

New Ways of Finding a Voice: Oral tradition and hybridity in Seychelles literature

Anne-Berenike Rothstein

Introduction: Island literature and oral tradition in Seychelles

Islands have manifold connotations and have entered the collective memory through the fame of their literary processing. To name but a few milestones in literary interpretation and adaptation, the island dates from antiquity (Homer, *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, 700BC) to contemporary literature (Christian Kracht's controversial German novel *Imperium*, 2012); an integral part of literary history, having been the site of multiple projections and metaphorical connotations. In their greatest antagonistic orientation, islands can be substitutes for utopias (Plato's *Atlantis*, 360 BC and Thomas More's *Utopia*, 1516 are projections for ideal societies in fictional settings or 'no-places') or dystopias (*In the Penal Colony* from 1919, Franz Kafka describes a claustrophobic island where there is no control on the exercise of power; and H. G. Wells creates an apocalyptic scenario in *The Island of Dr Moreau*, 1896). The island reveals human representations and conceptions of small worlds and is also a mirror of human existence: be it in social contacts (the most famous allegory of the brutal energies of hierarchical groups towards sensitive individuals is William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, 1954) or be it in the contact with nature as a confidant of man or as an antagonist. One might think of William Shakespeare's drama *The Tempest*, 1610/11 or Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* from 1719.

The paradigmatic novel of the antagonism between nature and human civilisation, showing the individual caught in the loneliness of an island where he [sic] finds, finally, some companionship and manages to learn how to survive via simple means.

(Kremer, 2015, p.13)

A multilingual and multicultural society like Seychelles, is always on the lookout for new forms of literary expression to discuss its own identity. In particular, the social structures prevalent in Seychelles (a mixture of African, French, Chinese, Indian origins) require a continuous redefinition of one's self-image. It is difficult to speak of an island literature of Seychelles, since to this day the oral tradition has prevailed over the written one. There are also very few material objects or written documents that can testify for the life of the slaves during the colonial era of Seychelles.

Existing testimonies are kept alive through the oral tradition in songs, stories, riddles and dances. Oral literature plays an important role as a dynamic discourse about society and about the relationships between individuals, groups and classes in their society. Furthermore, oral literature is a domain in which individuals in a variety of social roles articulate a commentary upon power relations and create knowledge about society (Furniss

and Graham, 1995, p.1). '[...] the words, the texts, have the ability to provoke, to move, to direct, to prevent, to overturn and to recast social reality' (Furniss and Graham, 1995, p.9).

Another effect of cultural convergence is to bring together the various channels through which storytelling happens: speech, song and writing. Song represents in folktales and myths a mode of communication, even the essence of the narrative (Haring, 2003, p.25). Creolization also favours a structural sort of mixing. Long before writing, it was a favourite device of Indian and Arab storytellers to frame one story in another:

Language and genre-mixing, framing, quotation, and other narrative techniques are practised both by storytellers in creole societies of Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion, Seychelles and the Comoros and by their collectors, who elaborate and simulate oral texts ... Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion, Seychelles and the Comoros share a common stock of traditional folktales.

(Haring, 2003, p.25)

So far, research has concentrated primarily on traditional folk tales and has, for example, worked out general or recurrent motifs specific to the regions (a disobedient daughter refuses husbands in favor of an animal in disguise, Görög-Karady and Seydou, 2001).

Oral tradition in Seychelles literature on the example of the Sega and the Moutia

Sega and Moutia (or Moutya) are cultural, oral forms of expression; their various meanings show the variability effected by creolization.

Sometimes, the Sega is a traditional song; formerly, it was a piece of island dance music played on a European instrument, the piano; now it is a costumed touristic dance (La Selve, 1995, p.102). In Seychelles, where few songs seem to have been recorded, song is a privileged channel for revealing interrelations in tales. Hazel de Silva herself gives a definition of the Sega as a prologue or reading instruction for her volume of poems.

The dances and songs we call 'Sega' today are a heritage from Africa. The Sega is usually composed spontaneously and is a form of folklore or oral literature. Sega of Seychelles is composed similarly, following closely the pattern of the Sega; keeping to the local idioms and attitudes. It also relates about the traditional way of life which is dying out and about local beliefs and customs and folklore. It also gives an insight into the social and historical background of 'Île d'Abondance'.

(de Silva, 1983, p.1).

Around 200 years ago, the Moutia was created by slaves hailing from Africa. This African influence can be experienced in the rhythm of the Moutia, combined with the lyrics of Seychellois Creole language. The Moutia was a dance, performed outdoors, designed by

slaves to indicate their suffering within their group on the plantations. Much like the blues in the Southern United States, Moutia was a creative expression of one's suffering after a hard day's work. At the same time, this cultural form offered a strong cohesion among the slaves, an information transfer of stories that were forbidden by the masters and at the same time a welcome distraction from the suffering. 'Whilst the white European masters danced in their great halls, the slaves created their own dance to declare their suffering' (Salomon 2018, n.p.). In the glow of the fire prepared by the women, the Moutia served as an information carrier for forbidden contents: be it insults about the master, but also lamentations about lost loved ones and excessive labour. The Moutia served, then and now, as a permanent creative tool for questioning and determining identities. It was both palimpsest of trauma and a signifier of emancipation (Choppy, 2017).

De Silva and the Moutia

Hazel de Silva is the first Seychellois woman of colour to be published in the English language in Seychelles. 'Though she wrote in English, Hazel's discourse is beautifully coloured with Creole words and expressions, situating her books firmly in the archipelago' (Seychelles Women's Day Association, 2013, p.6). The National Arts Council describes her as the most prolific of Seychellois authors writing in the English language.

The poems in the 1983 collection form a continuous story with an inherent drama: the lyrical I first establishes the place, then tells of the lover who gave her a child, and then disappears. Most of the poems deal with the suffering and grief of being abandoned. This continuous narrative is also reminiscent of a conversation in which the events are described more and more clearly to the addressed reader, creating a small and intimate scale by the increasingly emotional confession of the lyrical I. The core statement revolves around the traumatic experience of abandonment, longing and loneliness, staged in different spaces and times. The feelings of alienation, displacement and disenchantment, that have already made de Silva's novel *Black Night of Quiloo* (1971) so famous, are also ubiquitous in the poems of the 1983 collection, as well the longing to return to the homeland and the reflection of one's own cultural heritage (Miller, 2001, p.226). *Sega of Seychelles* exhibits de Silva's unique and characteristic experimental style that blends poetry and prose; while focusing and emphasizing the complex roles of the women of Seychelles. This palimpsest-like structures (here the overlapping of two levels of text and the interaction between these) which allow myths and literary traditions to shine through, also represent an attempt to redefine Creole literature and culture through poetological procedures (including paratexts and intertexts), and sometimes to counter 'female' historiography with 'male' historiography. De Silva takes up premodern spellings in modern and postmodern implementations with the help of the Sega and the Moutia.

In order to explore the poetics of the poem, three thematic areas were selected for analysis. These are connected to small scale and the oral tradition: places and non-places, hybridity and gender.

Imaginary and real small scales: places and non-places

The analysis of the construction and representation of the insular space and the geographical islands of Seychelles is conducted in the context of the spatial turn that considers space a paradigm being constituted by a 'societal production process of perception, use and appropriation' (Dautel and Schödel, 2016, p.12). Therefore, space is subject to permanent change and undergoes continuous re-constitution and re-definition. De Silva reflects this pliability and changeability of space within different time levels in her poem *Moutia*. The poem connects different levels of space and time and combines individual and collective memory: in the first part (up to the verse 'not to reason'), the various connotations of the traditional musical style, the dance of the Seychelles (*Moutia*), are brought together in the present and the past. The second part (up to the verse 'the sun is falling') deals with the individual love story of the lyrical I and the first hints of abandonment. Finally, the third part is a kind of retrospective, expressing the longing for the lost lover, the birth of the common child and the pining for the homeland.

De Silva designs various spaces: first, she leads the reader to real places, which she describes costumbristically (the sunset, the water, the Creole houses). The reader is at the beginning of the poem in the midst of Creole life, which is conveyed through visual (description of the landscape), acoustic ('the drum clap of *moutia* dancers is mounting in the air', first stanza) and taste aspects ('bacca sometimes', third stanza). This description in the well-known connection of the 'île d'abondance' is taken up again in the second part and gets geographically specified: 'menge, bois noir vanille sauvage' is located 'in the deep forest of takamaka' (stanza 10), in which the lyrical I – already abandoned by the lover – is located. De Silva plays with the classical image of the place of longing embodied by Seychelles.

Islands allude imagination, thought and affect. ... Emotions and desires are moved by and commonly move us towards or away from islands.

(Baldacchino and Clark, 2013, p.129)

De Loughrey (2001) describes this as an *archipelagraphy*: a re-presentation of identity, interaction, space and place that proceeds as different combinations of affect, materiality, performance, things. The encounter with nature is here, 'an experience that is characterized as at once an 'escape' and a rediscovery of one's root in nature, with the sea, or at least with water, acting as the backdrop to the unknown'.

In some mysterious way, the water that surrounds islands evokes emotions that are linked to the need to look for solutions to problems of ultimate meaning, of the meaning of life and death.

(Vassallo, 2015, pp.24-25)

De Silva takes up the often romanticised image of the island not only in her description of fixed places, but also in non-places, illustrated in the fourth stanza 'the moon can make': Michel Foucault's space-constructivist theory of the 'enacted utopia' (Foucault, 1986,

p.24), what he terms *heterotopian* space, could be seen in the paradisiacal description of the island, where even misfortune becomes beauty ('even misery seem beautiful', stanza 4). Like the garden in the Orient (Foucault, 1986, p.25), the place here has very deep and seemingly superimposed images. A trance- and dream-like state is designed in this heterotopic place, which makes the senses disappear and – reinforced by the bacca – drives 'emotions into madness' (stanza 4).

The entire poem can be read as a heterotopia, since the 'heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (Foucault, 1986, p.25). The pluricentric character of space and the antagonistic diversity of Foucault's heterotopias are especially manifest in de Silva's poems: her heterotopia consists of different small scales (paradise, Creole houses, etc.) that she links with allusions to the slave past, connected with daily life and an individual story of love and loss and a general reflection on uprooting. According to Foucault (1986, pp.25-26), modern space is organized by oppositions in a set of relations 'between private space and public space, between family space and social space, between cultural space and useful space, between the space of leisure and that of work.' Heterotopias are spaces in which all these related oppositions are 'simultaneously represented, contested and inverted' (ibid.).

Hybridity and oral tradition

The concept of hybridity as a category of cultural theory is understood as an attempt to 'allow incompatibilities to exist in a tense relationship ... as a new principle of life and thought' (de Toro, 2008, p.175, author's translation from German). Hybridity is to be read as a special characteristic of Creole cultures, as a further development of the concepts of identity and identity constructions for the imagination of a community.

In a world so fluidly interconnected, identitarian sedimentations organised in more or less stable historical groups (ethnicities, nations, classes) restructure themselves in the midst of interethnic, transclass and transnational groupings.

(Canclini, 1989, p.xxviii)

Hybridity can be analysed in the poem on various levels: on a structural level (oral tradition, lyric, Segá and Moutia), in the use of language (English and Creole) and in narration (past and present trauma). Not only does the text reveal different levels of historical and individual experience and significance, placed on top of one another like a palimpsest, but above all the island itself is a hybrid phenomenon, 'a meta-text, a rich palimpsest for fertile imagination' (Baldacchino and Clark, 2013, p.130).

On a structural level, the most obvious form of literary hybridity is the use of oral tradition. The poems in *Segá of Seychelles* are a stimulation of oral texts. In reading oral poems, we take them out of context. That lost context consists in the performance, the audience, the poet, the music, the specialized way of speaking, the gestures, the costuming, the visual aids, the occasion, the ritual, and other aspects of a given poem's reality (Foley, 2002, p.60). De Silva manages to get the former process of the oral poem in the product (i.e. the

written poem) alive through a synesthetic approach: you taste, smell, watch, feel etc. with the help of her dense descriptions of the small scale, the reader can breathe the atmosphere of her narration. The audience (we, the readers) is also inherent in her poems, through apostrophes, allusions to one's own world and imaginary space that imitates a conversation. This evoked two-person constellation or conversational situation is strongly reminiscent of a dialogue, a form of language that is popular in written texts. 'Impressive quantities of dialogue appear in texts recorded in La Digue and Praslin, Seychelles (Diallo, 1981). The communicative process of orality is permanent in the poem. Storytellers all over the Southwest Indian Ocean prefer to quote the dialogue of their characters rather than summarize it. 'In live performance, these narrators send a triple message, simultaneously establishing their own reality, the identity of their character, and a separation between narration and dialogue, often through the vocal manipulation so beloved of African narrators' (Haring, 2003, p.29).

In the use of languages – de Silva combines sections in italics and in quotes that are direct quotes from actual Segas in Seychelles with her text written in English – the author takes over the heteroglossia that is widespread and practised in the Seychelles and processes it in the form of multilingualism in the text. This linguistic diversity is further illustrated by translating passages of text first into Creole and then later into English in the poem ('Nous p'encore separe costé cote moi mon joli gate' and then later 'We have not yet separated come closer my sweet', stanzas 7 and 11). At this point the translation serves as distance and alienation from the beloved, which then becomes clear in the next stanza in the retrospective of the love affair: 'I return to the islands of Seychelles here I met him he the one who was to give me a *bebe*' (stanza 12). Here, the mixing of the languages shows itself both as identitary self-assurance and as a sign of oscillation between the foreign and the familiar. 'It is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture' (Bhaba, 1994, p.38).

The title of the poem refers to its conception: Moutia (pp.11-14) is a strongly rhythmized text, which above all conveys the vocal and lyrical component with its repetitions ('batte la main', stanzas 1, 2, 5) and exclamations ('Ah!', stanza 10). The basic mood is expectant ('the dance has begun'; 'the drum clap of Moutia dancers is mounting the air', stanza 1) and brings together past and present as well as individual and collective memory against the background of the Moutia: it stands on the one hand for the collective identity and past in which the song was forbidden as the epitome of creolité ('the once forbidden dance', p.11) and had to be exercised clandestinely ('once performed in secret', stanza 2). Then as now, the poem suggests, music and dance help to overcome the hardships of everyday life and to forget 'their misery' (stanza 4). The reader is drawn directly into the bubbling rhythm of the Moutia: 'Batte la main, batte la main' and the dance has just begun and will be accompanied by O-exclamations enclosing heaven and earth (o the sunsets, o the water', stanza 1). This dense atmospheric description, which de Silva applies directly to the present, initially establishes dance as something acoustic that recruits its participants through the demanding imperative ('batte la main'). The levels of meaning of the Moutia are now expanding and de Silva deals with the function of dance for its population in the

present (Friday evening means leisure for the creole houses) and the past ('the dance had begun', stanza 2): This is a direct allusion to the Moutia as a popular dance form and an important feature of the Seychelles culture, but also a reference to the colonial and plantation labour years when the Moutia was a forbidden dance for the population and its rhythm and breaking out can be read as form of resistance and a weapon against authority. The Moutia was then a forum for the community to express the willingness for freedom of speech and a cultural tool for survival in an environment where they were oppressed. Following the action-theoretical definition of space (Dautel and Schödel, 2016, p.12), the once oppressed population recaptures its space, but not entirely: although dance is no longer performed in secret, it is only practised 'on the fringes on the city' (stanza 3). The Moutia also illustrates de Silva's narrative method of linking time levels.

Heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time – which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time.

(Foucault, 1986, p.26)

Every woman is an island: gender aspects

The connection between spatial and gender narratives plays a decisive role in the symbolization of different power relations. The body can be defined as a category of performative inscriptions with the term 'body eventuality' (Tuider, 2003), which emphasizes the event character of the sexually coded body. In the connection of the analysis of spaces with the gender question, power relations crystallize clearly (Löw, 2001). Their examination is based on a dynamic understanding of space following Michel Foucault (1994) and Geraldine Pratt (2004), which starts from the power permeation of space. Body and power imply each other, because:

[T]here is no power relation without a corresponding field of knowledge constituting itself, and no knowledge that does not simultaneously presuppose and constitute power relations.

(Foucault, 1994, p.39)

Body, sexuality, desire and power are mutually dependent, imply and arise within power relations (de Toro, 2002, p.45). In de Silva's poem, the female lyrical I undergoes a transformation from the embodiment of the island to the traveler but also stranger, who is looking at the island from outside. The second part of the poem describes the luck and fulfillment of the relationship ('he is holding me ever closer [...] To see him to see him sends joy to me', stanza 8, 9) and even the retrospective glance on the past relationship ('we two we loved till...' stanza 13) in the third part illustrates the joy of being the fertile island of their relationship in bearing a child. The poem gives the position of the woman in society then and now and may be used as a reference to the matrifocal society of Seychelles (Benedict and Benedict, 1982, p.104). In this context, the female body and the island are small scale, symbolising a microcosm of past and present communities. The body serves as a place for the translation and transmission of social and identity issues, which are primarily discussed in gender terms, and becomes the instrument of message for the embodiment of history itself. So there is a relationship between female body and textual

body which could be aligned with Homi Bhaba's terminology of 'in-betweens', since the (textual) bodies are 'a space of translation, transference and transnationalism' (Rutherford, 1990, p.208).

The chapter title 'Every woman is an island' is reminiscent of John Donne's famous phrase 'No man is an Island' (Donne, 1959, p.108). The woman here in the poem is not only the personification of the island but also the outsider, the other, the lonely figure as she feels simultaneously arrival and displacement that reflect what Homi Bhaba (1994, p.9) describes as 'unhomely moment', or capture the moment when the outsider becomes painfully aware of their otherness and distance ('I return to the islands of Seychelles ... Yesterday, we were together; today he is no longer beside me, stanza 12).

Conclusion: Between tradition and innovation

In her poem *Moutia*, de Silva combines the aims of postmodern writing and expression: she shows writing as an aesthetic game in which language experiment becomes the dominant element. The poem as a medium of self-knowledge helps to achieve a new definition of one's own and collective identity and becomes a space for construction in which existing forms like the Moutia are recalled, quoted, contextualized or recreated. The topic of small scale not only permeates socio-cultural life and its dominant form of oral literature, but also plays a significant role in the poetological analysis of literature.

This paper seeks to contribute to studies on the literature of Seychelles, integrating the gender perspective and focusing on its best known but, unfortunately, still scientifically hardly-noticed, author Hazel de Silva. Her poems are a mixture of folklore and metropolitan and literary canons and offer a model wherewith to understand the cultural convergences of the postmodern world.

References

- Baldacchino, G. and Clark, E. (Eds.). (2013). Guest editorial introduction: Islanding cultural geographies. *Cultural Geographies*, 20(2), p.129-134.
- Benedict, B. and Benedict, M. (Eds.). (1982). *Men, women and money in Seychelles*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.
- Bhaba, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Canclini, N. G. (1989). *Culturas híbridas: Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*. México: Editorial Grijalbo.
- Choppy, P. (2017). *Attitudes to slavery and race in Seychellois Creole oral literature*. Available at: <https://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/8082/7/Choppy18MARes.pdf>

- Dautel, K. and Schödel, K. (2016). Introduction: Insularity, islands and insular spaces. In *Insularity: Representations and constructions of small worlds*, K. Dautel and K. Schödel (Eds.), pp.11-28. Würzburg, Germany: Königshausen und Neumann.
- De Loughrey, E. (2001). The litany of islands, the rosary of archipelagoes: Caribbean and Pacific archipelagraphy. *Ariel: Review of International English Literature*, 32 (1), pp.21-51.
- Defoe, D. (1719/2012). *Robinson Crusoe*. London: The Penguin English Library.
- Donne, J. (1959). *Devotions upon emergent occasions, together with Death's duel*. Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press.
- de Silva, H. (1983). *Moutia*. In *Sega of Seychelles*, pp.11-14. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Publishing House.
- de Silva, H. (1971). *Black night of Quiloa*. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Publishing House.
- de Toro, A. (2008). Überlegungen zu hybrider Repräsentation und Inszenierungen der Andersheit und Altarität im Spiegel der neueren und neuesten Forschungen sowie der Chroniken und in prämodernen: Diskursen der Eroberung Mexikos und Amerikas. In *Von der Eroberung bis zu new world borders*, A. Andersheit, pp.171-223. Hildesheim, Germany: Georg Olms Verlag.
- de Toro, A. (2002). Jenseits von Postmoderne und Postkolonialität. Materialien zu einem Modell der Hybridität und des Körpers als transrelationalem, transversalem und transmedialem Wissenschaftskonzept. In *Räume der Hybridität: Postkoloniale konzepte in theorie und literatur*, C. Hamann (Ed.), pp.15-52. Hildesheim, Germany: Georg Olms Verlag.
- Foley, J. M. (2002) *How to read an Oral Poem*. Chicago IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Foucault, M. (1994). *Überwachen und Strafen. Die Geburt des Gefängnisses*. [Orig.: *Surveiller et punir*, 1975]. Frankfurt, Germany: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Foucault, M. (1986). Of other spaces, heterotopias. *Diacritics* 19, pp.22-27.
- Furniss, G. and Gunner, L. (Eds.). (1995). Introduction: power, marginality and oral literature. In *Power, marginality and African oral literature*, G. Furniss and L. Gunner (Eds.), pp.1-22. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Görög-Karady, V. and Seydou, C. (2001). *La fille difficile, un conte-type africain*. Paris: CNRS Edition.
- Golding, W. (1954/1973). *Lord of the Flies*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Haring, L. (2003). Techniques of creolisation. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 116 (459), pp.19-36.
- Kafka, F. (1919/2011). *In the Penal Colony*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Kracht, C. (2012). *Imperium*. Köln, Germany: Kiepenheuer and Witsch.
- Kremer, A. (2015). Ready for the island? Cultural and linguistic aspects of islands and insularities. In *Insularity: Small worlds in linguistic and cultural perspectives*, R. Heimrath and A. Kremer (Eds.), pp.13-21. Würzburg, Germany: Königshausen und Neumann.
- La Selve, J-P. (1995). *Musiques traditionnelles de la Réunion*. Saint Denis: Azalées Edition.

- Löw, M. (2001). Der Körperraum als soziale Konstruktion. In *Geschlechter-Räume. Konstruktionen von gender in Geschichte, Literatur und Alltag*, M. Hubrath (Ed.), pp.211-222. Wien/Köln/Weimar, Germany: Böhlau Verlag.
- More, T. (1516/1996). *Utopia*. Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions.
- Miller, J. E. (2001). *Who's who in contemporary women's writing* (p. 226). London: Routledge.
- Pratt, G. (2004). *Working feminism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Rutherford, J. (1990). The third space. Interview with Homi Bhaba. In *Identity: Community, culture, difference*, J. Rutherford (Ed.), pp.207-221. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Salomon, N. (2018, March 29). Moutya: A dance rooted in the flames of the past. *The Seychelles Islands: Another World*. Available at: <https://www.seychelles.travel/de/blog/7411-moutya-a-dance-rooted-in-the-flames-of-the-past>
- Seychelles Women's Day Association (Eds.). (2013). *Seychelles women's hall of fame*. Vol 1. Mahé, Seychelles: Creole Institute of Seychelles.
- Shakespeare, W. (1610/2001). *The Tempest*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Tuider, E. (2003). Körpereventualitäten. Der Körper als kultureller Konstruktionsschauplatz. In *Körperbilder zwischen Natur und Kultur: Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zur Genderforschung*, H. Macha and C. Fahrenwald (Eds.), pp.43-67). Opladen, Germany: Leske und Budrich.
- Vassallo, M. (2015). Insularity: Blessing or curse? In *Insularity. Small worlds in linguistic and cultural perspectives*, R. Heimrath and A. Kremer (Eds.), pp.23-29. Würzburg, Germany: Königshausen und Neumann.
- Wells, H. G. (1896/2005). *The Island of Dr Moreau*. London: Penguin Classics.

*Anne-Berenike Rothstein is Professor (apl.) for Romance Literature and Culture at the University of Constance, Germany. She was a visiting professor at the University of Seychelles, a Visiting Scholar at the Shoah Foundation/USC, Los Angeles and held a guest professorship at the Humboldt-University of Berlin, Germany. She is an external expert witness for the SNF (Swiss National Science Foundation) and a member of the Connecticut/Baden-Württemberg Human Rights Research Consortium (HRRC). Currently she is leading a transfer project on the digitization of memory culture and heads an international research group on 'Tattoos as Memorable Palimpsest'. In her research, she focuses on trauma and memory discourses (espec. of the Holocaust) and works on mythologization and hybridity (espec. in Latin American literature), the European Decadence and narration in documentary and fiction films. Her dissertation is on literary and medial forms of memory in space and time (Niemeyer/Romania Judaica. Tübingen 2008), her habilitation (postdoctoral lecture qualification) is on mythologization of Latin American female figures. She is the editor of (inter alia) of: *Entgrenzte Erinnerung – Erinnerungskultur der Postmemory-Generation im medialen Wandel*. De Gruyter 2020; *Rachilde – Weibliches Dandytum als Lebens- und Darstellungsform/Literatur, Kultur, Geschlecht*. Böhlau. Wien, Köln, Weimar 2015; *Poetik des**

*Überlebens – Kulturproduktion im Konzentrationslager. De Gruyter/Europäisch-jüdische Studien.
Berlin 2015.*

Anne-Berenike.Rothstein@uni-konstanz.de