

Johannes Bohle (Bielefeld University) and **Marius Littschwager** (Bielefeld University)

Caribbean Entanglements. Culture(s) and Nature Revisited

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Introduction

Set off by the *spatial turn*, there is an ongoing struggle in the social sciences and in the humanities to grasp and conceptualize fluid, contingent, and relational understandings of flows, mobilities, and multiplicities. In the Caribbean, “archipelagization provides one entry point [...]” to grasp these understandings (Boyce-Davies 3). Starting from that entry point, numerous ideas have evolved. For instance, Benítez-Rojo’s notion of the *repeating-island* (1992) to more recent ideas such as *island movements* (Pugh), and approaches like *Transatlantic Caribbean* (Kummels et al.). The debates are far from being complete and the present special issue on Caribbean entanglements represents a critical intervention on these understandings.

Over two years ago, as editors of the present *fiar* edition, we started a dialogue in order to reflect on these debates, fathoming out perspectives from human geography and literature with a common regional focus and a common interest in postcolonial studies as starting point. As Jennifer Robinson suggests: “[...] postcolonial critique could encourage us to reconsider concepts [...], including theorisations of society, space and nature” (275). This led to the Call for Papers for this special issue, an invitation to scholars from across the world and from all academic disciplines to expand the debate and to bring together multiple perspectives. Some of those who answered our call are brought together in this special issue.

A look at this issue’s contributions sheds light on different dimensions of Caribbean archipelagic entanglements. There is an underlying *leitmotif* of the sea (Kowalik; Nicolas-Bragance & Saffache), rivers (Beushausen), and canals (Baquero Melo) as spaces of relations and (dis-)connections: in other words, as spaces of *entanglements*.

By interpreting the eco-epic textures of Romare Bearden’s *The Sea Nymph* and Derek Walcott’s *The Schooner Flight*, Ania Kowalik brings out “[...] the entanglement of the poetic and the material that generates cultural and historical meanings of the archipelago” (3). Fabiola Nicolas-Bragance & Pascal Saffache show how the transient area between the land and the sea undergoes not just geophysical changes by way of tides or surging storms, but also changes in societal use and meaning; in the presented case of the *tours des yoles rondes* from a danger zone to a party zone. In Wiebke Beushausen’s analysis of *The Sudden Disappearance of Seetha*, it becomes obvious that, in the Guianas, rivers serve as borders as well as center-hinterland connections. In Jairo Baquero Melo’s analysis of canal projects in Colombia, Panama, and Nicaragua, the author shows how transnational and (g)local entanglements are at work to “[...] facilitate territorial transformations [...]” which are accompanied by the colonization of nature and the reproduction of inequalities (2).

What these contributions have in common is that they place their analysis at the blurry transient area (*ecotone*) between the land and the sea, where the dichotomy of nature and culture offers a target to be challenged. The contributions show that there is potential for analysis beyond fixed entities and established categories. Entanglements as spatial metaphor *and* multiscalar analysis, reflect the deep spatiality of social, historical, material, and discursive processes. This is the key point which will be elaborated in this editorial.

What is proposed here as *entanglements* does not exclusively and predominantly emerge from within, and about, what is called *the Caribbean*. However, it is remarkable that many phenomena and studies here mentioned can be principally seen as *Caribbean entanglements* because of their vision to focus on relations and their dynamics. Therefore, the authors want to argue for and with Caribbean entanglements, since the image and practice of entangling as envisioned here focuses on a better understanding of dynamics, instead of reproducing hierarchies.

With this special issue, we pursue three goals. First, we want to foster a transdisciplinary dialogue on the (disciplinary) key concepts nature and culture(s). [1] In this way, we want to outline how far nature and culture are at work as concepts that are inherently entangled. Second, we want to take up and develop further ongoing debates in Inter-American Studies and in Area Studies, and third, we want to critically reflect the scope of the concept of entanglements.

Hence, in the following three sections, we shall offer an overview of recent trends and discourses in Area Studies and Inter-American Studies, a short synopsis of the evolution, debates, and challenges of nature and culture in geography and literature. Furthermore, we open and discuss perspectives on Caribbean entanglements in dialogue with the contributions to this issue. [2]

The Caribbean as Space of Entanglements

The dichotomy of nature and culture corresponds to a binary framework one will not just find in the Caribbean and its diasporas, but also in broader global analytical and critical approaches when engaging with postcolonial spaces. It is also the analytical binary of the colonizer and the colonized that continues to shape dichotomies such as nature and culture as fixed entities.

Following fruitful perspectives coming from postcolonial studies and global history studies, taken up by literary studies, the focus shifts on to an

[...] intertwined, entangled history of Europe and the Global South, of colonizers and colonized, thus addressing not a history of isolated entities but rather a history that takes several sides as one complex unit [...]. Postcolonial history should no longer be seen as a history of European influence on the rest of the world or as a history of a serious deficit - of a catching up with European modernization. (Epple & Lindner 9)

Conrad & Randeria (2002) frame this idea of entanglements for a better understanding of the shared and divided history that mark experiences and constructions of modernity. That means that colonizing and colonized nations are bound together and shaped by the interplay of historical processes and dynamics.

We do locate our understanding of *the Caribbean as space of entanglements* within larger debates of and on postcolonial theory. Postcolonial authors have a particular liking for the use of spatial metaphors (like *entanglements*), to challenge the process of thinking in fixed identities. The logic behind this is to conceptualize difference in regard to spatial metaphors in a way that is non-dualistic (Lossau). Yet, they entail a broad range of methodological and conceptual tools across the disciplines. Edward Said's contrapuntal reading might be seen as an early attempt to think critically about interactions or *entanglements* despite its lack of focus on the dynamics of those interactions understood in the current discussions of the term and its possible uses as a method

(Kaltmeier; Müller; Raussert). [3] Furthermore, Fernando Coronil's approach entitled "Occidental Representational Modalities" (57-73), namely a "Dissolution of the Other by the Self", "Destabilization of Self by Other", and "Incorporation of the Other into the Self" can be regarded as an attempt to explain the conflicting constructions and stabilization/destabilization of identities in Western academic discourses as entanglements of knowledge production and ideas about identity in the Americas from an anthropological and Latin American perspective. [4] And it is here that two prominent studies from and about Caribbean cases are mentioned and resumed as one of the modalities: Fernando Ortiz's study on tobacco and sugar (1946) and Sidney Mintz's history of sugar's contribution to the formation of modernity (1985). According to Coronil's critique of the two studies, they both hint already at entanglements between and within different national areas and transnational spaces in methodological terms, yet they place the Caribbean or Cuba with Eurocentric essentialisms as a fixed entity. In this regard they indicate the dynamics and multi-relational connectedness of Caribbean entanglements, and more decisive in the context of the present collection of essays, they destabilize and deconstruct the dichotomy of nature and culture by taking (natural) goods as processors of social and cultural imaginaries and institutions.

Studies departing from a Caribbean perspective have also taken up and further developed the specific ideas and methods of the entangled histories approach. With its strong focus on mobilities in historical perspectives it crisscrosses traditional assumptions of national and cultural spaces as given entities, not just spatially but also between material and immaterial objects and imaginaries. [5] While the idea of shared and divided history is based on fruitful postcolonial thought (notably Fanon; Hall; Mintz "Sweetness and Power") and useful for historical research on empire and (post-)colonial nation-states, the overemphasis of the transnational as the dominant scale of investigation limits the practicality of the approach. Focusing predominantly on the transnational scale allows us to grasp transnational processes, but makes it difficult for us to grasp processes on and between other scales. Hence, the focus of the present issue of *fiar* is set by an understanding of *the Caribbean as space of entanglements*, and thus as a space shaped by circulations and transfers of goods and ideas by multiple colonial and postcolonial policies, imaginaries, discourses of literatures as well as other cultural and social practices. Entanglements are not *a priori* the object of study, because natural and cultural dynamics are understood as inherently entangled. Consequentially, the concentration lies on asking *how* relations are entangled and *what* the results are.

Based on these reflections, one needs to be careful about the reiteration of dichotomies, as Sundberg & Dempsey (2009) highlight: "[...] to write about nature/culture constructions is to presume the existence of a divide and thus constitutes a Eurocentric and Euro-centered endeavor". Therefore, analyzing "how culturally specific formations of nature come into being and how they are put to work to achieve particular political ends" renders it possible to analyze the

construction of what is imagined as nature as the product of power-knowledge relations (458). While the dichotomy of nature and culture is a prevalent idea, this does not imply that this conception holds true in other cultures and contexts, like, for instance, for the cultures and people in the Caribbean, prior to colonialism (Fitzpatrick; Zierhofer).

The Caribbean as space of entanglements is a ludic example of how the essentialist character of the dichotomy of nature and culture was and is used as legitimation of colonial expansion, of the disparagement of human beings, and of commodification of nature, just to name a few practices. For instance, the term 'Caribbean' was originally used to demonize the inhabitants of the region who resisted against the invaders and who were discursively vilified as unchristian and immoral man-eaters (Girvan; Hulme; Sheller). From then on, "the term itself and its later application to a geographical zone were inventions of imperial powers" (Girvan 3). By distinguishing themselves as civilized and cultivated, European colonialists left the sphere of nature and in this way placed Indigenous people in nature, outside of civilization, and therefore subject to domination and exploitation. The contemporary, economically important industry of tourism is based entirely "on (the idea of) unspoiled natural landscapes and an image of the region as paradise" (Jaffe 317). The Caribbean landscape is seen as "so abundantly tropical it's virtually vandal-proof. [...] Nature here becomes a kind of self-generating power that can be endlessly consumed and can withstand all that human consumption can impose on it" (Sheller 69; see also Nicolas-Bragance & Saffache in this issue).

This quick survey of what we see as forerunners indicates our aim of understanding *Caribbean entanglements* as material, geo-aisthetical and historical constellations and shows the multiscalar perspective that is necessary for such an approach to be extensively applied. [6] Consequently, by using the term entanglements both as a method and a metaphor, we understand them as the wide range of historical and contemporary processes and dynamics of circulation and transfer of actors, goods, and ideas simultaneously with the multiple and multi-relational ways these connections as webs, networks and knots create symmetries and asymmetries of power. Set within a larger framework of these dynamics and the focus on how these dynamics emerge, we would like to continue the ongoing debate in Inter-American (Area) Studies and take up the appeal "[...] to converse, share, exchange, debate, but first and foremost work together" (Rausser 92).

In a previous issue of *fiar* (*fiar* 7.3 *Theorizing Inter-American Studies*), several authors reflected on the concept of 'Entangled Americas' as a rethinking of Inter-American (Area) Studies. While Julia Roth explores decolonial politics of *intersectional entanglements* (2014) and Olaf Kaltmeier identifies three primordial points of departure of how one might rethink Area Studies in the Americas: *flows, geopolitical imaginaries and environment* (2014), Wilfried Rausser stresses a processual approach to Area Studies and explored a critical lexicography addressing "the transversal, multidirectional, and interconnected nature of historical processes, political

developments, economic changes and cultural productions that one considers fundamental for a more comprehensive understanding of the Americas as entangled space(s)” (70-1).

The three texts share some commonalities which are worth exploring. First, they underline the importance of analyzing power relations. Second, they foster a focus on interconnections, flows and mobilities. Third, they support an understanding of the Americas as an area basically shaped by manifold north-south and transatlantic connections. While they put emphasis on the fact that the Americas as space of entanglements are not limited to north-south-relations, but instead built critically upon this divide.

In order to foster an understanding of *the Caribbean as space of entanglements* within and as an Inter-American perspective, we would like to draw attention to the discussions on Area Studies and the transdisciplinary frameworks which primarily address the issues of analyzing cultural, geographical and literary dynamics in historical perspectives, but also consider sociological and economical sides of these entanglements.

Entangling Area(s)

Area Studies are “academic programmes that cut across disciplinary boundaries to develop a relatively comprehensive body of knowledge about given regions - or areas - of the world” (Glassman 34). Their roots lie in colonial projects and the linked demand to generate knowledge about the Other via techniques of mapping, counting and alike (Kaltmeier; Mielke & Hornidge; Said “Orientalism”). In the decades after the Second World War, notably European and US-American governments largely funded Area Studies programs in order to further pursue the creation of operational knowledge about regions of the world. This way of collecting encyclopedic-style knowledge about artificially fixed entities usable for the implementation of geopolitical aims has been widely criticized (for a detailed overview of the historical development and critique of Area Studies, see Sidaway). However, this kind of Area Studies is still dominant in European and US-American Area Studies programs. Nevertheless, there is potential in academic Area Studies to autonomously and critically reflect upon knowledge production and to propose dialogic ways of exchange (Kaltmeier). One may argue that Area Studies programs have helped lower traditional fixed disciplinary boundaries. Correspondingly, critical approaches which stand in opposition to traditional western agendas have emerged from Inter-American and Caribbean perspectives as sketched above. That’s why, among others, Robinson claims to reincorporate and strengthen Area Studies, and in this way to challenge what she calls “parochialism to geographical knowledge” (275). This transdisciplinary and critical character of Inter-American (Area) Studies paves the way which this introduction and this issue follow.

Thinking about area in terms of, for instance, spatial entities, center-periphery models, or organic cultural traditions does indeed obscure underlying power-knowledge asymmetries and therefore obstructs emancipatory postcolonial thought (Mintz “The localization of anthropological practice”; van Schendel). There is a need to rethink conventional Area Studies in order to overcome the focus on fixed entities defined by political borders and assumed to have characteristic cultural elements. This leads to another concept of area itself. Area is not exclusively understood as a physical and/or symbolic space, but as a product of *geographical imagination* (Gregory “Imaginative Geographies”; see also Baquero Melo in this issue). Consequently, Area Studies represent a research paradigm relying on multiscale mobilities, networks, flows, and entanglements of people, ideas, and things. It is this potential that continues to make Area Studies a worthwhile endeavor.

Likewise, *the Caribbean as space of entanglements* cannot be examined as a bounded area. Urgent themes, for instance discussed in this special issue’s contributions, undeniably require the inclusion of connections with other areas and the multiplicity of relations between people, places, and spaces. Area Studies as a research paradigm “allows us to trace the global in the local, thus illustrating the benefits of local area analyses for understanding global dynamics” (Slocum & Thomas 553). Or, as Carole Boyce Davies puts it: “Because the Caribbean is clearly one of those geopolitical locations impacted by [...] larger historical developments, reading Caribbean space in this contemporary period means using different understandings of how this space is contoured beyond assumed fixed geographies” (6f.).

Here, the author reflects the interface of literary and geographical reading of the Caribbean space, which is at the core of our collaboration for a special issue on *Caribbean Entanglements*. In the following, we thus sketch some disciplinary and transdisciplinary key ideas of geographical and literary reading of space and the dichotomy of nature and culture. The discipline of geography played a major role in institutionalizing the dichotomy of nature and culture, and furthermore offered tools and practices to support, legitimate and advance colonial projects. It thus served as an instrument of empire and furthermore, helped establish dualistic ontologies like nature/culture, object/subject, woman/man, black/white, and other/self (Gregory, “(Post)Colonialism and the production of nature”). The discipline itself is held captive in the dualism of human geography and physical geography. At the same time, the discipline’s quite unique and distinguishing feature is its ability to reflect on this dualism and to use it productively in integrative and combined approaches. The broad debate on the dichotomy of nature and culture in the field of geography cannot be presented in this section. Rather, some main strands which are at the core of the debate are outlined here. Since its establishment as an academic discipline, geography has had the relationship between nature and society at its core. Changing understandings of the dichotomy of nature and culture range from 19th century environmental determinism and biogeographical

concepts à la Mackinder or Ratzel; to cultural ecology's attempt to relate nature and culture in the 1960s and 1970s; to Marxist approaches (e.g. Harvey); to late 1990s and early 2000s modern and post-dualist ontologies like Actor-Network-Theory (e.g. Latour), to name just a few (Braun; Gregory "(Post)Colonialism and the production of nature"). A central point of recent debates is the question of the meaning, the conditionality, and the causality of materiality in the social world (Schlottmann, Korf & Graefe).

The aforementioned critique of the established modern understanding of nature and culture is embedded in a broader appeal for integrative research, connecting perspectives from human geography and physical geography. The inherent danger of such appeals lies in its point of departure, reiterating the categories that are sought to be overcome. This highlights again the power of both nature and culture as essentialist constructions. However, a more integrative perspective is needed to better grasp the entanglements of nature and culture. Today's geography offers promising approaches to challenging the dichotomy as it sees the world not separated in ontological segments, but rather composed of a multiplicity and diversity of relational spaces, flows, patterns, and processes.

The basis for an explicitly geographical discussion of entanglements (Sharp, Routledge, Philo & Paddison) lies in Massey's (e.g. 2005) conceptualization of space and place. She conceives space as a side by side of different narratives—a social construction—and highlights that power relations are necessarily a part of space. Massey advocates dissolving the idea of place as a rather static site and emphasizes the processual and multiple character of place (Lossau). Developing this thought further with Jones' (2009) idea of thinking places as entanglements enables the investigation of cross- and multiscalar, temporal, corporeal, relational, material, natural, and cultural dimensions of a place. In this perspective, one can better grasp the "[...] rich entanglements of the social, the natural, the material, the imaginary, the past, and the present" (319), without falling into the infamous territorial trap (Agnew) of conceiving entanglements simply as intensive relations between places or areas.

Furthermore, theories that combine the critical potential of poststructuralist approaches and an engagement with realist understanding of materiality are emerging which might be a way to challenge the dichotomy of nature and culture without the inherent shortcomings of, for instance, Actor-Network-Theory. One could, for instance, think of entanglements in a similar way as of *assemblages* in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari. That means, entanglements are characterized by multiple flows, lines, imaginaries, and territories, always put together by relations and in relation, always challenged by processes of stabilization and destabilization. This understanding of space and time "[...] as a seamless web of reciprocal action, or as an integrated totality of functional interdependencies, or as a block of unlimited universal interconnections [...]" contests the thinking in linear causalities and dichotomies (DeLanda 19). Therefore, by shifting the focus from, for

instance, bounded territories to intertwined processes of (de-)territorialization, one must put an emphasis on the processes, mechanism, techniques, and effects. In other words, drawing on this *flat ontology* allows for overcoming the dichotomy of nature and culture, which is as any other technique of separation a powerful operation of ordering knowledge on the one hand (e.g. Foucault). And, on the other, to analyze discourses, practices, materialities, and effects in relation and in an integrative way.[7]

Taking up the above mentioned *leitmotif* of ecotone and water bodies in this issue, hurricanes represent an example for research drawing on the outlined approach by forms of thinking with entanglements at work at the nature-society interface; for example, an analysis of hurricanes and disaster risk management in the Caribbean focusing on Foucauldian apparatuses and Deleuzian assemblages. Hurricanes can be located at the interface of nature and society, as they are physical phenomena, which evoke diverse practices in different societies, influenced by human induced climate change. Hurricanes are neither all natural, nor all cultural. They shape social life and politics and, the other way round, social and political configurations are shaped by them. Furthermore, hurricanes and societies dealing with them develop a specific rhythm, a distinct interplay or entanglement of time and space (Schwartz).

Such interplays Schwartz is analyzing, we can observe as the object of literary and cultural studies. For instance, Lotman's concepts of the *semiosphere* (Lotman), combines structural spatial analysis of literary texts with models of cultural analysis. Recent approaches of (postcolonial) ecocriticism (see Beushausen's and Kowalik's articles in this issue, and Huggan & Tiffin in general) continue to critically re-write the latter holistic design of Lotman's approach.

Literary Studies and Comparative Literature take active part in defining recent approaches in Area Studies, such as *TransArea* (Ette), *Hemispheric American Studies* (Bauer) or *Inter-American Studies* (McClennen), in doing so, they also critically recognize and question the participation in the so called *project of modernity* that fundamentally set out to define what is natural and, idealistically, its cultural counterpart. We notice here similar discursive and practical mechanisms at work as they have been described above in the critical characterization of geography as a discipline. Literatures and also different and changing ideas of what literature *is* through ways of its institutionalization have helped to shape and transform the narrative of civilization and/vs. barbarism in the Americas not just geographically from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. But also thematically and spatially it is to be regarded as an entanglement of knowledge that combined, in its postcolonial trajectories, colonial discourses of landscapes as wilderness in terms and codes of morality from the Americas and beyond (see also Fitz 210-32).

In 'Caribbean literatures', it is slavery and the plantation trope that formed aesthetic discourses and literary practices since the colonial period. In recent years, these discourses and practices have been focused in their spatial formations. The idea of space in literary studies consequently works

as an entanglement of symbolic and material spaces. Evolving spaces of and in literature are therefore cultural practices as signifying practices. The study of topologies, topographies and mobilities of and within literatures continue to re-read the entanglements of nature(s) and culture(s) through the demonstration and critique of models and practices of imagination (see Russ; Isfahani-Hammond; and Kowalik in this issue).

At the same time *Caribbean entanglements* are explored thematically in literary and cultural studies approaches. Just to mention more historical and differentiating perspectives: Gudrun Rath offers new ways of looking at Zombies and *zombi narratives* and the critical approach to their global circulation as a worldly phenomenon (Rath; see also Anatol's video in the present issue). In a similar way, Leonie Meyer Krentler's work on human-animal relations and their representation in Caribbean literatures deals with the entanglements of nature(s) and culture(s) and serves up fruitful material for discussions in the future.

In this process of critical revision we are pointing at, the *Caribbean as space of entanglements*, has more recently been approached epistemologically as a space of transatlantic and inter-Caribbean knowledge production (Ette; Müller) and therefore not just reevaluated. [8] This idea of a producing space serves as multiple centers actively taking part in the process of exchange and not just passively receiving what is brought to it. Especially theories dealing with identity, from Glissant's *Poetics of Relation* to the discussion of *creolité* in Caribbean spaces and beyond have helped to reveal histories and History as entangled in the dynamics of creational processes.

Outlook: Caribbean Entanglements

The very notion of *the Caribbean as space of entanglements* as it is proposed in the present issue of *fiar* already challenges ideas of spatial thinking practiced by traditional Area Studies. Thinking with the idea of entanglements is a way of description and reflection, not only prominent within fields such as Area Studies, but dominant and fruitful in more and more systematic approaches of cultural analysis departing from an understanding of space as a form of social, cultural, and aesthetic practice. The spatialized categories of postcolonial theory, for example *third space*, *in-betweenness* (Bhabha), have gained more importance in combination with cultural theories and models by Caribbean authors – e.g. *repeating islands* (Benítez-Rojo) or *poetics of relation* (Glissant). As a result, the notion of *the Caribbean as space of entanglements* is working with and within this combination of heterogeneous epistemologies, which itself is already formed by entanglements of knowledge-transfer.

The intertwined character of power-knowledge relations can be seen as a key topic in this issue's contributions and editorial. Reflecting this, for further research, one might investigate apparatuses

(Foucault) and assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari). This allows for an analysis of power-knowledge relations and their effects in neither causalistic, nor deterministic, nor dualistic ways. Furthermore, such a framework enables the dialogue between different areas, fields, and disciplines.

When looking at the contributions to this special issue, it is clear that a Caribbean perspective does include a wide range of areas and interconnections. A Caribbean perspective is transoceanic, multiscalar and connects places, ideas, and histories. Contributors to this special issue come from various disciplines such as Sociology (Jairo Baquero Melo), Geography (Fabiola Nicolas-Bragance & Pascal Saffache), and Literature (Giselle Anatol, Wiebke Beushausen, Ania Kowalik). The contributors are based on both sides of the Atlantic and on both sides of the Caribbean Sea, namely in Bogotá (Colombia), Fort-de-France (Martinique), Atlanta and Kansas (United States of America), and Göttingen (Germany). In their texts, they explore the entanglements of places, regions, nations, and continents. In this way they lay out interconnections and relations such as (among others) India-Canada-Guyana (Beushausen), Martinique-Europe (Nicolas-Bragance & Saffache), China-Nicaragua-USA-Panama-Colombia (Baquero Melo), St. Lucia-Trinidad and Tobago-Africa (Kowalik) and Africa-USA-Trinidad and Tobago (Anatol).

The location of the authors and their contributions highlight the scope of *transnational*, *translocational*, and *transatlantic* approaches. At the same time, the limits of these approaches become obvious and are discussed in the contributions. Studying interactions and the dynamics of construction of imagined and realized spaces in historical formations or/and in contemporary constellations is marked by an attempt to break free from national narratives. The fragmentary character of the juxtaposition of studies presented here and dedicated to histories, structures, actors, discourses and narratives of entanglements, reveal quite well the alertness to avoid overall celebratory images of circulation and transfer as entirely positive processes, because they would risk re-affirming stereotypes and the colonial categories they criticize.

Therefore, the concept of entanglements serves as a fruitful starting point for analysis, as it reflects the place and location, as well as the materiality and representation of social, historical, and spatial processes. Analyzing entanglements means thus to engage with a multiscalar analysis without excluding particular scales or using a framework with fixed and bound levels of analysis. All of these case studies start from a problem and analyze the entanglements of and on the relevant scales (spanning from the global to the body), and embed their analysis in the social, cultural, spatial, and historical context.

Endnotes

[1] We do not want to restrict the use of nature and culture as key concepts of specific disciplines, like Geography or Literary Studies, however, consider the discussions of both terms as central to a wide range of a nowadays transdisciplinary exchange, ranging e.g. from Gender and Cultural Studies and Social Sciences to Biology and Natural Sciences.

[2] We thank the editors of Forum for Inter-American Research (*fiar*) to give us the opportunity to enter the debate with this special issue. Furthermore, we thank the contributors for their contributions, the reviewers, and those who provided inspiration and critique during the publication process.

[3] “As we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally but contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts” (Said “Culture and Imperialism” 129).

[4] At the same time Edward Said is put prominently in the present discussions of postcolonial theories, we also share Fernando Coronil’s critique of post-colonial studies formed as set of dominant discourses since the 1980s: “It is remarkable but understandable that debates and texts on and from Latin America do not figure significantly in the field of post-colonial studies as it has been defined since the 1980s. [...] Said’s canonical *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) is emblematic of this tendency: it centers on British and French Imperialism from the late nineteenth century to the present” (Coronil 2004).

[5] Please see Bauck & Müller for a general critical introduction to *Entangled History* from an Inter-American perspective.

[6] As material conditions we subsume the constitution of territorial topographies and its respective geographical, climatological and geological coordinates; aesthetical resumes the interplay of sensitive, cognitive and affective conditions of perception and observation of surroundings.

[7] There are works preparing the ground for such an analysis. On a theoretical level inter alia Grove & Pugh or Legg; on an empirical level e.g. Mattissek & Wiertz discussing an example from Thailand; first signs for the Caribbean: Grove “From emergency management to managing emergence” & Grove “Biopolitics and Adaptation”.

[8] It is relevant to notice that the above listed studies and authors are based in Western academia. But it is those studies and authors we are basing our reflections on, who foster critical approaches of transculturation, postcolonial theory, mobilities, imaginaries etc., rather than of fixed entities and identities. Overemphasizing the origin and institutionalization of an author follows the same binary logic like the dichotomy of nature and culture. Instead, we argue in favor of entanglements as an approach to put forward dialogue and transfer (e.g. Chakrabarty).

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