Fractured Connections in the Caribbean

Early-Career Symposium 2026
Society for Caribbean Research
18 – 19 June 2026

Conference Programme

Thursday, 18 June 2026 – Centre for Development Research (ZEF)

10 – 10.30 a.m.	Opening remarks and welcome to participants
	Panel 1 **Colonial Archives, Historiographies, and Epistemologies of the Caribbean**
	Chair: **Norah El Gammal**
10.30 – 11 a.m.	**Hannah Leah Neugebauer** (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz): "Fractured Revolutionary Solidarities in the Caribbean – Simón Bolívar as a Precursor to Glissant's and Benítez-Rojo's *Caribbean Way of Thinking*?"
11 – 11.30 a.m.	**Dr. Wolf Behnsen** (Hanover): "The written records of the Moravian Church and the fractures and connections of the abolition of slavery in Suriname in 1863"
11.30 – 12 p.m.	**Dr. Johana Caterina Mantilla Oliveros** (University of Bonn): "Scars of the earth: *Palenque*s and the creation of freedom, northern Colombia, 17th and 18th centuries"
12 – 1.30 p.m.	*Lunch break*
1.30 – 2.30 p.m.	**Keynote**
	Prof. Tessa McWatt (University of East Anglia): "Ruptures: What Are We Now?"
	Introduced by Norah El Gammal
2.30 – 3 p.m.	*Coffee break*
	Panel 2 **Languages, Memory, and Cultural Resonance in the Caribbean**
	Chair: **Micely Díaz Espaillat**
3 – 3.30 p.m.	**Raphael Dohardt** (FAU Erlangen-Nuremberg): "The Linguistic Repertoire of Dominican Vudú"
3.30 – 4 p.m.	**Dr. Pratyush Sharma** (Research and Innovation System for Developing Countries): "Roots and Routes: The Girmitiya in the Caribbean and the Sustenance of Diasporic Bonds"
4 – 4.30 p.m.	**Luis Ramón Campo Yumar** (Universidad Central de Las Villas): "Notes for the Construction of a Caribbean Anthropomastics in Spanish: Challenges and Perspectives"
4.30 – 5 p.m.	Closing remarks
7 p.m.	*Dinner*

Friday, 19 June 2026 – Department of Anthropology of the Americas

Panel 3
Bonds, Ruptures, and Mobilities in the Caribbean

Chair: Norah El Gammal

10 – 10.30 a.m.	Joanne G. Johnson (Trinidad and London): "Future Memoir: Writing Freedom Through Fracture, Repetition, and Portraiture"
10.30 – 11 a.m.	Alexandra Savard-Chambard (Sorbonne University): "Rethinking Connection Through Spectral Ecopoetics in Olive Senior's *Gardening in the Tropics* (1994)"
11 – 11.30 p.m.	Ronja D. Quast (University of Koblenz): "'To Write as a Complete Caribbean Woman': Poetics of Fragmentation in the Writings of Michelle Cliff"
11.30 – 12 p.m.	Dr. Ethol Exime (State University of Londrina): "Haitian Kindness Beyond Stereotypes: Subaltern Masculinities, Cultural Tensions, and Knowledge Circulation in Brazil"
12 – 1.30 p.m.	*Lunch break*
1.30 – 2.30 p.m.	**Keynote** Dr. Jean-Marie Théodat (University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne): "An Island for Two" Introduced by Micely Díaz Espaillat
2.30 – 3 p.m.	*Coffee break*

Panel 4
Caribbean (Counter-)Narratives: From Eighteenth-Century Fractures to Digital Decolonization

Chair: Dr. Johanna Caterina Mantilla Oliveros

3 – 3.30 p.m.	Matthew Monrose (McMaster University): "The Children of Sisyphus: Don Moore and the NCA's Fanonian Dilemma, 1955"
3.30 – 4 p.m.	Esperanza Anido Calvo (University of Vechta): "Exploring Fractures of the Caribbean: Eighteenth-Century Narratives of Past and Present"
4 – 4.30 p.m.	Helen Atkins (University of the West Indies): "Decolonising AI for Violence Prevention in Jamaica"
4.30 – 4.45 p.m.	*Coffee break*
4.45 – 5.30 p.m.	Programme evaluation
5.30 – 5.45 p.m.	Closing remarks and departure

In their reflections on and from the Caribbean, Édouard Glissant and Antonio Benítez-Rojo refer to it as a complex space marked by connections, overflowing, ruptures, and shared imaginings (Benítez-Rojo 1986, 1998; Glissant 2010). The Caribbean emerges as a dynamic site where histories, cultures, and languages intersect and diverge in ways that challenge fixed boundaries and linear narratives. Glissant's notion of the 'relation' emphasizes the Caribbean as a place of continual interaction and transformation, where identity is shaped through a web of ongoing cultural exchanges and creolization. Similarly, Benítez-Rojo highlights the 'repetitive multiplicity' of Caribbean experience, underscoring how overlapping histories produce both cohesion and fragmentation.

Considering the Caribbean's multifaceted history and its ongoing tensions and complexities, the planned symposium focuses on the exploration and critical reflection of three modes of relationality: connection, bond, and fracture. These notions serve to form a framework to discuss historical and current events, processes, and phenomena in the Caribbean (both insular and continental). We seek to discuss how these elements have shaped the region in various dimensions, such as the production of perceptions and narratives, internal and transoceanic commercial, social, and political dynamics, the configuration of families, and the formation of specific cultural landscapes. This two-fold dimension of inquiry situates the history and present of the Caribbean across multiple spatial and chronological scales. Furthermore, it facilitates an understanding of the implications these dynamics have had on the formation of Caribbean thought and the narratives forged about the region.

Organizers:
Norah El Gammal (European University Viadrina)
Micely Díaz Espaillat (University of Bonn)
Dr. Johanna Caterina Mantilla Oliveros (University of Bonn)