

„All that glitters is gold: A contemporary vision of the (im)material legacy of (post)colonial wealth as seen through the example of Anglo-Caribbean fiction” is an original, interdisciplinary research project from the field of postcolonial studies combined with the elements of sociology and economy (postcolonial economics). The project inscribes itself into current debates on wealth circulating within international academia, the media and politics. It responds to recent scientific trends as, following the 2008 economic crisis in the West, scientists from various disciplines started taking more interest in studying the metanarrative of global capitalism and the idea of wealth. In its investigations of wealth, the present project centres on contemporary Anglophone Caribbean fiction and argues that it offers a unique insight into the (post)colonial discourse of wealth – culturally, socially and politically sanctioned ways in which we think about wealth. Within the Anglo-Caribbean novel, readers encounter many complex historical and contemporary protagonists who pursue their chance for a better life and material well-being. Their personal stories and difficult moral choices get entangled into a broad (meta)narrative of global capitalism and discourse of wealth. The project is premised on the belief that the way these protagonists think about wealth tells us a lot about the socio-economic system they live in – (post)colonial global capitalism. As the majority of people worldwide live within the realms of the same system, literary and critical investigations undertaken within the project gain a universal and actual dimension. The project aims to better understand socio-economic issues that face the protagonists of Anglo-Caribbean fiction such as overseers, accountants, medical doctors, [self]educated former slaves, ambitious Hindu- and Chinese-Caribbean tradesmen, and other protagonists burdened with material and symbolic legacy of [post]colonial wealth. Simultaneously, it pursues answers to vital questions asked by contemporary sociologists, economists and postcolonial literary scholars.

The project revolves around six general research queries: (1) how people directly or indirectly employed by the Empire understood and defined wealth; (2) to what extent they recognised the connection between their own material well-being and colonial project; (3) to what extent they consciously participated in the colonial project; (4) what aspirations, fears and moral struggles colonial wealth and global trade sparked in their communities; (5) what discursive strategies they used to distance themselves from the dark(er) side of the colonial trade, and finally (6) what their experience may teach us about contemporary anxieties and challenges connected with migrations, lack of economic stability and global capitalism. Consequently, the project does not perpetuate a polarised narrative of wealth as a difference between the rich and the poor, but scrutinizes middle-class characters whose experience of wealth, access to wealth and wealth-gaining practices are crucial for understanding the whole narrative of (post)colonial capitalism. Therefore, the results of such literary and cultural analyses will be relatable and interesting to students and the general public as Anglophone Caribbean literature offers a peculiar perspective on the (hi)story of wealth as ideology and practice of (post)modern life, which came into being with colonial capitalism and which lasts until today.