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Crossroads of the World - Transatlantic Interrelations in the Caribbean. Berlin: Ingrid Kummels / Claudia Rauhut / Stefan Rinke / Birte Timm, Institute for Latin American Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, 02.07.2012-03.07.2012.

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Crossroads of the World - Transatlantic Interrelations in the Caribbean

The international and interdisciplinary conference "Crossroads of the World - Transatlantic Interrelations in the Caribbean" sponsored by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation assessed current trends in researching the Caribbean from anthropology, history, sociology, political science, literature and other disciplines. It brought together junior and senior scholars and encouraged innovative approaches in studying the Caribbean from a transregional perspective, focusing on transatlantic interrelations, movements and transfers.

In his opening key note, "Survival/Creolization/Dialogue: How Tropes Remake the African Diaspora", J. LORAND MATORY (Durham) introduced his concept of the "Afro-Atlantic Live Dialogue". This presentation appropriately captured the theme of the conference and opened the discussion about the re-negotiation of 'original' cultures by different forms of agency and power relations in the Afro-Atlantic diaspora. Reflecting on metaphors like 'survival', 'creolization', 'dialogue' and 'negation', Matory emphasized the reciprocal influence of different cultures. Based on his broad empirical research on religious Yoruba worship in the USA, Brazil and the Caribbean, Matory argued that continuous transatlantic connections have actually led to religious and cultural transformations in these regions. They are therefore not just viewed as legacies of the past, but as actively and continuously renewed practices in colonial and post-colonial contexts.

The first panel focused on different "Protagonists and Practices of Transatlantic Live Dialogue". In "Cubans in Angola: Renewed Practices in Post-Colonial Contexts", CHRISTINE HATZKY (Hannover) presented rich empirical insights of her research, focusing on the long-term Cuban engagement in Angola, mainly in the field of education between 1975 and 1999. HATZKY analyzed this unique south-south cooperation between two former colonized nations and concluded that many Cubans rejected the idea that their involvement was the result of a transnational African-American solidarity, thus contradicting the official notion of this intervention. Also FÉLIX AYOH' OMIDIRE (Ile-Ife) followed up on Matory's concept of the live dialogue, looking at "The Position of Chávez's Socialist Venezuela within the Yoruba Atlantic Diaspora: New Perspectives on Ifá/Orisa Identity in Contemporary Latin-America and the Caribbean". His primary focus was the recent Africanization or *Yorubanization* within Latin America and the Caribbean in countries of the region that are not traditionally associated with African diaspora identity focusing on new political and economic ideologies and transatlantic networks of "Yoruba religion" in Venezuela.

Panel 2 "Weaving Identities and Belongings, Creating Diaspora", expanded the discussions on south-south relations. HAUKE DORSCH's (Mainz) presentation "Trans-Atlantic Rites of Passage? Mozambican Students in Cuba and their Reintegration at Home", examined the opposite flow of migration between African nations and Cuba since 1961. He focused on the educational exchange program agreement between Mozambique and Cuba in the 1970s and 1980s, using the metaphor of "rites of passage" to describe separation, integration and re-integration, while he depicted the economic and race related problems that developed between African students and Cubans. PATRICK HELBER (Heidelberg) discussed the linkages between politics and culture in "The Role of the *Reggae Studies Unit* in the Controversy about Homophobic Contents in Jamaican Dancehall Music". He reflected on the political implications in the culture of dancehall, which has been internationally criticized for inciting violence against gays and lesbians since the early 1990s, analyzing the different roles of protagonists like dancehall artists, human rights activists, scholars, journalists and fans as part of an ongoing transnational debate framed by the intersectionality of *class*, *race* and *gender*.

GESINE MÜLLER (Potsdam) offered insights into

"Processes of Cultural Transfer in 19th-Century: Francophone and Hispanophone Literatures of the Caribbean". She identified the cultural modes of action displayed by various colonial systems of dominance focusing on a comparative approach to processes of transfer the Caribbean. She argues that these actions unfold across the center-periphery axis and involve processes in which both sides are actively involved as subjects within a context of dynamic interaction that contributed to a distinctive sphere of literature, which differed from the colonial canon. SANDRA COLLY-DURAND (Cergy Pontoise) also examined the colonial experience and its influence on the usage of language in independent Jamaica (English/Creole). She analyzed the teacher representations on the role of Creole in the classroom showing tensions between global linguistic power play and notions of local identity. Concluding, Colly-Durand called for a Bilingual Education Project, but argued that the Jamaican government rigidly opposes such an approach. FRANCESCA MELONI (Montreal) presented on "Living without Status: Experiences Among Undocumented Caribbean Immigrants in Montreal". Drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork conducted with immigrants from the Anglophone Caribbean and with churches and community organizations of the Caribbean community in Montreal, she examined how being "undocumented" and "black" doubly excluded immigrants from access to health and social services, exposing immigrants to social vulnerabilities and different types of abuses. Meloni concluded by calling for NGO's and policy makers to break the institutional silence on racist practices. MAJA HORN (New York) argued in "Theorizing Dominican Modernity: 20th and 21st Century Dominican Political Culture and the Postcolonial Lexicon" that thinking and theorizing the postcolonial Dominican experience, productively complicates the stories that are most often told about Caribbean colonization and de-colonization, repression and liberation.

Panel 3 "Making History: Interrelations of Race and Nation" approached the theme of transatlantic connections with four presentations that considered the role these connections played at transitory moments in Caribbean history. In his contribution "The Day of Guanahani in Global Perspective", STEFAN RINKE (Berlin), followed up the theme of Columbus "discovery" in 1492 and pointed to the global significance of Columbus' entry into what Europeans began to consider the 'new world'. Rinke reflected on the different interpretations of the event and emphasized the relevance of locality power of historical interpretations as well as the different meaning attached to objects in a cultural context. Concluding, he argued that the day of Guanahani should indeed be seen as a turning point in temporary and spatial dimensions, and urged that a closer look into the different interpretations and meanings is necessary. BIRTE TIMM (Berlin) looked at the "Transnational Roots of Anticolonial Nationalism in Jamaica" and reviewed crucial but hitherto neglected factors that led up to Jamaica's independence in 1962. She focused on the migration experience that helped to overcome traditional colonial thinking and presented a portrait of the Jamaica Progressive League (JPL), a transnational organization founded by Jamaican immigrants in New York in 1936 that lobbied for an end to British colonial rule in Jamaica. In her presentation, "Rasta, Race, and Revolution: The Rastafari Movement in Socialist Cuba", KATRIN HANSING (New York) focused on transnational connections and cultural transfers between Jamaica and Cuba within the globalized Rastafari movement. She showed its arrival in Cuba by technology, music and consumerism while explaining its success with persisting racism despite the rhetoric of equality in socialist Cuba.

Panel 4 "Migration, Cultural Transfers and Politics of Exclusion" continued to trace migration trajectories and immigration politics. KRISTEN S. CHILDERS (Philadelphia) applied her talk on "Migration Flows and the Politics of Exclusion in the French Antilles" to the "crossroads"-metaphor to describe a turning point in the history of Martinique and Guadeloupe when, in 1946, they voted against independence to become regular departments of France. Childers focused on the much contested migration projects that were initiated, controlling migration between France and the Antilles and demonstrated the power of the idea of "Frenchness" on these policies.

INGRID KUMMELS (Berlin) presentation on "Tourism and the Transnationalization of Couplehood, Family and Friendship Relations in the Caribbean" explored transnational couplehood and marriage between citizens from Cuba, the USA and Germany. Kummels provided insights into the mix of emotional and economical enticements and showed that even if these intimate social relationships are accompanied by discourses of equality, they may simultaneously produce new inequalities in regard to gender and race. In her contribution "Contested Religious Traditions in Transatlantic Networks in Cuban Santería", CLAUDIA RAUHUT (Berlin) discussed the transnationalization of Santería and elaborated on religious agencies and power relations in present Cuba. Rauhut reconnected her argument to Matory's concept of the "Afro-Atlantic Live Dialogue" and showed how the expansion of Santería throughout the

Atlantic world continues to reshape the often conflictive re-negotiation of 'authentic tradition' as a consequence of religious globalization. LIOBA ROSSBACH DE OLMOS (Marburg) concluded the panel with a presentation on "CaribBerlin: Multiple Tracks in the Religious Biography of a German Oricha-Priest", complementing Rauhut's argument about the adaptability and convertibility of Santería, especially in new migration contexts. Authenticity, she argued, is difficult to defend in a globalized context of Santería and Yoruba religion.

In the closing keynote speech "Transient Histories: Memory and Movements within the Nineteenth Century Caribbean", MATTHEW J. SMITH (Kingston) took up the recurrent themes of the conference and concluded with a reflection about memory and the historicization of Caribbean history, focusing on the often overlooked importance of intra-Caribbean migration. Further, he argued that many important events such as the role of Caribbean peoples in the armies of the two world wars, which contributed greatly to the formation of the identities in the region, are often not prominent in the national memory of the countries. Drawing on his extensive research on migration between Haiti and Jamaica in the 19th and 20th century, Smith demonstrated the impact of movements within the Caribbean itself on the shaping of identity, relations and practices in the region and beyond.

The conference was a great success, emphasized the advantages of interdisciplinary and inter-regional exchange and contributed to the strengthening of the Latin American Institute's focus on Caribbean Studies. The presentations provided much needed empirical material to illustrate the multiple interrelations between the Caribbean within the Atlantic World, formed by transatlantic networks of agents, practices and ideas and pointed to promising future research directions that transcend classical regional and institutional borders and acknowledge the central role of the globally interconnected Caribbean in the studies of the Americas.

Conference Overview:

Key-Note Speech

J. Lorand Matory (Duke University) Survival/Creolization/Dialogue: How Tropes Re-make the African Diaspora

Panel 1: Protagonists and Practices of Transatlantic Live Dialogue

Christine Hatzky (Leibniz Universität Hannover): Cubans in Angola: Renewed Practices in Post-Colonial Contexts

Félix Ayoh'Omidire (Obafemi Awolowo University of Ile-Ife): The Position of Chávez's Socialist Venezuela within the Yoruba Atlantic Diaspora: New Perspectives on Ifá/Orisa Identity in Contemporary Latin-America and the Caribbean

Claudia Rauhut (Freie Universität Berlin): Contested Religious Traditions in Transatlantic Networks in Cuban Santería

Panel 2: Weaving Identities and Belongings, Creating Diaspora

Hauke Dorsch (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz): Trans-Atlantic Rites of Passage? Mozambican Students in Cuba and Their Reintegration at Home

Everard Phillips (Trinidad & Tobago): The Inequality Problematic- Speaking Truth to Power Through Caribbean Musical Art-Forms

Patrick Helber (Universität Heidelberg): The Role of the Reggae Studies Unit in the Controversy About Homophobic Contents in Jamaican Dancehall Music

Panel 2 (Continuation): Weaving Identities and Belongings, Creating Diaspora

Gesine Müller (Universität Potsdam): Processes of Cultural Transfer in 19th-Century Francophone and Hispanophone Literatures of the Caribbean

Sandra Colly-Durand (Université Cergy Pontoise): English as a First Language; Creole as a First Identity

Francesca Meloni (McGill University): Navigating Multiple Identities: Belongings and Identity Among Caribbean Immigrant Youth Without Status

Maja Horn (Barnard College of Columbia University): Theorizing Dominican Modernity: 20th and 21st Century Dominican Political Culture and the Postcolonial Lexicon

Panel 3: Making History: Interrelations of Race, Nation and Gender

Stefan Rinke (Freie Universität Berlin): 1492: The Day of Guanahani in Global Perspective

Mélanie Lamotte (University of Cambridge): Colour Prejudice in Early Modern Guadeloupe Archipelago, c. 1635-1769

Birte Timm (Freie Universität Berlin): Transnational Roots of Anticolonial Nationalism in Jamaica

Katrin Hansing (Baruch College, Cuny): Rasta, Race, and Revolution: Rastafari in Socialist Cuba

Panel 4: Migration, Cultural Transfers and Politics of Exclusion

Kristen S. Childers (University of Pennsylvania): Migration Flows and the Politics of Exclusion in the French Antilles

Hannes Warnecke (Universität Leipzig): Different and Yet Alike? The Causes of Violent Forms in El Salvador and Jamaica

Sean Gill (York University): Economic Crisis, Migrant Labour, and the Dilemma of Citizenship in the Cayman Islands

Lirio Gutiérrez Rivera (Freie Universität Berlin): Capital Expansion and Elite Formation in the Carribean Region: The Case of Palestinian Entrepreneurs in Honduras

Ingrid Kummels (Freie Universität Berlin): Tourism and the Transnationalization of Couplehood, Family and Friendship Relations in the Caribbean

Lioba Rossbach de Olmos (Phillipps Universität Marburg): CaribBerlin: Multiple Tracks in the Religious Biography of a German Oricha-Priest

Keynote Speech

Matthew J. Smith (University of West Indies, Jamaica): Transient Histories: Memory and Movements within the Nineteenth Century Caribbean

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