kompridis, Critique and Disclosure, 9) that we not only reflectively pass on but that we also self-critically inherit from the past(s).

37. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Receptivity, Possibility, and Democratic Politics’, 264.

38. Ibid., 267.

39. Ibid., 264.

40. Nikolas Kompridis, Critique and Disclosure, 35.

41. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Receptivity, Possibility, and Democratic Politics’, 264.

42. Nikolas Kompridis, Critique and Disclosure, 206.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 112.

45. Here, I follow Noortje Marres’s ‘issue-oriented’ perspective of public involvement in politics. This perspective conceives ‘issues’ as the organising principle of a public, thus ‘a public’ is constituted around specific issues, such that if there is no issue, then there is no public. See her ‘No Issue, No Public: Democratic Deficits after the Displacement of Politics’, (Unpublished PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2005). See also ‘The Issues Deserve More Credit: Pragmatist Contributions to the Study of Public Involvement in Controversy’. Social Studies of Science 37, no. 5 (2007): 759–80.

46. Nikolas Kompridis, Critique and Disclosure, 203.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., 254.

49. Hannah Arendt, Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 68.

50. A lengthy quote suffices to show what Kant means by this notion: ‘By the name sensus communis is to be understood the idea of a public sense, i.e. a critical faculty which in its reflective act takes account (a priori) of the mode of representation of every one else, in order, as it were, to weigh its judgment with the collective reason of mankind, and thereby avoid the illusion arising from subjective and personal conditions which could readily be taken for objective, an illusion that would exert a prejudicial influence upon its judgment. This is accomplished by weighing the judgment, not so much with actual, as rather with the merely possible, judgments of others, and by putting ourselves in the position of every one else, as the result of a mere
abstraction from the limitations which continentally affect our own estimate' (Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 91.

51. Ibid., 152.
52. Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, 38.
53. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Receptivity, Possibility, and Democratic Politics’, 267.
54. Ibid., 264.
55. Ibid., 263–64.
56. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3.
57. Nikolas Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure*, 220.
58. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1969), 95.
59. The reason for mentioning this is that there is a flawed tendency to over-emphasize the plasticity, permeability and fluidity of culture and cultural practices, and to conceive all forms of contest within a specific cultural domain as lending credence to an anti-essentialist view of culture. Rather, what I seek to highlight here is that Collé’s act is not to be seen as a challenge to the coherence of her culture and cultural practices or a doubt to the view that her culture is holistic. Such a challenge would render culture too transient and unidentifiable. Rather, I conceive of Collé’s act as an example of how culture can be critiqued from within, thus circumventing the tendency towards anti-essentialism which leads to normativization of hybridity and, as such, neutralization of culture. For a more detailed and critical analysis of the critique of the anti-essentialist view of culture, see Nikolas Kompridis’s ‘Normativizing Hybridity/Neutralizing Culture’, *Political Theory* 33, no. 3 (2005): 318–43.
60. William Connolly, *Why I Am Not a Secularist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 57.
61. Ibid., 57.
62. Postcolonial theory has faced disparaging criticisms from various angles. Some critics have argued that the ‘post’ in ‘postcolonial theory’ is a derivation from ‘postmodernism’ (For a discussion of this critique, see, for example, Linda Hutcheon’s article, ‘The Post Always Rings Twice: The Postmodern and the Postcolonial’, *Textual Practice* 8, no. 2 (1994): 205–238 and Kwame Anthony Appiah, ‘Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial’, *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 2 (1991): 336–357). Other critics have argued that since postcolonial theory originates in the Western academe, then it is impotent for Africa and Africans. (See, for example, Ella Shohat, ‘Notes on the “Post-Colonial”’, *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 99–113). For responses see, for example, Arif Dirlik, ‘The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism’, *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 2 (1994): 328–56, and Aijaz Ahmad, ‘The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality’, *Race and Class* 36, no. 3 (1995): 1–20, and also Rajeswari S. Rajan, ‘The Third World Academic in Other Places; Or, the Postcolonial Intellectual Revisited’, *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 3 (1997): 596–616. The criticisms have been used to suggest that postcolonial theory is not authentically African and therefore irrelevant for re-envisioning African social and political transformation. The search for authenticity has foreclosed the possibility to see how other areas of study present conceptual resources that disclose possibilities for African studies’ own enrichment.
63. Nikolas Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure*, 206.
64. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘Receptivity, Possibility, and Democratic Politics’, 258.