

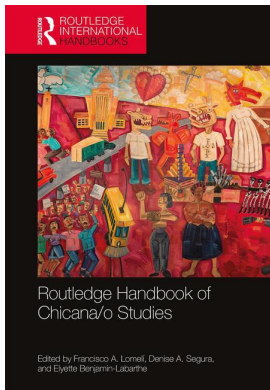
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Chicana/o Studies and Inter-American Studies in Germany

Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

The engagement with Chicana/o literary and cultural production in Germany began in the 1980s and continued to be strong throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s. It was motivated by the heightened interest of German scholars of American Studies in civil rights activism and multiculturalism in the United States and later in the concept of the border, in hybrid/hyphenated identity constructions and in transnational perspectives on the United States. While in the early 1980s the political activism of the Chicano movement and the writings of the Chicano Renaissance were at the center of attention, in the late 1980s and the 1990s the impact of the spatial turn moved the peripheral spaces of the nation and in particular the U.S.-Mexican border as a cultural contact zone into focus. This idea, as José David Saldívar put it in a seminal book, *Border Matters* (1997), for the nation, placed Chicana/o and Border Studies in a crucial position in key debates in American Cultural Studies about American exceptionalism, postcoloniality and the *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Kaplan & Pease 1995). Additionally, in the 1990s Chicana literature – especially the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, Sandra Cisneros and Ana Castillo – sparked the interest of feminist critics in American Studies in Germany. Since about 2000, Chicana/o and Border Studies have increasingly intersected with other disciplines, such as Comparative Literary Studies, Latin American Studies, and Inter-American Studies, while research interests have shifted from Chicana/o towards Latina/o and Hemispheric Studies, enlarging perspectives from the U.S.-Mexican border to the entire American continent. This has been accompanied by endeavors to investigate the ways in which the United States has throughout its history been economically, politically, and culturally entangled with other regions in the Americas.

In assessing the place of Chicana/o Studies within German American Studies, it is necessary to consider the institutional context within which the study of ethnic minority literatures has been able to develop at German universities. Many American Studies scholars hold positions in American literature within English departments (often with a majority of British Studies scholars) and are expected to offer a broad range of topics in teaching instead of specializing in one particular area. In some cases the American Studies scholar is expected to cover the entire field of American literature single-handedly.¹ The hiring practices resulting from this situation have made specialization difficult as well, as untenured younger scholars who need to choose their research profiles strategically to enhance their chances for a permanent position tend to

avoid specializations (beyond a dissertation project or a few essays) in fields that are not well established.

Up till today, Ethnic Studies in Germany have largely been dominated by African American Studies and, to a lesser degree, Native American Studies. Both fields have been entrenched for a much longer period at German universities, and especially African American literature has become a distinct subfield of American Studies. As Eva Bösenberg has pointed out, African American Studies today is “an unquestioned, in many cases particularly cherished part of doing American Studies” in Germany (Bösenberg 2011, p. 228). German non-academic and academic interest for American Indians reaches back to the 19th century (Lutz 1985, Calloway 2002, Usbeck 2015), and American Indian and First Nations Studies is a research focus in many departments of anthropology and of scholars of Canadian Studies and postcolonial literatures in English departments. The anthropologist Christian Feest (Frankfurt/Main) founded the American Indian Workshop in 1980, an annual European scholarly platform for researchers concerned with topics related to the Native peoples of North America. Hartmut Lutz, an American Studies professor who taught in Greifswald from 1975 to 1994, established a research center of Canadian Studies with a particular focus on Canadian Aboriginal literature and other minority literature in Canada at Greifswald University.

On the contrary, Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies – notwithstanding the demographic weight of Latinos/as in U.S. society – still assumes a quite marginal position in German American Studies. It developed later than African American and American Indian Studies and has not been firmly institutionalized so far. One problem might be the lack of language competence in Spanish of many German Americanists, given that at least in the early years of Chicana/o cultural production, many texts were written and published in Spanish, and many texts continue to use a mixture of English and Spanish. Renate von Bardeleben has observed that “the use of two languages has for a long time prevented the awareness of a literary continuity” (v. Bardeleben 1986, p. xiv), a fact that may also have affected the situation of Chicana/o Studies in Germany. Throughout the 1980s, research in Chicana/o culture largely depended on the interest and efforts of individual researchers such as Dieter Herms, Renate von Bardeleben, Wolfgang Binder, Horst Tonn and Heiner Bus. In the 1990s and early 2000s a second generation of scholars continued their work, and some of them now hold permanent professorial positions at German universities (e.g., Josef Raab, Astrid Fellner, Anja Bandau, Marc Prieue and Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez), which allows them to teach and foster research in Latina/o and Inter-American Studies in their departments.

The early development of Chicana/o Studies

Chicana/o Studies in Germany first emerged from the efforts of a number of committed German scholars who began to investigate and publish on the literature written by Mexican Americans in the United States in the 1980s. Their endeavors were encouraged by the increasing interest in the study of U.S. ethnic minorities in German American Studies, an interest that had developed beginning in the 1970s, clearly motivated by a countercultural spirit (Bösenberg 2011, p. 223). The study of ethnic minority cultures thrived in Germany at a time when critical discussions about multiculturalism were on the daily agenda: as Frauke Gewecke has observed, Germany, as other European countries, was trying to cope with its own immigrant minorities and with the reluctance of large parts of German society to accept the idea of living in a pluralistic society (Gewecke 2013, p. 108). While African American and Native American literary and cultural studies had been driven forward in Germany earlier by scholars such as Günter Lenz, Maria Die-drich, Berndt Ostendorf, Wolfgang Karrer and Hartmut Lutz, arguably the first scholar to delve

into the literature written by Chicanas/os was the Bremen professor Dieter Herms, who in the 1970s started researching Mexican American authors. His first contact with this literature was via Theater Studies when he discovered El Teatro Campesino in 1972 while the company toured Germany and he was able to do an interview with its director Luis Valdez (Herms 1990, p. 7).² The result of his extensive research in American libraries in Austin and Berkeley as well as in direct contact with many Chicana/o authors were several essays and finally a book-length study on contemporary Chicana/o literature that was published by the Frankfurt Vervuert Verlag in 1990, titled *Die zeitgenössische Literatur der Chicanos (1959–1988)*. The book provided a comprehensive survey on Chicana/o literary production (drama, narrative literature and poetry of over 50 authors) as well as a chapter on Chicana/o murals. It is the first study on Chicana/o literature in Europe that addresses such a wide range of texts and writers. Herms' interest in Chicana/o literature was clearly inspired by his Marxist outlook: he considered specifically Lenin's concept of 'two cultures'³ – a bourgeois and a proletarian one – and saw in the development of Chicana/o literature many elements of this 'second' culture, which he described as 'democratic' and 'socialist' (Herms 1990, p. 295). From this perspective he was particularly interested in outlining elements of Chicana/o literature that marked resistance to what he terms "das weiße kapitalistische System" ("the white capitalist system") (Herms 1990, p. 296). Herms saw Chicana/o literature as part of a larger culture of resistance that he connected to the struggles of other nonwhite ethnic groups in the United States as well as to subaltern movements such as the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua and the Black liberation movement in South Africa (Herms 1990, p. 296).

Already in 1985 Herms had co-edited a volume of essays on American Indians and Chicanas/os together with Hartmut Lutz (*Native Americans: Chicanos und Indianer in den USA*). The volume framed Chicanas/os as 'Native' based on movement writer Luis Valdez's observation that Chicanas/os – like American Indians – "did not come to the United States at all. The United States came to us" (Valdez, qtd. in Herms & Lutz 1985, p. 5). It reflected the view of the editors that Chicanas/os and American Indians were historically colonized populations in the United States due to their marginalized positions in American society and their shared experiences of disenfranchisement. The book was published by Argument Verlag, a leftist publisher dedicated to the enhancement of the theoretical culture of the left ("Das Argument-Konzept") and contained an introductory essay by Herms and Lutz, as well as a diverse collection of critical pieces, among them a teaching unit on the situation of Mexican American farm workers in the U.S. West and Southwest, several essays on El Teatro Campesino, on Chicana/o literature (by Alurista and Jorge A. Huerta) and American Indian literature. One section of the volume addressed Native American Studies in Europe, and another section entitled 'conferences' contained reports on the 1984 American Indian Workshop in Rome (by Helmbrecht Breinig) and on the Chicana/o Studies Conference in Mainz–Germersheim that took place in the same year (by Genevieve Fabre).

The year 1986 saw the publication of two important volumes dedicated to Chicana/o poetry: *Partial Autobiographies: Interviews with Twenty Chicano Poets* (1986b) and *Contemporary Chicano Poetry: An Anthology* (1986a), both edited by Wolfgang Binder. Among the well-known poets and writers that Binder (an Erlangen professor who is a writer and translator himself) interviewed were Alurista, Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo, Juan Felipe Herrera, Lucha Corpi, Gary Soto, Alma Villanueva and Bernice Zamora. Comprising two generations of writers, *Partial Autobiographies* discusses various aspects of the authors' lives, their poetics, their involvement in the political Chicano movement as well as their use of language (English/Spanish, code-switching, *caló* slang). It was the first comprehensive anthology presenting Chicana/o poets to a German audience, and it was especially remarkable for the keen attention to the aesthetic qualities of the poetry, thus emphasizing the need to read these texts as artistic productions and countering a then still

widespread prejudice that ‘minority literatures’ were predominantly political and social statements. The accompanying collection of poems addressed different facets of the experience of Chicanas/os as reflected in poetry, in particular “claiming territories, self-definition, and paying homage” (Binder 1986a, p. xv).⁴

Conferences

The 1984 conference on Chicana/o culture in Mainz-Germersheim was the first of a series of major international conferences that dealt with the Latino literatures of the United States and provided a platform for German, other European and American scholars of Chicana/o literature. Organized by Renate von Bardeleben, an American Studies professor with an interest in minority literatures and bilingualism at the Germersheim branch of Johannes Gutenberg-Universität in Mainz, it was entitled “First International Symposium on Chicano Culture”. The conference invited well-known Chicano writers Sergio Elizondo, José Montoya and Alurista, as well as key U.S. experts on Chicana/o Studies, such as Juan Bruce-Novoa, Francisco Lomelí, José David Saldívar, and Arte Público Press director Nicolás Kanellos, along with European scholars such as Marcienne Rocard, Dieter Herms, Horst Tonn, Heiner Bus, and Yves-Charles Grandjeat. The volume emerging from the conference, *Missions in Conflict*, was, in editor Renate von Bardeleben’s words, “a tribute to the impressive growth of scholarship during the seventies and early eighties” (v. Bardeleben 1986, p. xvi). As she saw it, “the pioneer days are over”; the study of Chicana/o culture was resting “on a solid rock of research” (v. Bardeleben 1986, p. xvi) – an assessment that was certainly true for the next two decades in Germany.

The second conference on “Hispanic Cultures and Identities in the United States” was convened by Genevieve Fabre in Paris in 1986. While many of the scholars present in Mainz-Germersheim in 1984 also contributed to this conference, its scope was not restricted to Chicana/o literature but also addressed the literature of Puerto Ricans in the United States (Fabre 1988). The third conference returned to Mainz-Germersheim in 1990 with a focus on gender issues at a time when Gender Studies began to establish itself as a discipline at German universities, and as a reaction to a decade of unprecedented successes for Chicana literature in the United States – a decade that included the publication of Gloria Anzaldúa’s landmark book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), and the commercial success of authors such as Ana Castillo and Sandra Cisneros, who reached audiences in and beyond the U.S. mainstream and who found recognition in Feminist Studies internationally. “Gender, Self, and Society” invited contributions from the fields of social studies, literature, linguistics, film, education, music and many others. Organized again by Renate von Bardeleben in cooperation with Juan Bruce-Novoa, Erlinda Gonzales-Berry and María Herrera-Sobek, the conference and the ensuing volume (v. Bardeleben 1993) discussed the literatures of Chicanas/os, Cuban Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans, allowing scholars and audiences to explore U.S. Latino/a gender issues from comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives. Other conferences in European cities (Barcelona, Madrid and Granada in Spain; Groningen in the Netherlands; and Bordeaux and Marseille in France) followed. The founding conference of the Society for Multi-Ethnic Studies (MESEA) in Heidelberg in 2000 also contributed to the strengthening of Ethnic (including Chicana/o) Studies in Germany.

In 2004 Anja Bandau and Marc Priewe organized “Representations of Chicana/o culture(s): Images, Texts, Products” at the University of Potsdam, with Norma Alarcón and Juan Bruce-Novoa as keynote speakers. The conference volume was published as *Mobile Crossings. Representations of Chicano/a Cultures* in 2006, stressing the notion of mobility as a productive concept for Chicana/o cultural production both in the literal sense of actual border crossings and in a

metaphorical sense for the mobilization of culture to “voice opposition to oppressive and racist power structures” (Bandau & Prieue 2006, p. 3). Mobility is explored as a transgression of national and social, but also of linguistic borders and disciplinary frames, announcing the intersection between Transnational, Chicana/o, Latina/o and Latin American Studies that would come to dominate the field in the subsequent years.

Another conference dedicated to “Latina/o Images in the 21st Century: Interethnic Relations and the Politics of Representation in the United States” was convened by Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez, Josef Raab, Sebastian Thies and Gary Keller, in 2008, with Yvonne Yarbrow-Bejarano, María Herrera-Sobek, Clara Rodríguez and Michelle Habell-Pallán among the speakers. The focus of this conference that took place at the University of Bielefeld’s Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZIF) was on the changes in the representation of Latinas/os as the largest U.S. ethnic minority in the new millennium. It enabled a dialogue of participants from the fields of literary, art, music, education, and cinema and television studies. Visual artist Cristina Cárdenas and film directors Paul Espinosa and Héctor Galán presented and discussed their work. The conference was combined with a traveling art exhibition of 20 contemporary works by Latina/o artists curated by the Hispanic Research Center at Arizona State University that toured Bielefeld, Tübingen, Dortmund and Essen. All of these conferences were characterized by close cooperation of German scholars with Chicana/o scholars and played an important role in increasing the visibility of Chicana/o literature and culture for German and European audiences. In recent years the study of Chicana/o and Latina/o cultural productions has been an integral part of American Studies conferences as well as of graduate schools and interdisciplinary research groups, many of which focus on Inter-American and Hemispheric Studies.⁵

Dissertation projects and monographs

The early endeavors in German American Studies to promote Chicana/o literature and Chicano Studies generated a series of dissertation and postdoctoral projects. The output of monographs on Chicana/o literature has been quite considerable: most of the doctoral and some of the postdoctoral dissertation projects have turned into books. German scholars published monographs on the Chicana/o novel and autobiography, pioneered by Horst Tonn’s (1988) study on texts by Ernesto Galarza, Oscar Z. Acosta and Rudolfo Anaya. Walter Piller in Zurich, Ernst Rudin in Basel (both Switzerland), and Roland Walter in Mainz followed with books on the development of the Chicana/o novel (Piller 1991), on magical realism in Chicano literature (Walter 1993) and on the use of Spanish in the Chicana/o novel (Rudin 1996), while other studies were dedicated to the work of Rolando Hinojosa (Schäfer 1992) and to the genre of Chicana/o theater (Rahner 1991). Beginning in the mid-Nineties and reflecting the commercial and critical success of Chicana authors in the United States, studies such as Annette Maier’s exploration of the topic of sexuality in Chicana literature (1996), Anja Bandau’s investigation of the work of Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga (2004), Karen Ikas’ dissertation on contemporary Chicana literature (2000) and Astrid Fellner’s book on Chicanas’ multiple selves (2002) explored gendered perspectives in Chicana texts. The institutional framework of publishing Chicana/o literature was addressed by Ann-Catherine Geuder, who discussed Chicano publishing in the context of Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of the field (*Chicano/a Literaturbetrieb*, 2004). The 2000s also signaled a shift towards the study of Chicano literature in the context of Transnational and Border Studies, visible in the doctoral and postdoctoral dissertations that were produced in the next decade by Josef Raab, Monika Kaup, Markus Heide, Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez and Marc Prieue. In all five studies the U.S.–Mexican border figures as a defining space not only for the cultural productions and flexible identity constructions of Chicanas/os, but also for a reconceptualization

of U.S. national imaginaries in view of migration and globalization processes. Josef Raab's *The Borderlands of Identity in Mexican American Literature* (2000) investigated the conflicting Mexican and U.S. identities in the period from the end of the U.S.-Mexican War to the late 20th century, including a discussion of romance novels by Jovita González de Mireles and María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, texts that had been re-edited in the "Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project" series. Parts of the study were published in peer-reviewed journals (Raab 1999, 2008). Monika Kaup's book *Rewriting North American Borders in Chicano and Chicana narrative* (2001), a study of Chicana/o narrative texts since the 1960s, examines the decline of Chicano cultural nationalism in the 1970s and the emergence of Chicana feminism in the context of postnationalism. Markus Heide's 2004 study *Grenzüberschreibungen* explores "writing across borders" and the rewriting of national identity constructions as continuing practices in Chicana/o texts from Américo Paredes' *With a Pistol in His Hand* (1958) to John Rechy's *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez* (1991). Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez's *MexAmerica* (2005) includes a chapter on public art and Chicana/o muralism, and traces genealogies of postnational discourses in different realms of narrative and artistic identity construction, such as the body, the family, the national community and the borderlands. Marc Priewe's study *Writing Transit: Refiguring National Imaginaries in Chicana/o Narratives* (2007) focuses on urban 'transit spaces' between Los Angeles and Tijuana as they are represented in the cultural imaginaries and aesthetic strategies of writers such as Ron Arias, Alejandro Morales or John Rechy, as well as performance artists Guillermo Gómez-Peña or ElVez – writings that in his view "posit a necessary critique of national inclusions and exclusions based on certain markers of difference", while at the same time "redefin[ing. . .] national imaginaries for counter-hegemonic purposes in a globalized contact zone" (Priewe 2007, p. 7).

More recent dissertation projects have been dedicated to representations of folk tradition (Krok 2011), social criticism in Chicana/o texts (Haslhofer 2009), the dialectics of transculturation (Baur 2013), the Chicana movement (Pircher 2013), and Chicana narrative "beyond the borderlands" (Andres 2015). Most of these projects have continued the analysis of canonical authors of Chicano/a literature such as Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo, Lucha Corpi, Oscar Z. Acosta and Rudolfo Anaya. A new focus is brought in by Annette Rukwied's dissertation project "Between Activism and Commodification: Identity Politics and Imagined Communities at Three Californian Latino/a Film Festivals," to be completed in 2018, promising insights into the dynamics of these festivals and their institutional contexts. Many of the scholars mentioned have also published essays in peer-reviewed journals that cannot be discussed in more detail here.

Teaching

A number of projects have been directed at the teaching of Chicana/o and Latina/o literature and culture. Some of the scholars interested in advancing Minority Studies in Germany, such as Hartmut Lutz (Greifswald), Heiner Bus (Erlangen) and Wolfgang Binder (Bamberg), who combine their research foci on American Indian, African American and Caribbean Studies with projects directed at the teaching of Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies. The endeavors of these scholars and the work produced by them and by younger scholars helped introduce Chicana/o and Latina/o literatures to the curricula of German universities. Courses about Chicana/o literature began to be taught in English and American Studies departments and sometimes also in Romance Studies departments at several universities. Text collections such as *Chicanos: The Second Largest Minority in the USA* (ed. Alurista & R. Müller-Kind 1988), *Hispanic Groups in the USA* (ed. Horst Tonn 1992) and the special edition of *Hispanorama* (a journal dedicated to the teaching of Spanish) on Chicana/o literature (ed. Heiner Bus 1990) made Chicana/o culture and literature accessible to a wider audience. Heiner Bus, together with students of the Bamberg

American Studies program, translated a selection of Chicana/o poetry that was published as *Recent Chicano Poetry/Neueste Chicano-Lyrik* by Bamberger Editionen in 1994. Apart from Bus' introduction, the volume contained an introductory essay by Ana Castillo, who also co-edited the volume. It presented poetry by 18 authors – well-known ones such as Alfred Arteaga, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Gloria Velásquez-Treviño, Ronnie Burk and Marisela Norte along with less well-known and emergent poets. Castillo had visited Germany several times and received a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Bremen, Germany, in 1991, where Dieter Herms was her doctoral adviser. Instead of a traditional dissertation, she handed in the manuscript of her book *Massacre of the Dreamers: essays on Xicanisma* (1995).

In 2001 Karin Ikas edited a volume entitled *Mexican American Stories* with the Munich textbook publisher Langenscheidt-Longman containing texts by eight contemporary writers, among them José Antonio Burciaga, Denise Chávez, Ana Castillo and Helena María Viramontes (Ikas 2001). The volume was reprinted in 2006. Ikas also compiled a collection of interviews she did with Chicana writers that was published by the University of Nevada Press in 2002 as *Chicana Ways: conversations with ten Chicana writers*.

Bielefeld University has established a master's program in Inter-American Studies, as has the University of Erlangen (Master's of arts in "The Americas/Las Américas"). In Leipzig, since 2011, the American Studies master's program features a module on Inter-American Culture and Latina/o Studies, and several Latina/o writers have taught as guest professors there.⁶ The university libraries of Bremen, Bamberg, Free University Berlin, Humboldt University Berlin and Leipzig as well as the library of the Ibero-American Institute Berlin (IAI) hold considerable collections of material in the fields of Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies. In most cases, due to the specific conditions described previously, however, there has been no systematic updating of these collections.

From Chicano/a Studies to Inter-American Studies

In the new millennium the focus of research of a number of German scholars has expanded from Chicana/o (and Latina/o) Studies to the larger field of Inter-American or Hemispheric Studies. While Chicana/o and Latina/o cultures continue to be addressed in this framework, scholars have also begun to explore the historical and contemporary connections between the economies, politics, cultures and literatures of the different regions of the Americas on a larger scale. These scholars are interested in a methodological transnationalism that takes the Americas (defined as South America, Central America, North America and the Caribbean) as the region of critical reference and that has inspired interdisciplinary research projects, conferences, book series and other publications.

Bielefeld University has become a center of inter-American research in the past 15 years. Resulting from a close cooperation of the chairs of North American Studies and Latin American Studies and in collaboration with U.S. American, Mexican and other Latin American scholars, a number of conferences with an inter-American focus were organized, among them "Hybrid Americas: Contacts, Contrasts, and Confluences in New World Literatures and Cultures" (2002), "Of Fatherlands and Motherlands: Gender and Nation in the Americas/De Patrias y Matrias: Género y nación en las Américas" (2006), and "ImagiNations/ImagiNaciones: Documentaries and the Narration of Nation in the Americas/ImagiNations: El cine documental y la narración de la nación en las Américas" (2008). Edited volumes resulting from these events were *Screening the Americas: Narration of Nation in Documentary Film* (2011), *New World Colors: Ethnicity, Belonging, and Difference in the Americas* (2014), and *Of Fatherlands and Motherlands: Gender and Nation in the Americas* (2015). The conference "E Pluribus Unum: Ethnic Identities in Transnational

Integration Processes in the Americas” in 2005 was followed by an interdisciplinary research group of the same name in 2008 that explored the fields of identity and representational politics, changing definitions of ethnicity, as well as cultural practices of ethnic identity construction in Latin America and the United States. The research group, was funded by the German Research Council and which comprised scholars from Europe, Latin America and the United States, addressed both theoretical conceptualizations on the field of identity politics and several concrete thematic compounds, among them “The Field of Identity Politics”, “Media and Ethnic Identity Politics”, “Ethnicity in Urban Spaces” and “Ethnicity, Hybridity, and Plural Identities” (“E Pluribus Unum” 2016). In the period of one year the group organized a series of nine conferences and workshops, which assembled over 200 participants from 20 countries in Europe and the Americas. Publications resulting from these many conferences culminated in two book series: *Inter-American Perspectives/Perspectivas Interamericanas* (LIT-Verlag Münster) and *Inter-American Studies/Estudios Interamericanos* (Raab & Thies 2008), which began in 2008 and currently comprise close to 20 volumes. Both series are co-published with Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe in Tempe (Arizona). Among the volumes are not only conference proceedings (Raab 2014; Raab, Thies, & Noll-Opitz 2011) but also monographs with an inter-American perspective resulting from dissertation projects, such as Julia Roth’s *Occidental Readings, Decolonial Practices* (2014), Rebecca Fuchs’ *Caribbeanness as a Global Phenomenon* (2014), and Julia Andres’ *¡Cuéntame Algo! Chicana Narrative Beyond the Borderlands* (2015).⁷

An important step was the founding of the International Association of Inter-American Studies in 2009. The association was established with the aim to “promote the interdisciplinary study of the Americas, focusing in particular on interconnections between North, Central, and South American culture, literatures, media, languages, histories, societies, politics, and economies” (“Welcome” 2016). It has since held biennial conferences in Essen (2010), Guadalajara (2012), Lima (2014), Santa Barbara (2016), and Coimbra (2018). The first conference in Essen that was organized by founding president Josef Raab featured keynote speakers from the United States (María Herrera-Sobek), Ecuador (Carmen Martínez Novo) and Germany (Berndt Ostendorf, Ludger Pries) as well as presentations by Latina/o writers, filmmakers and performers (Graciela Limón, Yolanda Cruz, Monica Palacios). It brought together European, Latin American and American scholars of Latina/o, Inter-American and Latin American Studies. The association’s journal, the *Forum for Inter-American Research (FIAR)*, is edited at Bielefeld University under the direction of Wilfried Raussert. Bielefeld also features the Center for Inter-American Studies (CIAS) founded in 2011 and dedicated to institutionalizing the long-standing research and teaching focus on Inter-American Studies at this university (“Center for Inter-American Studies”). The CIAS currently features a large-scale research project, “The Americas as Space of Entanglements,” which is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) and which takes the border between the United States and Mexico as a symbol of the various dynamics of conflict and interdependence that shape the processes of entanglement on the American continent (“The Americas as Space of Entanglements”).

Inter-American Studies in Germany, however, has not only addressed contemporary situations. German American scholars in the past two decades have explored the many ways in which the United States has throughout its history been economically, politically, and culturally connected with other parts of the Americas, be it through the slave trade, through the United States’ 19th-century expansionist ventures in the Caribbean and Central America, or its more recent military involvement in various Latin American countries. Conferences and book publications have addressed inter-American literary relations in the early period of U.S. history. An early forum addressing the inter-American dimension of literature was the Göttingen conference “Do the Americas have a Common Literary History?” which scrutinized the literatures written

in the Americas in European languages and their possibly similar patterns of differentiation from the European literatures they originated from (Buchenau and Paatz 2002). A special issue of the journal *Amerikastudien/American Studies* in 2008 explored “The Americas in the 19th Century – Inter-American Perspectives” (Heide and Pisarz-Ramírez 2008). Another international conference took place in Leipzig in 2012: “Hemispheric Encounters. The Early United States in a Transnational Perspective”, which brought together scholars from the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria with Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Michael Drexler, and Vera M. Kutzinski among the speakers (Pisarz-Ramírez and Heide 2016). The conference volumes resulting from the Göttingen and Leipzig conferences are part of a new book series called “Interamericana” at international publisher Peter Lang that has also included volumes on the literary connections between the United States, Canada, and France (Lohse 2005), and *The International Turn in American Studies* (Messmer and Frank 2015). In 2016 the Bavarian American Academy, an institution that provides a network of cooperation for Bavarian scholars and fosters interdisciplinary cooperation and research on the United States and the Americas, dedicated its annual conference to “Cultural Mobility and Knowledge Formation in the Americas”, inviting historians and literary scholars to explore knowledge construction in an inter-American framework.

The shift from Chicana/o to Latina/o and to Inter-American Studies in Germany in recent years is not least a reflection of the developments in the United States where the increased academic attention to globalization and transnationalism, combined with budgetary pressures on Ethnic Studies programs, has had a significant impact on Ethnic and Area Studies, producing new research agendas and alliances (Poblete 2003, p. ix). Given the existing sociocultural processes that link Latonas/os in the United States to those in other parts of the Americas (migration, monetary transfers, Latina/o television, etc.), Poblete speaks of a “globalized Latino/a America” and stresses the necessity for Latina/o Americans to “restructure the political agenda of Latina/o representation in the United States toward a more interactive conception of hemispheric Latina/o citizenship” (Poblete 2003, p. xxiv). The substantial and innovative scholarship in the field of Inter-American Literary Studies undertaken by critics such as Kirsten Silva Gruesz (2002), Anna Brickhouse (2004), or Gretchen Murphy (2005), scholarly forums such as the journals *Comparative American Studies* or *AmeriQuests*, the critical models for the study of the Americas proposed by American scholars such as “trans-American imaginary” (Moya & Saldivar 2003, p. 1), “an Americas paradigm” (Shukla & Tinsman 2007, p. 17), or the framework of “transamerican literary relations” (Brickhouse 2004), as well the theoretical debates around the concept of Inter-American Studies (e.g., Sadowski-Smith & Fox 2004, McClennen 2005, 2007), have informed and energized the research undertaken at German universities in the past 15 years.

Notes

- 1 The independent American Studies departments at some universities (e.g., at the universities of Munich, Mainz, FU Berlin or Leipzig), where several professors are employed are more interdisciplinary, allowing for specific teaching and research profiles, but have not produced a strong research focus on Ethnic Studies either. One exception is the American Studies Department in Leipzig, where a chair for U.S. Minority Studies was established in 2010.
- 2 El Teatro Campesino toured Europe several times in the early 1970s (Marín 2014, p. 400).
- 3 In *Kritische Bemerkungen zur Nationalen Frage* that was first published in 1913, Lenin proceeded from the assumption of two cultures under capitalism – bourgeois and proletarian. While he did not mention artists or writers, he claimed that the living conditions of the oppressed in any capitalist society produce a socialist and democratic ideology which then is also reflected in the cultural productions of this group.
- 4 Both volumes were published in the book series “Erlanger Studien” by the academic publisher Palm und Enke. As to contemporaneous publications in other European countries, see Lomelí, Márquez, &

- Herrera-Sobek (2000); for the publication and translation of Chicana/o and Latina/o authors in Germany, see Gewecke (2013).
- 5 The 2013 Leipzig conference on “Selling Ethnicity and Race: Consumerism and Representation in 21st Century America” featured contributions on Latina/o culture by Markus Heide (on narcocorridos), Annette Rukwied (on Latina/o film festivals) and the author (on the commodification of Latina/o racial ambiguity) as well as a reading of Latina writer Jennine Capó Crucet. A conference volume of the same title was published in 2015. A panel on “‘New Italians’ or ‘Criminal Aliens’: The Contradictions of Latinas/os, Rights, and Race in the United States” was part of the 2016 Annual Conference of the German American Studies Association. The panel was organized by Jesse R. Ramírez (University of St. Gallen, Switzerland) and Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez.
 - 6 Guillermo Verdecchia, Jennine Capó Crucet and Justin Torres taught in Leipzig as part of the Picador guest professorship program at Leipzig American Studies, which invites U.S. authors for one term. The program is supported by the Holtzbrinck Publishing Group and the German Academic Exchange Service.
 - 7 Roth’s book is an investigation of the occidentalist reception of Latin American women artists/writers from Argentina, Mexico and Guatemala (Victoria Ocampo, Frida Kahlo and Rigoberta Menchú). Fuchs explores the writings of Caribbean Latina/o authors Junot Díaz, Edwidge Danticat and Cristina García in the context of Caribbean theory and Walter Mignolo’s concept of border thinking. Andrés’ book traces motifs introduced by Gloria Anzaldúa in her *Borderlands/La Frontera: the new mestiza* in works by Chicana authors Ana Castillo, Sandra Cisneros and Michele Serros.

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