

12. Ringvorlesung Gender Studies
Biopolitiken aus queer-feministischer und
postkolonialer Perspektive
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Nikita Dhawan: *The Empire Prays Back: Religion, Secularity and Queer Critique*
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The past decades have been ones of unprecedented sociocultural and legal gains for queer politics. But these achievements have been accompanied by a severe critique of queer racism and of the imperialist agenda of global gay politics. The employment of gender and sexuality as alibis for legitimizing violence against religious groups, especially Muslims, has opened up fundamental questions regarding the future of queer emancipatory politics. While supportive of the urgency of critiquing the complicities of Western queer politics in neoliberal, imperial discourses, I am troubled by the silences on and the lack of critique of homophobia and heterosexism in diasporic and postcolonial contexts. The unwillingness to address the violent experiences of those subjects who are vulnerable to both queer racism as well as postcolonial heteronormativity has become the Achilles heel of the recent postsecular turn in queer postcolonial scholarship and activism. Religious violence against sexual minorities is ignored by prioritizing violence against religious minorities. The sole focus on queer racism and homonationalism in the global North neglects how supposedly conflicting ideologies of heteronormative nationalisms on both sides of the postcolonial divide in fact collaborate with each other. There is an urgent need to explore non-imperialist strategies of contesting heterosexism and homophobia in diasporic and postcolonial contexts and pursue a more complex, multidirectional politics of critique that is directed at coercive practices across the secularism-religion divide. Critique, when engaging with solely one dimension of domination, risks reproducing violence. Thus, anti-imperialist and antiracist critique of queer politics must be accompanied by a critique of “reproductive heteronormativity” within postcolonial contexts.

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