

Fragmented Memories. New Digital Archives as Media of Cultural Memory in the Caribbean

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Abstract

In Caribbean societies questions of cultural heritage remain problematic due to a fragmented history which is not entirely recorded but rather at least partially preserved within fictional literature and oral traditions. This history is experienced differently by various social agents and has a direct impact on cultural heritage as a process of production, in- or exclusion, and storage of memories. The proposed project will investigate how new digital archives may create a basis for overcoming the problem of scattered and conflicted memories and offer new possibilities for defining Antillean cultural heritage. This project hopes to demonstrate that new digital archives may help satisfy the needs of diasporic memory communities, in part because they reflect the plurality of identities in their netlike character and thus make possible a relational, as opposed to a hierarchical, representation of Caribbean memories. Furthermore, they are able to bring together memory communities that go beyond the strict geographical limits of the Caribbean in a virtual space. The proposed project will analyse the material and social aspects of new digital archives in the West Indies from an interdisciplinary perspective by making recourse to digital and transcultural approaches in the field of Memory Studies as well as Caribbean memory theories.