

# INTRODUCTION – Reshaping Glocal Dynamics of the Caribbean

## 1 Relations and Disconnections

Deities were entering the field. What we generally call “Indian music” was blaring from the open platformed shed from which the epic would be narrated. Costumed actors were arriving. Princes and gods, I supposed. What an unfortunate confession! “Gods, I suppose” is the shrug that embodies our African and Asian diasporas. I had often thought of but never seen *Ramleela*, and had never seen this theatre, an open field, with village children as warriors, princes, and gods. I had no idea what the epic story was [...], yet I had recently adapted the *Odyssey* for a theatre in England, presuming that the audience knew the trials of Odysseus, [...] while nobody in Trinidad knew any more than I did about Rama, Kali, Shiva, Vishnu, apart from the Indians, a phrase I use pervertedly because that is the kind of remark you can still hear in Trinidad: “apart from the Indians.”  
(Derek Walcott: *Nobel Lecture*, 1992)

aquí al fondo danzan concejales –  
ahogados todos del Caribe  
emisarios  
de las naciones del pasaje intermedio:  
delegados de Costa de Marfil,  
ciboneyes todavía suicidándose en rituales de mar  
disidentes de Trujillo, de Batista, Duvalier  
(Mayra Santos Febres: *Boat People*, 2005, 47)

[...] la tentative d’approcher une réalité tant de fois occultée ne s’ordonne pas tout de suite autour d’une série de clarté. Nous réclavons le droit à l’opacité. [...] l’élan des peuples néantisés qui opposent aujourd’hui à l’universel de la transparence, imposé par l’Occident, une multiplicité sourde du Divers. [...] L’intention en ce travail fut d’accumuler à tous les niveaux. L’accumulation est la technique la plus appropriée de dévoilement d’une réalité qui elle-même s’éparpille.  
(Edouard Glissant: *Le discours antillais*, 1997 [1981], 14–17)

Derek Walcott’s famous Nobel Prize acceptance speech “The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory” from 1992 not only points to the “fragmented memory” of the Antilles and the role that art plays within this “shattered history” marked

by deep scars but glued by love (Walcott 1992). It also highlights the hierarchization of memories and cultures, the highly ideologized relations and disconnections, continuities and ruptures that characterize the region in the realms of politics, society, culture, and the arts until the present. The originally dismissive remarks “Gods, I suppose” and “apart from the Indians”, which Walcott reproduces self-critically, reflect on his own position while observing the staging of an East Indian epos in rural Trinidad. They also allude to the phenomenon of ethnopolitization, common in Trinidad but especially virulent in the Republic of Guyana, where citizens of Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean descent affront each other politically.<sup>1</sup> Walcott’s famous metaphor of the “shattered vase” from the same text (cf. Walcott 1992) not only refers to the present Caribbean as a multi-faceted, multiethnic, and multilingual region influenced by diverging colonial histories; it also applies to the difficult recollection of a fragmented and discontinuous history. Due to its, in parts, irretrievable history of forceful displacement, colonial violence, Afro-Caribbean slavery, and Indo-Caribbean indentureship, some pieces of the historical puzzle will always be lost. There are, however, manifold attempts to fill this void. Resourceful historians read the perpetrators’ archives against the grain in order to reconstruct the victims’ voices (cf. Geggus 2002; Scott 2012; Zeuske 2015). In addition, the arts, fiction and poetry in particular, keep alive, restore, and re-create the memory of the Middle Passage as well as the crossing of the Kala Pani along with their consequences. In *Boat People* (2005), Afro-Puerto-Rican poetess and writer Mayra Santos Febres points to the diversity of the Middle Passage’s victims and its parallelisms with other victims of the Caribbean Sea – such as exiles fleeing Haitian or Dominican dictatorial regimes, discrimination, and famines. In her multi-faceted novel *Fe en disfraz* (2009), she attempts to reconstruct a femino-centric, pan-Afro-Caribbean history of slavery from the perspective of female slaves and their descendants.<sup>2</sup> Following the lead of historical slave narratives and adding fictional Latin American sources, the text builds bridges between the present and the past as well as within and between the Caribbean region and its diasporas.<sup>3</sup>

1 It is only since 2015 that a multi-ethnic, multi-party alliance, APNU-AFC (A Partnership for National Union and Alliance for Change), administrates the country after decades of ethnopolitical scission between the ‘Indian party’ PPP (People’s Progressive Party) and the ‘African party,’ PNC (People’s National Congress), and the period of political violence during the rule of Forbes Burnham.

2 For an analysis cf. the contribution of Adriana López-Labourdette in this volume or Brüske 2018.

3 Similarly, Indo-Caribbean writers like Trinidad-born authors Lakshmi Persaud and Ramabai Espinet or Martinican Camille Moutoussamy intend to recover the lost or often

In a similar vein, Edouard Glissant suggests that Caribbean history and art feature an aesthetics of repetition which organizes the cyclonic and opaque history of the Antilles. He refers to the specific constitution of a fractured history by repetition, variation, and accumulation. It is through these techniques that we can approach the region's discontinuous “non-histoire” (Glissant 1997: 263). The experience of rupture, this “encuentro catastrófico” of the ‘discovery’ (Ortega/Rodríguez Juliá 1991: 156), the Middle Passage, and the enslavement have led to a fiction marked by frequent changes of perspective, ellipses, and an oftentimes pronouncedly ambivalent style of narration. Fiction and artistic expression in general then have become tools suitable to affront historically experienced hardship and chaos as well as psychic and physical injuries.

As our reflections on the fragments of Derek Walcott's, Mayra Santos Febres', and Edouard Glissant's texts indicate, the interplay of relations and disconnections, cohesive and separating elements, lies at the core of an advanced understanding of contemporary Caribbean realities and academic or artistic interventions on ‘the Caribbean.’ Taking these issues seriously, in this publication we aim to shed light from an explicitly comparative, historical, and contemporary perspective both on the phenomena described by the concepts of “relation” (Glissant), “mangrove” (Condé), or “the repeating island” (Benítez Rojo) and on the experience of historical, political, social, cultural, linguistic, and artistic disconnections.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the present volume proposes to remap and reshape both processes of circulation and non-circulation of ideas, people, and things<sup>5</sup> in and between the Caribbean as well as between the Caribbean and other regions from a multidisciplinary and multilingual view, taking also into account the different places of knowledge production in Caribbean Studies. This approach seems appropriate if we consider the complex picture of Caribbean societies and their diasporas sketched out in the citations above but more importantly so in the manifold and highly dynamic contemporary constellations that describe Caribbean realities. Accordingly, we would like to stress the multiple ways in which the social, political, cultural, and academic dimensions of the transversal topics addressed in this book are interwoven:

shamefully hidden subaltern Indo-Caribbean heritage in their novels, for instance in Moutoussamy's work *Éclats d'Inde* (2003).

<sup>4</sup> In her monography *Poetics of Relation. Caribbean Women Writing at the Millenium* (2012), Odile Ferly complements Glissant's relation by recurring to Condé's mangrove, thus promoting a conceptual shift from the single and masculinist root of the rhizome to the multi-rooted, life-bearing and interconnected space of the mangrove, more apt for studying also gender-related issues in the Caribbean and its literary production.

<sup>5</sup> We refer to the more general notion of things here as opposed to “material goods,” “commodities,” or “artefacts” as already economically, socially, and culturally defined items.

academic and artistic approaches, arts and visual studies, environment and sustainability, migration and transnational networks, entangled histories and memories. Those topics are highly relevant to current Caribbean Studies, as they represent virulent issues for contemporary Caribbean societies and thus call for a thorough analysis of historical and contemporary social dynamics in the region.

While the previous examples of the Caribbean's shattered history, its theorization, and its aesthetization highlight the entanglements between theory, arts, and politics, the following cases in point shall illustrate further dynamic battlefields, especially in (academic) politics, urbanism, and ecological or social deprivation. For, however different the colonial heritage of the Caribbean Archipelago and the Circum-Caribbean and their cultural expressions may be, all nations and territories share the legacy of displacement and enslavement as a common historical experience, with highly diverging outputs concerning ethnic and linguistic composition, literacy rates, economic capacity, social inequality, and political orientation. When it comes to sovereignty, especially the French, French-based Creole, and Spanish-speaking territories diverge dramatically. Besides these complex trans/national constellations, post/colonial discontinuities also lead to processes of intellectual or political discontent, for which the scission of the *Université des Antilles et de la Guyane* (UAG) in 2014 (cf. Méné-Caster in this volume) or the arduous negotiations towards a common Caribbean policy within CARICOM are but two recent examples.

Similarly, Haiti's and the 'West's' entangled and conflictual history, that is the various levels of relations and disconnections between the local and global are mirrored by the complicated process of reconstruction in post-earthquake Port-au-Prince in which the international community's omnipresent, inefficient, sometimes fraudulent interventions and the undemocratically elected government under President Martelly are subject to harsh criticism. Furthermore, human beings are increasingly exposed to precarious physical, economical, and (geo)political environments. Therefore, the Caribbean has seen a rise in social movements and local activism. *Liyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon* (literally: "Mouvement contre la surexploitation") in Guadeloupe in 2009 or *Pou la Gwiyan Dékolé* (literally: "Pour que la Guyane décolle") in French Guiana in 2017 have mobilized people in form of general strikes against increased costs of living and highlighted the importance of having access to the local and the regional decision making level in the Caribbean as well as to transatlantic politics. Also, distributional issues linked to environmental problems and deprivations, as discussed by Rivke Jaffe (2016) for Curaçao, or accessibility to renovated eco-housing as in Fort-de-France's former public housing project (*grand ensemble*) Bon Air quarter (cf. Bohle in this volume) play an important role here. Other issues are institutional racism, spatial apartheid of tourists and

locals, exclusion of locals from access to beaches and coastlines threatening possibilities of livelihood and recreation, and the increasing power of foreign investors.

Relations and disconnections as well as surprising blanks deeply mark the unequal, frequently entangled, or interrupted paths of reception and tradition-making in Caribbean literature, theory, and arts. The question of language is crucial here: On the level of concepts, regional models such as Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Otherwise Modern* (2002), Nelson Maldonado-Torres' *Views from the Underside of Modernity* (2008), or Paul Gilroy's concept of a "Counterculture of Modernity" (1993) have had a supra-regional impact thanks to their place (USA or England) and language of publication.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, the recognition of theoretical texts originally written in French or Spanish is too often limited to their linguistic realm, which contributes to isolated lines of theorization. The politico-literary movements of francophone *Négritude* and hispanophone *Negrismo* are another case in point for various sets of relations and disconnections along language, gender, disciplinary, and political lines. Consider, for instance, the halting reception of Guyanese poet Léon-Gontran Damas, one of the co-founders of the *Négritude* movement in Paris as compared to fellow writers Aimé Césaire's and Léopold Sédar Senghor's. Until the 2010s, Damas' poetry has been largely ignored and disconnected from the original creation myth of *Négritude* for mainly ideological reasons (cf. Gyssels in this volume; Emina 2014; Rabaka 2015). As this example shows, an in-depth approach to this intellectual and artistic movement helps to reconstruct other specific intra-Caribbean and intermedial connections. In *Césaire & Lam: Insolites bâtisseurs* (2011), Daniel Maximin unravels how much Césaire's *Négritude* had been influenced by Cuban exile Wifredo Lam's visual art. For Maximin, the reason for this mutual attraction lies in the way in which both oeuvres seek to approach their African roots, leading to common artistic productions by Césaire and Lam.

In this sense, the movements of *Négritude* and *Negrismo* are also exemplary for the power of linguistic boundaries which hamper or impede the reception of theoretical, political, social, or artistic movements within the Caribbean region: *Négritude* and *Negrismo* evolved as two separate, yet in certain aspects similar movements, one tied to the Hispanic Caribbean, the other one to a wider African Francophonie. Similarly, in Hispano-Caribbean *Negrismo*, which has its starting point in the Caribbean itself, the fecund inter-

6 U.S. academic consideration or English translations often serve as relay-stations for knowledge production (cf. Bandau/Zapata Galindo 2011) while original translations from French to Spanish or Spanish to French are still rare. The translation project "Pen-samiento caribeño" initiated by Adriana López-Labourdette intends to fill this gap.

play of different forms of arts is characteristic, especially in Nicolás Guillén’s poetry and Afro-Cuban *son*.<sup>7</sup>

However, the in- and exclusion of individual actors of *Négritude* and *Negrismo* also follows specific configurations of gender and power relations. Think, for example, of the romanticizing and feminizing images of Africa in the works of *Négritude*’s founding fathers (e.g. the trope of Mama Africa) or the gaping absence of *Négritude Women*, such as Jane, Andrée, and Paulette Nardal or Suzanne Césaire from editorial projects and academic discussions (Sharpley-Whiting 2002 and 2009).<sup>8</sup> The Martinican writer Suzanne Césaire – whose theoretical texts have not been re-edited until recently (2009) – develops a critical view on the relation between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ world and the subsequent production of a glamorous “American society” at a price of extinguishing the original inhabitants of the Antilles and enslaving millions of Africans and Afro-descendants. *Negrismo* pioneer and Cuban anthropologist Lydia Cabrera’s case lies a little different: Her crucial role in the recovery of Afro-Cuban heritage in Cuba has never been questioned by the field’s specialists. It is outside anthropology and Cuban Studies that her contribution has been recognized only lately: Her publications on Afro-Cuban religion, songs, and proverbs (Cabrera 1936) were indeed a substantial source of inspiration for artists like Lam and they influenced Fernando Ortiz’ subsequent conception of transculturation. Moreover, her swift translation of Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* (1939) granted an access for Spanish-speakers to this foundational piece of *Négritude*.<sup>9</sup>

Gender as a partial blind spot and a site of complex, often intersectionally motivated disconnections is, of course, not specific to *Négritude* or *Negrismo* but a larger structural problem in Caribbean writing and its national, regional, and international reception insofar as, seemingly, Caribbean women writers are readily excluded from national and/or international canons.<sup>10</sup> How many

7 So far, the research on the history of *Négritude* and the history of *Negrismo* have been undertaken separately. On the investigation on the connections between both movements and their consequences as well as effects on new notions of humanism see Fera-cho 2001; Ueckmann/Febl 2017.

8 Daniel Maximin (2009) published recently important texts of Suzanne Césaire entitled *Le Grand Camouflage. Écrits de dissidence (1941/1945)* and thus made them accessible for a broader readership. These texts were first published in the famous journal *Tropiques* (1941–1945).

9 On Cabrera’s delayed and controversial reception cf. Garcia Vega 1993; Rodriguez Mangual 2004.

10 For instance, already in the 1950s, Mayotte Capécia’s autobiography, *Je suis martiniquaise* (1948) was the target of Frantz Fanon’s exacerbated criticism (cf. Cottias/Doby 2012).

Caribbean female intellectuals are as influential and widely received as Edouard Glissant, Antonio Benítez-Rojo, or Paul Gilroy? How many Caribbean women writers of fiction meet as much critical acclaim as V.S. Naipaul, José Lezama Lima, or Jacques Roumain?

Writing from exile or from the diaspora does not necessarily influence reception processes in entirely predictable ways either but heavily depends on political and historical constellations. On the one hand, US-Haitian and US-Dominican writers Edwidge Danticat and Junot Díaz, for instance, are too often perceived by their readers from the Global North as representatives of Haiti's and the Dominican Republic's literature and the respective country's spokespersons; and this despite the fact that, as diaspora artists, they are clearly part of the literary marketplace in the United States. On the other hand, their fiction, which because it is Anglophone and therefore highly visible in an international sphere, is looked upon with suspicion in Haiti or the Dominican Republic, countries with a dictatorial past in which exiles and exiled writers have been despised and denaturalized for political reasons. In other cases, writers from the region, such as Guyana Prize winner and Georgetown-based Ruel Johnson and others, have engaged in a critique (2012–2013) of their own Caribbean countries on behalf of their cultural politics and regional publishing policies that, according to Johnson, continue to favor diaspora over resident writers (cf. [Laughlin/Johnson 2008](#); [Braithwaite 2013](#); [Dabydeen 2013](#)).

Undisputedly, the Caribbean's history of dispersion and interconnection melds a vast array of agents, cultural practices, objects, and media into processes of exchange and synthesis and complex architectures of social negotiations. The resulting dialogue between theory, socio-cultural practices, and arts has generated a field of dynamic, yet at times insular knowledge-production. Therefore, we propose to explore, from a hitherto lacking comparative perspective, how (non)circulation occurred historically in the global and local production of knowledge in and about the Caribbean and aim to (re)map mechanisms and institutional contexts in specific cases. Our objective then is to formulate a clearer picture of who is creating which vision of the Caribbean and how. How do linguistic, geographical, ethnic, historical, political and – finally – disciplinary affinities or dissonances affect the rise of pan-Caribbean discourses, the local production of knowledge, or inclusion into and exclusion from national, transnational, and supranational discourses? It is this key question, applied to relations and disconnections in a multilingual space, to the circulation of knowledge between theory and socio-cultural practices or art, the field of socio-political negotiations and to the multidisciplinary context that will provide a frame and horizon for the whole volume.<sup>11</sup>

We explicitly aim to both identify the agents of knowledge and their goals and to question the 'instruments of thinking' that condition the discourses con-

cerning ‘the Caribbean.’<sup>12</sup> It is crucial then not only to analyze changing “relations and disconnections” and “glocal dynamics of the Caribbean,” but also to revisit and reshape the frameworks we use to think, speak, and write about the local and the global dynamics in what is considered ‘the Caribbean.’ The meaning of “reshaping” is thus not limited to the meta-dimension of theory but in many of the volume’s contributions refers to the need to re-describe ever changing social and cultural processes. What is at stake here is a redefinition and a refinement of the research instruments for the elaboration of a glocal perspective that is concentrating on the local and its entanglements or dialectic negotiations with the global, especially visible in the realms of migration, circulation, and knowledge circulation.<sup>13</sup> This also implies the revision or replacement of concepts linked to trans- or interregional comparative studies in favor of approaches that enable us to better study the circulation of knowledge, people, and things (such as “entangled history” [Mintz 1986]<sup>14</sup> or “histoire croisée” [Werner/Zimmermann 2006]). These concepts originate and have been theorized in different disciplinary contexts, as for example in Caribbean Cultural History, French Historical Studies, as well as Postcolonial Studies. Complementing the binary structures of transfer studies (Michel Espagne), the perspective of an *Entangled History* aims at retracing a history of transcultural relations. These movements of circulation through various paths bring into light the effect on places of origin and go beyond mere transfer.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the volume’s contributions discuss the circulation of people and things and the yet not fully unraveled global and local knowledge production in and on ‘the Caribbean’ in four intertwined dimensions: in and between (1) linguistic spaces and areas, (2) social or cultural practices and theoretical reasoning, (3) agents and political regulations, and (4) academic disciplines. These

11 In order to pay tribute to the multilingual character of the Caribbean, the present volume features contributions in English, Spanish, and French, whereas contributions in other languages spoken in the Caribbean, such as Dutch or the Creole languages, would have put at risk the general accessibility of their contents.

12 Mimi Sheller criticizes in *Consuming the Caribbean* (2008) the ‘invention’ of the Caribbean in Euro-American culture and its de-historization throughout a number of scientific disciplines.

13 We use the word “glocal” here to reference tendencies of globalization and localization and the importance of the dialectics between the local and global for political, economic, and environmental issues. For a reflection of the concept of “glocalization” cf. Robertson 1995.

14 Conrad/Randeria (2002) introduced the term “entangled history” into the German-speaking academic community.

15 For a similar approach to Transatlantic Romance Studies beyond the discipline of History cf. Bandau/Dorigny/Mallinckrodt 2010 and Bandau 2015.



structures include necessarily local and translocal, regional and transregional as well as intersectional perspectives. Furthermore, many of the contributions consider the specific disciplinary points of view of Literary Studies, Linguistics, Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Philosophy, History, and Political Science that constitute the highly diverse institutional and disciplinary locations of Caribbean studies. Establishing a dialogue between the South and the North, the volume closely examines and links local manifestations of knowledge production on ‘the Caribbean’ from the region itself, North America, South America, Africa, and Europe.<sup>16</sup>

The transversal fields of visual arts and culture, environment and sustainability, circulation of people, knowledge, and things as well as the renegotiation of entangled colonial and postcolonial histories and memories take center stage in the contributions. Thus, we wish to enable a dialogue between the Humanities, the Social Sciences, as well as transdisciplinary approaches, all of which are essential to studying ‘the Caribbean.’ In order to do so, topics are gathered in five sections: (1) “Academic and Artistic Approaches to ‘the Caribbean,’” (2) “Arts and Visual Studies,” focusing on an emblematic field for glocal developments in the region, (3) “Environment and Sustainability,” reflecting the increasing urgency of answers to ecological inequalities, (4) “Migration, Diaspora and the Circulation of Knowledge and Things,” highlighting the paradigm of Mobility Studies, (5) “Negotiating History: Entanglements and Memories,” linking issues of Caribbean history with a more global perspective.

Addressing these issues in Caribbean societies and Caribbean Studies, the volume marks the field’s numerous interconnections with other areas of research (e.g. Latin American Studies). Additionally, contributors hail from a

<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, also the present volume sports blind spots concerning entanglements and itineraries from a truly intercultural and transversal perspective, i.e. one that includes connections between the peripheries (cf. [Dussel 2012](#)). A study of the South-South relations and disconnections, for instance between the Caribbean and African intellectuals, is still a desideratum.

An interesting project in this respect is “Anthropology and Contemporary Visual Arts from the Black Atlantic and the redefinition of ethnographic museums in Europe and the United States.” The project focuses on the relationship between art historical discourse, methodology, and anthropological approaches to non-western visual arts, particularly the contemporary arts of the Black Atlantic and brings together African, Caribbean, and Brazilian partners. Chaired by Christoph Singler (Besançon), Brigitte Reinwald (Hannover), Malick Ndiaye (Dakar), Sterlin Ulysse (Port-au-Prince), and Romuald Tchibozo (Calavi), it promotes a dialogue of mainly African and African diasporic voices in the investigation of the arts of the Black Atlantic. Its principal objective is to reflect on new concepts in museographical practice and to rethink collaborations and exchanges with museums and institutions of the fine arts in countries of the Global South.

vast array of disciplines, such as Romance, English, and American Literary and Cultural Studies or Linguistics, History, Sociology, Media Studies, Mobility Studies, Art History, Anthropology or Urban Studies, and Environmental Studies.

## **2 Caribbean Studies on the Map of the German Academy and Germany on the Map of Caribbean Studies**

The multilingual conference “Reshaping Glocal Dynamics of the Caribbean: Relaciones y Desconexiones. Relations and Disconnections. Relations et Déconnexions” – out of which the articles in this volume evolved – took place in Hannover, Germany, in October 2015. Sponsored by the Volkswagen Foundation, – the conference brought together about 100 scholars, artists, and activists from the international field of Caribbean Studies.<sup>17</sup> The 32 contributions reproduced in this volume represent a selection of the most relevant presentations. They offer different disciplinary approaches and various linguistic regions and answer to the five above-mentioned domains of interest. Before delving into the details of the book’s structure, there is another question that has to be elucidated: Why organize a conference on “Reshaping Glocal Dynamics of the Caribbean” in Germany and why promote, in general, Caribbean Studies in and from Germany with the help of the present volume?

Research on the Caribbean already has a tradition in Germany: In 1988, a group of scholars founded *Socare*, the Society for Caribbean Research, which since then served as an important relay-station for research on the Caribbean.<sup>18</sup> Besides its function as an organ of the German-speaking academic community (representing Austria, Germany, and Switzerland) and its cooperation with colleagues in Belgium and France, Socare has from its beginning sought to foster a durable and fecund exchange with international Caribbean Studies, especially from the region itself and from Europe. One of its key tools in this matter has been the organization of international and interdisciplinary conferences, and, in slightly modified settings, workshops for younger researchers.<sup>19</sup> The 2015 conference was organized in this European and internationalist spirit and was

<sup>17</sup> The conference reader contains relevant information, in particular the abstracts of all lectures: [https://www.romanistik.phil.uni-hannover.de/fileadmin/romanistik/pdf/Hef\\_t\\_013\\_zum\\_Download\\_Stand\\_08.10.pdf](https://www.romanistik.phil.uni-hannover.de/fileadmin/romanistik/pdf/Hef_t_013_zum_Download_Stand_08.10.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> For more information on Socare, cf. <http://caribbeanresearch.net/en/about-socare/>. In her contribution to this volume, Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger gives an insight into Socare’s history.

Socare's first major public event since 2007 to revive the society's work as an important platform of research on the Caribbean.

Nevertheless, Caribbean Studies is still not an institutionalized academic field at German universities. Rather, it is part of other Area Studies, such as Latin-American Studies or transversal fields such as Atlantic Studies, Postcolonial and Transcultural Studies, or New English Literatures and enters through the re-shaping of canons into classic fields or disciplines such as Anthropology, Geography, History, English, American, or Romance literatures. Currently, there is a growing interest for Caribbean topics in different fields and disciplines; young researchers are approaching interdisciplinary topics and strengthening the field – introducing vital questions and approaches to the framework of their pre-existing disciplines.

What is the relevance of Caribbean Studies from a German perspective? How are the Caribbean and Germany connected? Why work in this field precisely here (and now)? At first glance, the German implication in Caribbean colonial history seems nil, as Germany had no colonies in the Caribbean and German colonial history officially ended in 1919. Still, Germany was engaged in (and profited from) the slave trade: German merchants participated in the Atlantic trade (cf. Weber 2004, 2009) and cities with long trade traditions, as Bremen and Hamburg certainly are, gained their wealth precisely as a result of the overseas trade in cotton, sugar, cacao, coffee, and tea (cf. Rössler 2011; Gleich/Spatzek 2015; Raphael-Hernandez 2015). Their participation took shape, for instance, in the activities of the influential trading dynasty Schimmelmann, who had their substantial share in the slave trade and plantation slavery in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (cf. Degn 1984; Sutherland 2016: 43–85) as well as in the ships sailing from Germany's North – for instance, Flensburg's harbor – towards Danish colonies in West India<sup>20</sup>. Today the shipping museum Flensburg hosts an exhibition on one of the cities' famous commodities and its connection to colonial history: rum. German colonial *lieux de mémoire* have come into the focus of the public and of scientific investigation in Germany slowly and only since the last decade. To this testify a variety of scattered activities: the founding of a research center on Hamburg's post/colonial legacy and early globalization in 2014 at Hamburg University which hosts lecture series and

19 The conferences took place in Berlin (1988, 1993, 1999, 2004), Utrecht (1992), Antwerp (2003), Vienna (1990, 2001, 2005), and Jamaica (2007). Smaller conferences for young researchers took place in Berlin (2011), Hannover (2013), Bielefeld (2015), and Salzburg (2017). Further information: <http://caribbeanresearch.net/en/conferences/>.

20 Danish West India, thus, was of relevance not only for the Danish farmers but also for the ones in Schleswig-Holstein. The sugar cane grown in this territory today known as the U.S. Virgin Islands was refined in Flensburg and Copenhagen.

other cultural activities<sup>21</sup>; a temporary exhibition (June 2017 – March 2018) on Flensburg’s colonial heritage in the aforementioned museum that is sponsored by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, curated by Jamaican anthropologist Imani Tafari Ama and which addresses the important aspect of education as it provides special material for schools.<sup>22</sup>

Ironically, the very location of the 2015 conference (a recently rebuilt 17<sup>th</sup> century palace in Hannover-Herrenhausen) constituted yet another pair of relations and disconnections. The flagrant discrepancy between the luxurious, imperial setting of the original palace (pointing back to the Hohenzollern dynasty that links Hannover to Great Britain) and the conference’s topic (which addressed the colonial and postcolonial relations between the Caribbean and Europe and formulated a clear critique of colonial and Eurocentric viewpoints in politics, society, culture, and arts) called for an explanation. Four sculptures, the allegorical representations of Asia, Europe, Africa, and America, are strategically placed at the four corners of the Royal Gardens right outside the palace and give us an idea of the production of space and the landscapes of power (here enacted in garden architecture, see Fig. 1) upon which European sovereigns grounded their power at the dawn of enlightenment.<sup>23</sup>

In line with Cesare Ripa’s description in his well-known *Iconologia* (1698), the unknown artist provided America with ‘American Indian’ attributes (nakedness, feathers, arc, and bow) as well as ‘African’ features, combined with the monstrous nature represented by the Caribbean caiman. These ‘African’ features correspond to the artist’s interpretation of the “visage effroyable” that Ripa (1698: 275–275) attributes to his allegory of America. Here, the observer gets a small insight into Europe’s vision of colonial ‘Others,’ a glimpse of the creolized America and, we might say, the Caribbean – present in the caiman – as well.

21 <https://www.kolonialismus.uni-hamburg.de/ringvorlesung-hamburg-deutschlands-tor-zur-kolonialen-welt-ueber-den-umgang-mit-einem-schwierigen-erbe-20-4-2016-13-7-2016/>.

22 Further information: <http://www.flensburg.de/Kultur-Bildung/Kultureinrichtungen/Schiffahrtsmuseum/Koloniales-Erbe>; [http://www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de/cms/en/programme/fellowship\\_internationales\\_museum/kultur\\_transfer.html](http://www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de/cms/en/programme/fellowship_internationales_museum/kultur_transfer.html).

23 The unknown artist – who probably never saw the continent with his own eyes – most likely got his inspiration for the statue in the widely known encyclopedia of allegories “Iconologia” by Cesare Ripa (1603) that was a source of reference for allegorical figures for baroque artists all over Europe. In an enlarged later edition at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (1698), we find a matching description and image of this allegorical figure together with the representations of the three other continents known at the time. And so it is not astonishing that we find a similar statue in the famous palace of Versailles.



**Fig. 1.** Statue America in the Royal Gardens of Herrenhausen, September 2015 (© Anja Bandau).

The exotic representation testifies to a well-established tradition of a European conceptualization of the Non-European. The fact that none other than the Hannover based early Enlightenment philosopher Leibniz dedicated himself to the Royal Garden's architecture reminds us of the impact of (Enlightenment) philosophy on the production of space. The historical German states as part of what was and would become European colonialism took part not only in producing ideas about the 'Other' but as well in the circulating its images. This should be reason enough to put Caribbean Studies on the scientific map of universities in Germany.

The second reason why Caribbean Studies matter in contemporary Germany relates to the fact that Caribbean lines of theory building – to retrace, explain, and analyze the region's shattered yet entangled histories, its relations, and disconnections – have had an impressive supra-regional impact. Be it alternative concepts of modernity or regional models of transculturation and creolization, they have become relevant for thinking other local contexts, as transnational fields or diasporic spaces (Brah 2003; Glick Schiller 2013), e.g. in European societies.<sup>24</sup> The Caribbean has come to be perceived as a space of "conviviality" (Gilroy), a kind of sociocultural "laboratoire humain" for different cultures (Chamoiseau/Confiant/Ette/Ludwig 1992: 10) which even postulates a

<sup>24</sup> See Glick Schiller (2013) for the re-considered definition of transnational fields that link migrants and locals, the local and the global, and that sees circular migration in the light of current developments in a more critical way.

special kind of new “creole humanity” (“humanité neuve”, Maximin 2006). It is Gilroy’s notion of “conviviality” (2004), his idea of the all-uniting Human – based on the experience of oppression, violence, and suffering – that various initiatives in Europe and elsewhere have been taking up lately: *Vivre ensemble* (Vergès 2013), *Manifeste convivialiste. Déclaration d’interdépendance* (Les Convivialistes 2013).

The question of *vivre ensemble*, of *convivencia*, is an urgent one in Europe, not only in Germany, as the last decades’ political debates on France’s colonial past and its recognition by public discourse or the German open-door policy, which allowed more than a million refugees from Middle Eastern warzones to enter the country, indicate. The discussions on how to deal with the massive migration via the Mediterranean Sea to the European Union underline the urgency of the question: Could Caribbean cultural theories lay out ways of coping with the heterogenization of German society, can they help engender new ways of thinking integration and replace the failed category of multiculturalism (Cantle 2012)? Could it, more particularly, provide answers to the threats of rising racism? Current debates on these and related topics are led by Caribbean and other post-colonial intellectuals in insular, archipelagic, and diasporic contexts in order to develop new categories of conviviality, that are neither hasty adaptations nor seemingly universally applicable appropriations of regional solutions. Careful scrutiny of the local constellations is needed to decide in how far non-European, especially Caribbean cultural, social, and theoretical knowledge productions can become useful for the analysis of inner-European processes of migration and transculturation.

### 3 Contextualizing the Contributions

#### 3.1 Academic and Artistic Approaches to ‘the Caribbean’

The agenda of our publication is to an important degree motivated by gathering the state of the art in Caribbean Studies and by the inquiry into new fields and promising designs of research. In this context, we believe that conceptual work is crucial as it revisions our theoretical and methodological sets of instruments, sheds light on (hidden) connections between different traditions of thought as well as on missing and failing connections, that is disconnections.

The first section “Academic and Artistic Approaches to ‘the Caribbean’” unites programmatic contributions to Caribbean studies out of transversal fields such as Mobility Studies, Post- and Decolonial Studies as well as disciplinary approaches such as Sociology, Literary and Cultural Studies, as well as Linguistics. This interdisciplinary section enables a well-focused perspective on

tendencies and new approaches to Caribbean Studies and an awareness of the various crosspollinations with other fields and with artistic expressions that further contributions, such as Leon Wainwright’s on Caribbean Art History and Martha Zapata Galindo’s on Migration Studies clearly illustrate. The following sections “Arts and Visual Studies,” “Environment and Sustainability,” “Migration, Diaspora, and the Circulation of Knowledge and Things,” and “Negotiating History: Entanglements and Memories” have their own framings as well as programmatic statements that add to the programmatic character of the first section’s contribution.

In her contribution, **Mimi Sheller** (Philadelphia) revisits the concept of mobility and traces back its origins to conceptual thinking in the field of Caribbean Studies. In doing so, the author not only (re)inscribes the concept into a particular context and ascribes it a specific agenda within Caribbean Studies and beyond but also highlights the importance of Transarea Studies (such as Caribbean Studies) for the work on theoretical issues.

Conceptual work is also offered by **Annika McPherson** (Augsburg): She works on theoretical notions in the light of the latest paradigm shifts and asks how localized perspectives can and need to be positioned, re-contextualized, and re-theorized within critical dialogues. McPherson addresses “[t]he discursive shift from the ‘postcolonial’ to the ‘decolonial,’” an inquiry leading to the final question: “[W]hat are the respective epistemological and political implications of these and similar (re-)descriptions and (re-)theorizations?” According to McPherson, to engage in these questions means to actively “dis-order” the very notion of knowledge production, emphasizing “practices and socio-spatial relations” aware of “the ever-present risk of discursive violence, appropriation or cooptation” (McPherson in this publication). McPherson introduces the critical concept of “complicity,” thereby warning against the pitfalls of “the conceptual separation, exceptionalization and ‘Othering’ of the Caribbean [...] frequently glossed over in the redemptive vision and promise of ‘decolonial’ rhetoric” (McPherson in this publication).

A similar agenda drives **Ariel Comejo**’s (Havana) inquiry from a Hispanophone Caribbean perspective, when he asks who constitutes the Caribbean in recourse to which concepts. He is interested in the intra-Caribbean discussion of knowledge and emphasizes, like McPherson, the importance of geopolitics as well as a body politics of knowledge on the Caribbean.

**Ralph Ludwig** (Halle) introduces a linguistic perspective and parts from the state of the art in Variational Linguistics in the field of French Caribbean Linguistics. Conceiving the Caribbean as a contact space, he pleads for synchronic Creole Studies that investigates the corpus from a macro areal perspective, linking typological and discourse based approaches. Linking linguistic and social creolization, Ludwig urges Creole Studies to always reconnect to their

praxeology, i.e. their relevance in relation to educational politics and lived experience. **Graciela Salto** (Buenos Aires) recapitulates South American research on the Caribbean in the realm of Literary Studies and her contribution visualizes a lively tradition of South-South dialogue. The various material connections due to migration from the Caribbean to South America and an editorial history of Caribbean authors in Argentina give strong evidence of this knowledge circulation. **Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger's** (Aachen) intervention takes up the South-South dimension and triangulates knowledge circulation between Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Her exemplary approach to matters such as literary and artistic production illustrates what a multi-sited and transdisciplinary approach is necessary in Caribbean research. **Corinne Mencé-Caster** (Fort-de-France/Paris) interrogates the conflicting processes of heritage making (*patrimonialisation*) in Martinique and the meaning of digital media for these processes. Her contribution stands for a vital field in Caribbean Studies: the implementation and role of digital media in culture(s) of memory.

Since our aim is to interrelate academic theory and cultural practice, this first set of scholarly contributions is complemented and expanded by artistic approaches from the areas of film and literature. They aim not only at the very necessary articulation between theory and practice but also at the aesthetic visualization of new (decolonial) discourses and images. The readings of Jamaican author and filmmaker Esther Figueroa and Haitian writer Kettly Mars as well as **Julia Borst's** interview with Mars address various of the transversal topics running through this publication such as the link between theory, research and activism, the transfer of knowledge to affected communities, the link between research and politics, environment and sustainability, and negotiating history. The entanglement of economic and discursive power is (subversively) countered by the filmic and literary activities in the case of **Esther Figueroa** (Kingston/Jamaica, director, author, and environmental activist) and the polyphonic tradition of Caribbean literature in the case of **Kettly Mars** (Port-au-Prince/Haiti, writer). In its aesthetics, art condenses on the one hand historical and social processes while creating, on the other, independent models of reality critical of power hierarchies. Communicating with these various issues in a multiplicity of ways the section offers a link between the multi-faceted theory driven approaches and the following section on “Arts and Visual Studies.”

### 3.2 Arts and Visual Studies

In his framing “Arts visuels des Caraïbes: plaidoyer pour sortir des cadres disciplinaires” for this section, **Christoph Singler** (Besançon) provides a meta-perspective.<sup>25</sup> He argues that the different status of the image (when compared to



the logocentric nature of a discourse) situates this section's objects of study in the wider scope of the visual turn and the heightened interest in visual cultural production in various fields beyond Art History, Film, and Media Studies. The framing formulates new tendencies and open questions for the field of Caribbean Visual Art, which until very recently has been a blind spot not only in Caribbean Studies but in Art History and Visual Studies as well. Singler advances the latter point, although some individual artists and art works have been integrated into a global History of Art and others have become emblematic for the widely circulating cultural theories coming out of the Caribbean. He does so taking the example of diasporic Cuban artist María Magdalena Campos-Pons, one of the conference's plenary speakers.

In accord with Singler's argument, we hold that the dynamics in this new field of Caribbean Visual Art become emblematic for glocal developments in and between the Caribbean and the world. In this respect, various questions concerning the circulation of art works as well as the integration of Diaspora artists into a global market come into focus. To highlight only one, **Leon Wainwright** (London) discusses in how far these dynamics promote or hinder a local Caribbean art scene. To envision such a scene, Wainwright takes into account current discussions on the materiality of culture and on geographies of movement, shedding light on the difficulties and frictions of mobility. Also emblematic in this respect is the special focus on Haitian art represented by the contributions of **Carlo Célius** (Paris) and **David Frohnapfel** (Berlin). They address the production of art as regulated by the rules of the art market and look into the ways in which art is perceived and defined through the academic discipline of anthropology on one side and through the lens of Fine Arts and History of Arts on the other. Célius traces the formation of a discourse on Haitian art back to the moment when an ethnological discourse on Haiti emerged and Haitian art was coined 'primitivist.' Vodou, racial memory, and neo-Africanness served in this context as central approaches. Consequently, the author pleads for a critical anthropology of images. Frohnapfel's contribution draws the connection between art market, tourism, and popular art and focuses on curatorial as well as artistic strategies to participate in this market. What happens when these art works are predominantly read in the confines of an identitarian quest and a culturalist discourse when it comes to scientific research and curatorial practices? This inquiry addresses different disciplinary approaches – Art History, Anthropology, Cultural Studies – and their impact on the reading, positioning of Haitian artists and their art in the field.

25 All the following thematic sections are introduced by a specialist in the respective field of interest and contextualized within the wider framework of our volume.

The contribution of **Emiel Martens** (Amsterdam/Rotterdam) opens the section to the broader field of Visual Studies and analyzes filmic discourses on Jamaica, giving a short history of the entanglement of film and tourism (industries) in Jamaica. Martens provides an impressive overview on this little known chapter in early Jamaican film history. Linking filmic discourse to economic, neocolonial, national, as well as transnational concerns, Martens highlights the power of images of the Caribbean and their potential instrumentalization for (neo)colonial as well as national economic concerns. His contribution touches upon the articulation of manifold issues that are also essential to the section that follows.

### 3.3 Environment and Sustainability

The section “Environment and Sustainability” lies at the heart of this publication. Next to economic and political inequalities that refer back to colonial history, especially ecological inequalities come center stage today. For various reasons “by now familiar environmental threats faced by already marginalised communities in the Caribbean” (Watts in this publication), such as bauxite extraction in Jamaica or new forms of tourism in the region (Figueroa), challenge our notions of conviviality in the most immediate way and testify to the need for sustainable solutions. Environmental changes and the related question of sustainability have developed into core issues that necessarily have to be approached interdisciplinary and studied from different angles. In his framing “Applying the Arts, Humanities and Social Science: The Value of Disciplinary Promiscuity for Practical Governance” **Nicholas Watts** (London) holds that the gathered contributions “demonstrate state-of-the-art approaches in the respective disciplines at the same time as contributing to solutions on the ground, or, on a broader scale, reframing our approach to development.” Cultural and scientific dimensions come together when ecological problems are used as levers for changes in the economic, social, and political structure.

**Christian Werthmann** (Hannover) reflects on the challenges local population and experts (landscape architects) are confronted with, when ecological housing infrastructure is to be implemented in informal urban sectors (at-risk communities) immediately after ecological catastrophes such as the earthquake in Haiti in 2010. The nexus between infrastructure and knowledge implemented (1) by foreign actors (experts, NGO’s and other institutions), (2) by actors on a national level, and (3) by self-help of local communities and groups becomes vital for a successful housing strategy. The insight in urban risk management from the perspective of landscape architecture is complemented by geographer **Johannes Bohle**’s (Flensburg) focus on sustainable urban planning in Fort-de-

France/Martinique. His contribution sheds light on the many different aspects of urban planning such as ecocriticism, urban risk management, and the implementation of ecological infrastructure in heavily urbanized areas. He pursues the question how environment, housing conditions, (public) transport, urban infrastructure, and sustainability interact in Martinique.

Enabling and contextualizing community-based activism and self-help is an issue that resurfaces in the two consecutive contributions of Esther Figueroa and Anabelle Contreras Castro. **Esther Figueroa** (Kingston/Jamaica) addresses concrete actions to enable self-help against the ecological threats through bauxite mining in Cockpit Country. From her activist and filmmaker's point of view, Figueroa reflects the involvement of different media (literature, essay, film) with the objective of environmental justice in Jamaica. **Anabelle Contreras Castro** (San José/Costa Rica) gives us an insight into Circum-Caribbean constructions of territory and identity linked to the community based initiative of self-organization *Foro Caribe Sur*. The author links it to questions of neoliberal economic interests (salvaje neo-extractivismo), enforced expropriation of local population (land rights), and the state-run interest in environmental questions and the re-evaluation of nature. On the basis of a discursive analysis, Contreras Castro points out how the discourses of multiculturalism and environmental protection (certain discursive practices of re-naming) are appropriated for a neoliberal agenda. In this context, the author revisits conceived identitarian constructions such as Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean in the light of the heterogeneous population in the Caribbean coastal region.

The call for slavery reparation by the CARICOM Reparations Commission, a regional organization of community activists, academics, and lawyers from different Caribbean countries founded in 2013 lies at the core of **Claudia Rauhut's** (Berlin) contribution. Drawing the attention to new strategies of Caribbean reparation claims, for instance suing former colonial powers on a state level instead of addressing smaller entities such as companies, Rauhut emphasizes the transfer of these new approaches from the South to the North, i.e. from the Caribbean basin to the USA.

This section closes with an intervention that traces the genealogy of fictional scenarios of disappearing islands: **Daniel Graziadei** (Munich) reads contemporary Caribbean writings by Amir Valle (2006), Lakshmi Persaud (2000), and Olive Senior (2005) in the genealogy of John Donne's "Meditation XVII" (1623) and its master image of the drowning island. These texts reconstitute "allegorical or metaphorical islands" that turn into "fictional island spaces with very real geomorphological and biospheric problems of erosion and extinction."

### 3.4 Migration, Diaspora, and the Circulation of Knowledge and Things

In recognition of theoretical and methodological approaches as Sheller and Urry (2006), as well as Stephan Greenblatt's *Mobility Studies Manifesto* (2008), the contributions to the section "Migration, Diaspora, and the Circulation of Knowledge and Things" focus on the movement of people, things, and knowledge both within the Caribbean and outside from the perspective of cultural anthropology, sociology, linguistics, literary and cultural studies. In the context of oftentimes circular and transnational migration, modern technologies of communication and increasing possibilities of physical mobility facilitate the formation of transnational networks allowing for the flow of financial, social, and cultural remittances and promoting new forms of diasporic communities. Networks of knowledge between the Caribbean, Europe, and the Americas and the possibilities of their mapping, the complex constellation of links and ruptures, blanks and loops are of special interest here. In her framing "Migración, diáspora y circulación de conocimientos" **Martha Zapata Galindo** (Berlin) takes up the conceptual discussion on the mobility paradigm started in the section "Academic and Artistic Approaches" by Mimi Sheller and reflects on the tensions between the notions of diaspora and the transnational, the notions of mobility and location which are important for the contributions of this section. Pleading for a plurality of approaches, Zapata Galindo shows the benefits of various 'epistemic metaphors' such as 'geopolitics of knowledge,' 'entangled histories,' 'spin' or 'epiphyte' emerging in the discussion on the Caribbean in and beyond this section. **Jean Stubbs** (London) and **Catherine Krull** (Victoria) focus on the Cuban diaspora communities in Canada and Western Europe that have grown considerably after 1989 and in comparison to the classical Cuban Diaspora in Florida show new characteristics, that is combine diasporic and transnational characteristics. The authors link their survey on specific circuits of actors and of know how to conceptual reflections on the term Diaspora, using Robin Cohen's notion of the epiphyte. The following articles trace specific paths of circulation that are undergone by forms of narratives as well as material goods. Highlighting the importance of material culture linked to spatial hierarchies and to social capital, **Sinah Kloß** (Cologne) presents results of a multi-sited ethnography that she conducted in transnational Guyanese Hindu communities on the exchange and consumption of clothing. The socio-cultural practice of sending barrels – 400-litre containers filled with consumer goods such as food items and textiles – is the material basis of this research that examines how intimacy and closeness are (re)created in the course of migration by focusing on clothing and sartorial practices. In her ecolinguistic study, **Alla Klimenkowa** (Göttingen) explores the current usages of the historically and culturally loaded concept 'creole' that marks an American origin but shows

fundamental differences in glocal meanings. Contrasting the Spanish-American notion ‘CRIOLLO’ and the French-Caribbean ‘CRÉOLE/KRÉYÒL’ and based on empirical data, her combined diachronic and synchronic approach asks to what extent new socio-cultural settings are able to modify the legacy of historical vocabulary in these linguistic communities. **Gudrun Rath** (Linz) looks at the transatlantic dimension of the notion ‘zombie’ and zombie-narratives. Contrary to many current scholarly explanations, which reduce the history of the *zombi* concept to African pre-stages, her narrative questions any linear and over-simplifying history of origins, emphasizing the transatlantic connections while at the same time looking at the manifold historical connections with local practices.

### 3.5 Negotiating History: Entanglements and Memories

The closing section “Negotiating History: Entanglements and Memories” builds upon the methodology of *entangled histories* that enables us to think different cultures of memory and traditions of knowledge that go hand in hand with the pluralization of memory through migration and sheds light on ‘missing’ links. This final section gathers contributions from History as well as Literary and Cultural Studies that investigate notoriously understudied but still neuralgic points of Caribbean history and position them in global history. In his framing “Historias entrelazadas y representaciones sociales” **Alejandro Gómez** (Paris) links new perspectives on inner Caribbean conflict zones as Dominican-Haitian relations, Caribbean-Latin-American entanglements of the histories of revolution, independence, and abolition in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that go beyond the so far existing narratives about the age of revolutions. The participation of Afro-Cuban politicians in a national consensus can shed light on the history of race relations and post-slavery memory from another angle: Literary rewritings of post slavery memory; the question of non-narration and non-linearity; the importance of the eco-system that comes into focus in cultural productions.

After the “Haitian turn” ([Forsdick 2008](#); [Bandau 2013](#)), a post-2004 awareness of the Haitian Revolution’s global significance, Caribbean, Latin-American, and Atlantic as well as Global History have broadened their focus from the concentration on the revolutionary Atlantic to the larger picture of intersecting analyses of independence and abolition movements between the different regions. On the basis of archival research, **Sibylle Fischer** (New York) shows very convincingly that it is only through the “cross-currents” of independence and abolition movements “from imperial Spain to Venezuela, from Saint Domingue and Guadeloupe back to Venezuela, and from Venezuela back to Spain” that we can make sense of Juan Bautista Picornell’s conspiracies in Madrid and

Venezuela at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is Fisher's working beyond disciplinary boundaries, combining philological close reading, historiographical research, intellectual history, and frames from network analyses that make her inquiry so fruitful and allow to map the complex flows of influence adding to an international intellectual history of liberationist politics. **Ulrike Schmieder** (Hannover) complements inner-Caribbean cartographies of revolution and conspiracies as she draws on new archival material from the Cuban political journals *La Fraternidad*, *Unión*, and the Afro-Cuban Women's magazine *Minerva*. Her study makes evident the ambivalent position of Afro-Cuban elites concerning their African heritage, their former status as slaves at the moment of independence, a moment when the reverberation of the Haitian revolution, the so called Haitian fear still determined the Cuban interaction with Afro-Cubans. The race-based inequalities have been a pernicious topic in the contemporary Cuban society since that time.

The material and somatic residues of slavery and its memory lie in the focus of **Adriana López-Labourdette's** intervention (Bern). Parting from the example of an artwork by Cuban artist Douglas Pérez and a novel by Puerto Rican writer Mayra Santos Febres, López-Labourdette discusses traces and absences of the legacy of slavery in a Caribbean post-slavery discourse. The innovation of this contribution lies in the fact that the works are framed by the Latinamerican theoretical discourse on post-slavery and post-dictatorial memoria and trauma ("trabajos de memoria," [Jelin 2002](#)). López-Labourdette insists that the work on somatic memories of slavery and its impact on a racialized presence resist a discourse that declares the trauma of slavery overcome.

Cultures of memory and their entanglement are addressed on two intertwining levels in **Kathleen Gysse's** article (Antwerp) on the franco-guyanese author Léon-Gontran Damas and his posthumously published poetry. Her contribution renders visible the often neglected and hidden entanglements of memory culture in the French Republic concerning the similarities and discrepancies between Black and Jewish memory culture. Damas reflects upon these in poems such as "À la rubrique des chiens crevés" and in a consequence asks for a re-evaluation and valorisation of the author and co-founder of the *Négritude* movement in the Caribbean and postcolonial discourses.

The fictional coming to terms with conflicting and plural cultures of memory and its other side – amnesia – are addressed in this book's last contribution. In her analysis of *L'empreinte à Crusoe* (2012), a novel by Patrick Chamoiseau, **Juliane Tauchnitz** (Leipzig) revisits topoi of literary history and Caribbean theoretical and identity discourse respectively. Chamoiseau rewrites a European Robinson into a black one and questions the efficiency of the *Créolité* concept and movement that he himself helped to set alive. This *writing back* of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) questions the received binary ethnic and cul-

tural classifications of Robinson and Friday that go along with the genre of robinsonade. Chamoiseau plays with transtextual references and counters the expectations of his readers to include the not yet narrated into the canon/archive of world literature. In Chamoiseau's narrative, a black Robinson who suffers from amnesia and who neither meets Friday or cannibals nor 'civilizes' the island, takes the place of Defoe's European Robinson and his successors. Accepting the human being's place within nature, he refrains from any domestication/domesticizing practice, so that the novel has been read as an "ecological utopia" (Lüsebrink 2013: 237). In its ecocritical dimension the novel hints to the island as a space of endangered conviviality and points back to the crucial topic of "Environment and Sustainability."

This overview over the specific cases of both relations and disconnections discussed in this volume already unravels how these insightful examples both help to remap and to reshape the field of Caribbean Studies from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective. Thus, both contemporary and historical, multilingual, and multiethnic perspectives draw attention to yet hidden links and mechanisms or neglected institutional contexts in the glocal processes of (non)circulation of people and things as well as in the production of knowledge in and about the Caribbean. With this volume, we wish to contribute to and stimulate the ongoing discussions concerning this important field.

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