

Introduction – Crossing Thresholds: Gender and Decoloniality in Caribbean Knowledge

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The development of the Caribbean during and after colonial times has led to a cultural fragmentation of and global involvements in the region. Over the course of centuries, colonial conquest, independence wars, imperial interventions, military dictatorships and revolutions have transformed the Caribbean into an extremely complex cultural area. This space also symbolically represents the constructive forces of creolisation processes that offer important impulses for understanding global cultural interdependencies.¹ As an epistemic space that produces cultural theory in a highly condensed form, Caribbean thinking offers decolonial approaches that have contributed to academic circulations of knowledge on a global scale.²

More specifically, the Caribbean cultural space offers enlightening stimuli for a decolonial approach to gender in general and to female subalternity in particular. Colonial history in the Caribbean constitutes a meaningful point of departure for understanding intersectional entanglements of gender and race in the context of oppressive mechanisms of coloniality. Black and coloured women were subjected to multiple ‘Otherings’ because of their race and their ethnic backgrounds within the colonial plantation economy. Even though they were doubly victimised in the colonial Caribbean, they were not invisible in the fight for abolition and emancipation. Not only did they resist in everyday life, for instance by sabotaging the logic of reproduction and carrying out abortions,³ but in Saint Domingue and Guadeloupe, women – albeit to a lesser degree than men – actively participated in armed slave uprisings.⁴ Caribbean women furthermore contributed an important share of anti-slavery literature. One of the first testimonial narratives was written by Mary Prince, who told the editor of the *Anti Slavery Reporter* about her life as a slave in the West Indies in 1831.⁵ In her foundational novel *Sab* (1841), the Cuban writer Gertrudis Gómez de

Avellaneda broached the issue of slavery from a decidedly female perspective.⁶ In 1857, the Jamaican Mary Seacole, a “free woman of colour,” published her impressions of a plantation society that was mainly dominated by white men under the title *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*.⁷ Despite the existence of a distinct tradition of female counter-narratives as a critique of modernity in the Caribbean, this literature has received fairly little attention in academic circles to date.⁸ Jean Rhys’s novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) is emblematic of a 20th century prose work in this tradition. In the Francophone Caribbean, writers such as Maryse Condé, Marie Chauvet and Kettly Mars have likewise negotiated the fractured and fragmented Caribbean history from a decidedly female perspective.⁹ Female authors in the Caribbean’s other language areas have also developed narrative concepts to generate a gender-specific access to memory in order to envision the violent genesis of Caribbean societies. One example is the novel *Fé en disfraz* (2009) by the Puerto Rican Mayra Santos-Febres, which represents memory traces of female slavery experiences via a physical space-time continuum the effects of which have persisted up until the present.

Although Caribbean arts and theory have negotiated the intersectional tensions of gender issues since slavery, academia has devoted insufficient attention to these interplays. Since the Caribbean is particularly relevant and suggestive for academic reflections on decolonial forms of thought and expression, this special issue links a decolonial theoretical perspective with a special focus on gender. The following articles are based on papers given at the International Junior Researcher Workshop “Crossing Thresholds: Gender and Decoloniality in Caribbean Knowledge,” hosted by the Society for Caribbean Research (SOCARE) at Leibniz University Hannover, Germany, 23-25 January 2013. The workshop aimed at rendering these neglected interfaces more visible in a trans-linguistic Caribbean context as well as finding new means of systematic analysis.¹⁰

The concept of decoloniality or the “decolonial turn”¹¹ has become increasingly popular in recent years.¹² It is based on a critique of Western modernity’s claim to universality and implies that, even after the political independence of most former colonies, the monopoly of earlier Western colonial powers has remained influential in different manifestations and persists in the form of epistemological dominance.¹³ The

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concept of 'coloniality' describes this phenomenon of asymmetrical power relations and epistemic and cultural imperialism as Western modernity's darker side.¹⁴ By "mov[ing] away and beyond the post-colonial,"¹⁵ decolonial approaches build upon postcolonial thinkers but also extend their insights by embracing 'subaltern' knowledge systems and thereby rejecting the West's epistemic dominance and uniqueness.¹⁶ The process of decolonising knowing and thinking challenges established (Eurocentric) thinking patterns ("learning to unlearn"¹⁷) and includes theorising by marginalised and oppressed peoples.

Decolonial perspectives thus broaden and complement those postcolonial approaches that mainly rely on Western theories such as poststructuralism and other epistemologies strongly influenced by Enlightenment thought.¹⁸ Furthermore, as the Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes, there is a suspicion among indigenous academics "that the fashion of post-colonialism has become a strategy for reinscribing or reauthorizing the privileges of non-indigenous academics because the field 'post-colonial discourse' has been defined in ways which can still leave out indigenous peoples, our ways of knowing and our current concerns."¹⁹ By including knowledge from other cultures and explicitly working with their terms and concepts, decolonial approaches offer innovative insights. Moreover, this perspective frees marginalised cultures and ethnicities from their status as objects of research and acknowledges their epistemologies as contributions to theorising,²⁰ which implies artistic productions and social performances in addition to theoretical works.²¹

Up until now, decolonial theorising has strongly focused on the concept of 'race' as a mechanism of geopolitical and social hierarchisation and as a symbol of global power asymmetries caused by the coloniality of power.²² María Lugones, María do Mar Castro Varela and Nikita Dhawan criticise this approach for neglecting gender and failing to acknowledge its potential for illuminating and exploring the concepts of coloniality/decoloniality and implicit power hierarchies.²³ According to them, it is important to include the gender aspect into the discussion since the discursively constructed hierarchies of race and gender rely on the same binary logic used to generate asymmetric power structures and mechanisms of discrimination.²⁴ Lugones explains that the existing "modern/colonial gender system" is characterised by a biologically motivated dimorphism and by a patriarchal-heterosexual viewpoint,

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which doubly discriminates the colonised/non-Western woman. This dominant perspective has infiltrated non-Western cultures and their self-image. Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí, for instance, has shown how British colonisation has affected gender roles in Yoruba culture.²⁵ Such a patriarchal-heterosexual view furthermore marginalises and ‘others’ LGBT gender identities,²⁶ while it simultaneously prevents the revelation of possible continuities of gendered suppression from pre-colonial times.²⁷

As a result of this persisting patriarchal-heterosexual dominance, Lugones calls for intersecting the categories of coloniality, ‘race,’ gender, and sexuality.²⁸ Akin to the objective of black feminist thought,²⁹ this approach examines the effects of the coloniality of power on people subalternised due to their gender and/or sexuality.³⁰ In order to understand and analyse the interrelationships between Western and non-Western processes and power structures on a deeper level, it is necessary to use gender theory beyond the Western canon.³¹ Castro Varela and Dhawan point to the complicity between certain tendencies of Western feminism and coloniality. They argue that Western feminists have failed to challenge the correlations between the emancipation of (white) women and the continuing suppression of the female marginalised ‘Other’.³² Moreover, there is an unresolved opposition between stereotypes of white women as “fragile, weak in both body and mind, secluded in the private, and sexually passive”³³ and that of black women as “desirable sexualized bod[ies]”³⁴ or even ‘legitimate’ victims of rape.³⁵ As a result, the agency of Western feminists has mostly been limited to “a *white* conceptual world”³⁶ that further marginalises black/non-Western women by rendering them invisible in their theorising.³⁷ However, if the correlations and interdependencies between race, coloniality and gender continue to be neglected, the powerful potential of decolonising knowledge as an alternative to open, physical resistance³⁸ will remain unused. The contributions in the present issue therefore aim at further exploring the mutual dependencies and relations between decolonial approaches and gender issues, thereby generating new insights into both fields of research.³⁹

While an increasing number of decolonial approaches have started considering interdependencies of gender inequality and coloniality, they scarcely embrace or touch on the context of queer inequality.⁴⁰ In view of this research gap, it is necessary to expand recent decolonial gender debates to include queer theoretical

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perspectives in order to pointedly explore how race and sexuality work together in processes of marginalising certain groups.⁴¹ Thinking these concepts together makes it possible to de-essentialise and deconstruct biological gender ascriptions and concepts of heteronormative sexuality in the sense of ‘queering.’ Such an approach exposes colonial mechanisms of exclusion with respect to categories beyond patriarchal gender hierarchies and heteronormativity⁴² and uses the resulting criticism to further decolonise thinking and knowing.⁴³

Gender studies from a decolonial perspective based on postcolonial studies and (Western) gender theory go beyond their focus on deconstructing centre and periphery as well as on socially constructed gender roles by constantly scrutinising existing knowledge systems with respect to the intersecting paradigms of coloniality and gender. Such an approach is open to queer theorising, enriches reflections on a supposed heteronormativity and includes non-Western views.⁴⁴ Moreover, the act of continually challenging and questioning notions of ‘denaturalisation’ (*Entselbstverständlichung*)⁴⁵ from queer theoretical perspectives that criticise established binary gender constructions constitutes an insightful parallel to decolonial approaches since both theoretical positions contest dominant discourses in order to render oppressed and hitherto ignored epistemologies and theoretical contributions visible.⁴⁶

Decolonial research thus aims at expanding current debates and discussing structures of coloniality in manifold ways that include gender as well as queerness. Such an approach makes possible reflections upon different forms of victimisation based on skin colour, gender and sexual orientation in their complex interrelationships.⁴⁷ Simultaneously, this approach helps to trace and re-discover alternative epistemologies such as Caribbean theorising that enrich existing gender and queer theory previously suppressed by a patriarchal, heteronormative, (post)colonial Western discourse.⁴⁸ Decolonial perspectives integrate local knowledge productions and postulate society and culture as plural and intercultural, always in relation to other societies and cultures. They aim at bringing about a political, social, and epistemic transformation that allows for the diversity of thinking patterns and, in line with the notions of ‘border thinking’ and of ‘post-abysal thinking,’ for the simultaneity and equality of different knowledge systems. Such a

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diverse thinking and knowing that establishes dialogues between different discursive traditions by including a broad spectrum of knowledge beyond the local epistemology of *one* culture (in this case the local knowledge of Western modernity) is capable of proposing epistemic solutions that are globally relevant. In particular, this epistemic diversity offers means of coming to terms with existing issues of discrimination based on gender and sexuality that in turn provide new views on historiography from marginalised perspectives.

The articles in this special issue examine how Caribbean historical and literary texts come to terms with patriarchal power structures and heteronormativity as historic-discursive constructs of an epistemology committed to thinking models of Western modernity. By assuming a decolonial theoretical outlook, they scrutinise Caribbean cultural productions as to their potential for reproducing or transcending these discourses. Moreover, the contributions are concerned with the question of how Caribbean knowledge formation helps to transcend fixed gender conceptions. In order to avoid uncritical impositions of Western theory onto the Caribbean, the articles re-think gender and sexuality by engaging in a dialogue between Western and Caribbean knowledge systems. The writers use the key category of gender to look at socio-cultural processes, discourses and performative means of expression that provide a way of analysing and discussing decolonial paradigms in the Caribbean. These approaches offer the space for research on non-Western conceptions of women and their emancipatory postulates as well as for political and artistic challenges to and interventions within heteronormative power structures. As a result, these contributions expand postcolonial feminism and its criticism of white, patriarchal social designs⁴⁹ by including decolonial perspectives as well as knowledge and theoretical production from the Caribbean.

In the first essay, Ulrike Schmieder evaluates historical sources from the time of Cuban independence. She uses court files from the Cuban national archive to exemplarily show how bourgeois European gender conceptions were used as individual strategies of social mobility to attain freedom in Cuban slave society at the end of the colonial era. Schmieder's research furthermore illustrates that the oppression of black women in late colonial Cuba can be attributed to a patriarchal

logic of domination that was used by both the white plantocracy and by male slaves to legitimate existing gender hierarchies.

Annika McPherson's contribution deals with the fictional writings of the female Rastafari authors Zindika Kamauesi, Masano Montague, Barbara Makeda and Blake Hannah, in whose works female protagonists re-negotiate their subaltern social roles within the Rastafari cult. McPherson reads these narratives as female counter-strategies that intervene in the masculinity discourse of the Afro-Caribbean religion and thereby create new options for a decolonial feminism.

Gudrun Rath examines the role of female zombies in the anthology *Haiti Noir* (2011) by Akashic Books. Firstly, she critically examines the independent Western publishing house's presentation strategy and then asks to what extent the publisher's position might influence an exoticisation of Caribbean literature. Secondly, Rath articulates how the presentation of a female zombie within Haitian 'hardboiled fiction' undermines this 'Western cannibalism.' Even though the examined texts consciously allude to the zombie cliché of the erotic 'femme fatale,' they simultaneously use this figure to engage in a decolonial dialogue with the Afro-Haitian cultural heritage.

Wiebke Beushausen discusses the novel *The Heart Does Not Bend* (2002) and the short story collection *Her Head a Village* (1994) by the Jamaican Canadian author Makeda Silvera. Her article investigates homoerotic constructions of the female body as a decolonial strategy of enunciating black subjectivity. She furthermore points to literary representations of stereotypes that strategically undermine interconnections between heteronormative notions of masculinity and Jamaican conceptions of nationality.

Martina Urioste-Buschmann's essay engages with narrative forms of negotiating lesbianism with respect to Hispano-Caribbean identity formations in the U.S. in the novel *Memory Mambo* (1996) by the Cuban American Achy Obejas. Urioste-Buschmann examines how discourses of queerness can be used to advance decolonial debates and demonstrates that Obejas's novel illustrates a gender-related form of border thinking by re-negotiating heteronormative conceptions. In addition, she shows how the text challenges homophobic acts of speaking in terms of anti-

colonial arguments of resistance using the example of Puerto Rico's political situation.

Julia Roth explores the musical production of the queer feminist Cuban hip hop band *Las Krudas Cubensi* based in the U.S. Her contribution focuses on how the band appropriates the music genre of hip hop, which is commonly associated with masculinity and heteronormativity, in order to grapple with the issues of homophobia and racism. On the basis of interview excerpts and song texts, Roth argues that these queer appropriations from a Cuban diaspora perspective express a "Nu Caribbean Feminism" as a form of intersectional and counter-hegemonic cultural critique.

The issue closes with an interview, in which Nadia Celis addresses central questions of decolonial thought, gender and her own research on the body. Celis takes up the theoretical debate on the differences between a decolonial and a postcolonial approach as well as the shortcomings of both approaches thereby complementing the contributions' focus on literature and historical documents. She broaches the issue of a scholar's positionality within a decolonial research paradigm and offers ideas for augmenting the focus on reason and rationality by focusing on alternative places of knowledge production such as love, emotions and the body as a spiritual and physical entity.

Endnotes

¹ On the global nature of the Caribbean, see Édouard Glissant "Creolization in the Making of the Americas," in *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, ed. by Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 268-75; Édouard Glissant, *Le discours antillais* (Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 1981); Rebecca Fuchs, *Caribbeanness as a Global Phenomenon in Caribbean Diaspora Literature by Junot Díaz, Edwidge Danticat, and Cristina García* (Trier: WVT, 2014).

² Some examples are Sylvia Wynter's criticism on the "absence of Caliban's woman", Édouard Glissant's poetics of Relation, and Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic counter-culture to modernity. See Sylvia Wynter, "Afterword. Beyond Miranda's Meanings: Un/silencing the 'Demonic Ground' of Caliban's 'Woman'," in *Out of the Kumbla. Caribbean Women and Literature*, edited by Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990), 361; Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de*

la relation (Paris: Gallimard, 1990); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

³ Bernard Moitt, *Women and Slavery in the French Antilles, 1635-1848* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 126.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁵ Selwyn R. Cudjoe, "Introduction," in *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from The First International Conference*, edited by Selwyn Reginald Cudjoe (Wellesley, MA: Calaloux Publ., 1990), 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁸ For more examples of female writing in the Caribbean, see Cudjoe "Introduction", 5-48.

⁹ Clarisse Zimra, "Righting the Calabash: Writing History in the Female Francophone Narrative," in *Out of the Kumbla*, 143-57.

¹⁰ The connection of gender and decoloniality differs in research with respect to the different Caribbean language areas; see e.g., Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, "Decolonizing Feminism: The Home-Grown Roots of Caribbean Women's Movements," in *Daughters of Caliban. Caribbean Women in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Consuelo López-Springfield (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 3-17; Rhonda Reddock, "Feminism, Nationalism, and the Early Women's Movement in the English-Speaking Caribbean (with Special Reference to Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago)," in *Caribbean Women Writer's*, 61-81; Marie-Denise Shelton, "Women Writers of the French-Speaking Caribbean: An Overview," in *ibid.*, 346-56. Gender issues in general, however, have played a decisive role in interdisciplinary research on the Caribbean for decades, see e.g., Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido, "Talking It Over: Women, Writing and Feminism," in *Out of the Kumbla*, ix-xx; Linden Lewis, "Exploring the Intersections of Gender, Sexuality, and Culture in the Caribbean. An Introduction," in *The Culture of Gender and Sexuality in the Caribbean*, edited by Linden Lewis (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2003), 1-21; Jean Stubbs, "Gender in Caribbean History," in *Methodology and Historiography of the Caribbean. General History of the Caribbean Vol. 6*, edited by B.W. Higman (London: UNESCO Publishing, 1999), 95-135.

¹¹ Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "Thinking through the Decolonial Turn: Post-Continental Interventions in Theory, Philosophy, and Critique – An Introduction," *Transmodernity* 1, no. 2 (2011): 2.

¹² Among others, see Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Eduardo Mendieta, eds., *Decolonizing Epistemologies. Latina/o Theology and Philosophy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012); Walter D. Mignolo and Arturo Escobar, eds., *Globalization and the Decolonial Option* (London: Routledge, 2010); Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel, and Carlos A. Jáuregui, eds., *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008). Maldonado-Torres explains that the decolonial turn "does not refer to a single theoretical school but rather points to a family of diverse positions that share a view of coloniality as a fundamental problem in the modern (as well as postmodern and information) age, and of decolonization or decoloniality as a necessary task that remains unfinished" ("Thinking" 2).

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¹³ Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality," *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (2007): 169.

¹⁴ Santiago Castro-Gómez, "(Post)Coloniality for Dummies: Latin American Perspectives on Modernity, Coloniality, and the Geopolitics of Knowledge," in *Coloniality At Large*, 268; Walter D. Mignolo, "Decolonizing Western Epistemology / Building Decolonial Epistemologies," in *Decolonizing Epistemologies*, 20; Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality."

¹⁵ Walter D. Mignolo, "Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of De-Coloniality," in *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, 306; see also *ibid.*, 305-06.

¹⁶ Mignolo, "Delinking", 339; Sabine Broeck, "Dekoloniale Entbindung: Walter Mignolos Kritik an der Matrix der Kolonialität," in *Schlüsselwerke der Postcolonial Studies*, edited by Julia Reuter and Alexandra Karentzos (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012), 172. In this context, Mignolo takes up Spivak's famous question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" and agrees that the 'subaltern' cannot not speak because s/he is not able to. Rather, a Eurocentric discourse claims universality and ignores 'subaltern' voices. See Walter D. Mignolo, "Colonial and Postcolonial Discourse: Cultural Critique or Academic Colonialism?," *Latin American Research Review* 28, no. 3 (1993): 130; Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledge and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 9; Gayatri C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 271-313. See also Castro-Gómez, "(Post)Coloniality", 279; Grada Kilomba, *Plantation Memories: Episodes of Everyday Racism* (Münster: UNRAST, 2008), 26-27; Mignolo, "Colonial", 130.

¹⁷ Mignolo, "Delinking", 339.

¹⁸ Cecile Sandten, "'How to Talk Postcolonial': Eine kritische Bestandsaufnahme der Leitbegriffe aus dem Feld der postkolonialen Theoriebildung," in *Zwischen Kontakt und Konflikt: Perspektiven der Postkolonialismus-Forschung*, edited by Gisela Febel et al. (Trier: WVT, 2006), 23-24; Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London: Routledge, 2000), 161; Walter D. Mignolo, *Epistemischer Ungehorsam: Rhetorik der Moderne, Logik der Kolonialität und Grammatik der Dekolonialität* (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2012), 53-54.

¹⁹ Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed, 1999), 24.

²⁰ Kilomba, *Plantation Memories*, 12; Mignolo *Local Histories/Global Designs*, 18. A theoretical foundation for this approach is offered by Mignolo's concept of 'border thinking' or Sousa Santos's 'post-abyssal thinking.' Both scholars criticise an epistemological exclusion of non-Western knowledge productions in favour of a pluriversal thinking of diversity; see Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*; Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges" *Eurozine*, (29 June 2007, 1-33, <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2007-06-29-santos-en.html>).

²¹ According to Glissant, the Caribbean artist "is his own ethnologist, historian, linguist, painter of frescoes, architect. Art for us has no sense of the division of genres. This conscious research creates

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the possibility of a collective effervescence. If he more or less succeeds, he makes critical thought possible; if he succeeds completely, he can inspire”, Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. 3rd ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 236.

²² Aníbal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Social Classification,” in *Coloniality at Large*, 181-224; Aníbal Quijano, “‘Race’ et colonialité du pouvoir,” *Mouvements* 51, no. 3 (2007): 111-18.

²³ María Lugones, “The Coloniality of Gender,” in *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*; María Lugones, “Toward a Decolonial Feminism,” *Hypatia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 742-59, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2010.01137.x/pdf>; María do Mar Castro Varela and Nikita Dhawan, “Gendering Post/Kolonialismus, Decolonising Gender: Feministisch-Postkoloniale Perspektiven,” in *Feminismus: Kritik und Intervention*, edited by Ingrid Kurz-Scherf et al. (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2009), 64-80. On the lack of research on the role of women and conceptualisations of gender during slavery in the Caribbean, see Jennifer L. Morgan, “Gender and Family Life,” in *The Routledge History of Slavery*, edited by Gad Heuman and Trevor Burnard (London: Routledge, 2011), 141.

²⁴ Lugones, “Toward”, 742.

²⁵ Lugones, “The Coloniality”, 377; Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourse* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

²⁶ Lugones, “The Coloniality”, 369-71, 377.

²⁷ Castro Varela and Dhawan “Gendering”, 76. Rather than idealising and romanticising precolonial societies by such a perspective, it is necessary to impartially examine their knowledge systems in order to learn more about alternative ways of knowing. However, this does not imply shifting the Western universality claim by exclusively focusing on these alternative epistemologies.

²⁸ Wynter names ‘race’ as a third variable in addition to gender and class that has to be taken into account if one wants to reflect on the situation of non-Western women; see Wynter “Afterword”, 356.

²⁹ Patricia Hill-Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 11-12.

³⁰ Lugones, “The Coloniality”, 369-70; also Castro Varela and Dhawan, “Gendering”, 64, 76-77. For intersectional analyses of the categories of gender, race, etc. in (post)colonial as well as Western societies, see e.g. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Cornelia Klinger, Gudrun-Axeli Knapp, and Birgit Sauer, eds., *Achsen der Ungleichheit. Zum Verhältnis von Klasse, Geschlecht und Ethnizität* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus-Verlag, 2007); Gloria E. Anzaldúa, “Preface: (Un)natural Bridges, (Un)safe Spaces,” in *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Analouise Keating (New York: Routledge, 2002), 1-5; Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury, “Introduction,” in *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, edited by Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 1-13; bell hooks, *Ain’t I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1981); Linden Lewis, ed., *The Culture of Gender and Sexuality in the Caribbean* (Gainesville, FL:

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University Press of Florida, 2003); Oyěwùmí, *The Invention of Women*; Wynter, "Afterword". For the significance of gender in postcolonial theory, see Castro Varela and Dhawan, "Gendering"; for a comprehensive overview of postcolonial gender theory, see Lann Hornscheidt, "Postkoloniale Gender-Forschung: Ansätze feministischer postkolonialer Studien," in *Schlüsselwerke der Postcolonial Studies*, edited by Julia Reuter and Alexandra Karentzos (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012), 215-28.

³¹ Gloria E. Anzaldúa, "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to 3rd World Women Writers," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa (New York: Kitchen Table, 1983), 165; Paravisini-Gebert, "Decolonizing", 4, 7; Wynter, "Afterword", 355-56.

³² Castro Varela and Dhawan, "Gendering", 77; hooks, *Ain't I A Woman*, 6-7, 9.

³³ Lugones, "The Coloniality", 384.

³⁴ Kilomba, *Plantation Memories*, 83; cf. also *ibid.*, 96-97.

³⁵ E.g. Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being: Contributions to the Development of a Concept," in *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, edited by Walter D. Mignolo and Arturo Escobar (London: Routledge, 2010), 109.

³⁶ Kilomba *Plantation Memories*, 96.

³⁷ Lugones, "Coloniality", 384-385; Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, "Introduction," in *This Bridge Called My Back*, xxiii; Anzaldúa, "Speaking in Tongues," 165; bell hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness," in *Yearning. Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston, MA: South End Press), 145-53. For similar sexual stereotypes of black men as potential rapists or as being endowed with an animalistic sexual instinct in a colonial realm of imagination, see Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being", 109. Wynter tries to metaphorically grasp this invisibility of the non-Western woman who is "doubly silenced" (Wynter, "Afterword", 365) – by masculinist as well as by (Western) feminist discourses (see Wynter, "Afterword", 365) – by pointing to the "significant absence [...] of Caliban's Woman" (Wynter, "Afterword", 360). Like Miranda, Prospero's daughter, only the 'white,' Western woman is present; see Wynter, "Afterword", 360; also 366. Also see Spivak's argument concerning the silencing of 'subaltern' women by Western as well as by indigenous masculine epistemologies in Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?".

³⁸ E.g. Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: Maspero, 1961).

³⁹ Castro Varela und Dhawan, "Gendering", 77; also Wynter, "Afterword", 364.

⁴⁰ John C. Hawley, "Introduction," in *Postcolonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections*, edited by John C. Hawley (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), 13-14; for the Caribbean context, see Lewis, "Exploring the Intersections", 5. In analogy to Roßhart, we define queerness as an open concept that expounds the problems of an ambisexual thinking pattern and that aims at deconstructing the supposedly natural normativity of heterosexuality on the basis of a critique of heteronormative discourses and practices; see Julia Roßhart, "Queere Kritiken, Kritiken an Queer: Debatten um die Entselbstverständlichung des feministischen Subjekts," in *Feminismus: Kritik und Intervention*, edited by Ingrid Kurz-Scherf et al. (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2009), 48, 53. According to Roßhart,

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queerness as a means of challenging hitherto valid ideas implies the expansion of gender theory to questions of sexuality and gendered identities and thereby aims at denormalising the duality of gender (see Roßhart, “Queere Kritiken”, 53-54). See also Hawley, “Introduction”, 3-4.

⁴¹ Samir Dayal, “By Way of an Afterword,” in *Postcolonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections*, edited by John C. Hawley (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), 324.

⁴² Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 89-91.

⁴³ Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands. La Frontera* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999), 106-107.

⁴⁴ E.g., Roßhart, “Queere Kritiken”, 53.

⁴⁵ Roßhart, “Queere Kritiken.”

⁴⁶ Walter D. Mignolo, “Decolonizing Western Epistemology”, 42-43.

⁴⁷ “Intersectional paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice” (Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 18). For more details on the debate on intersectionality, see Cornelia Klinger and Gudrun-Axeli Knapp, “Achsen der Ungleichheit – Achsen der Differenz. Verhältnisbestimmungen von Klasse, Geschlecht, ‘Rasse’/Ethnizität,” in *Achsen der Ungleichheit. Zum Verhältnis von Klasse, Geschlecht und Ethnizität*, edited by Cornelia Klinger et al. (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus-Verlag, 2007), 34-35.

⁴⁸ Paravisini-Gebert, “Decolonizing”, 7.

⁴⁹ Sara Mills, “Postcolonial Feminist Theory,” in *Contemporary Feminist Theories*, edited by Stevie Jackson and Jackie Jones (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 98.