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Editor's Introduction

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Editor's Introduction

I was euphoric when, in 2013, some colleagues and I were invited to join the editorial board of GSP. What followed were personally exciting and instructive years for the journal and myself—and, as we all know, there is no better way to learn than to fail. In spite of or perhaps because of this, we (as scholars) and GSP (the journal and the team) have developed rather well. Now—after almost eight years—it is time to put the journal's fate into someone else's hands and to make room for new ideas.

My successor as editor in chief, Kirril Shields, and our well attuned team will make sure that the developments of the past years are continued. What is more, I am convinced he will give a fresh impetus to GSP and thereby further improve the journal.

My heartfelt thanks go many people. First, the three IAGS presidents over the last years—Daniel Feierstein, Andrew Woolford, and Henry Theriault, who have always provided continuous support to the GSP Editorial Team. It was possible for us to independently control the journal's fate without any interference concerning its contents. I very much wish Kirril Shields similar conditions for his work.

Furthermore, my thanks go to all those who I could work with in the past couple of years. These include, of course, the former and current members of the editorial team, some of whom have become friends. Similarly, working behind the scenes are the reviewers whose work must remain anonymous. Their contributions to academic achievement are cherished far too little. I completely agree with the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)¹ in considering it an issue of fundamental importance that especially work like this—just as the supervision of theses and the like—should be esteemed much more highly in the context of assessing scientific excellence.

Finally, I would like to thank the authors who entrusted the fruits of their work to us in the hope that it would be judged fairly. I very much hope to have always been fair; yet, I am aware of the fact that authors, especially those whose contributions were not accepted by GSP, might have opinions which could possibly differ. I have constantly sought to do justice solely based on the quality of the paper and regardless of the person. The bottom line is, editors represent intersubjectively constituted norms that can only be disputed step by step. However, within the rather narrow scope of a peer-reviewed journal, I (and we) have made an effort to make room for diverse formats of publication. However, in our case this also implied that a good half of the submitted articles were rejected. Sometimes this was easy as, for example, in the case of political pamphlets covering several pages. Quite often, though, it was difficult, too; for example, when the reported facts were highly interesting, but the respective state-of-the-art was neither very well-known nor linked up with the paper at hand and when it was not possible for us to fill these gaps together. With the introduction of the *Dossier*, we now have a section that leaves considerably more freedom to the authors than what is permissible for peer-reviewed articles. The *Arts & Literature* section that is as yet at its experimental stage pursues a similar aim.

¹ The Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), <https://sfedora.org/>.

Especially this last issue under my supervision is an outstanding example for the role guest editors play for academic journals. This special issue is, first and foremost, the result of Scherto Gill's hard work and by the authors she summoned. In addition, working at those special issues behind the scene is always accompanied by—in the best case—intensive discussions. In this way, I learned and am still learning from every text, every review, and every exchange.

About the special issue itself it should be noted that it approaches a highly relevant and increasingly debated topic—the question how collective experiences and consequences of enslavement and slavery should be dealt with in the long run. Yet at a very basic level—and this also applies to this case—there is a strong focus on what can be called the North American experience. We, Scherto Gill and I, discussed in long emails and conversations to what degree these experiences are typical and can be generalized. This is important insofar as it implies questions about being White, about People of Color, about diversity but also about being privileged. Germany, for example, is of minor importance in the context of the Atlantic slave trade and the corresponding experience is not formative for German society. Much more important are other stories such as those concerned with robbery, rape, and enslavement on the so-called South Sea islands as they were traced in depth most recently by Götz Aly.² Here, robbery shaped biological and social anthropology for years to come. In this case, performative practices and notions evolve and confirm themselves that will be valid for a long time: to subdue the world (and its people) by force and to take what can be gotten hold of in other regions or countries. Both the national socialist raciology as well as the exploitation, obliteration, and rape of large parts of Europe follow a similar pattern and are to some extent carried out by the same people or their disciples. The heritage of this type of colonialism can be admired in the ethnographic collections of various museums preserving evidence of cultures that have been annihilated by the predecessors of those that display it.

Further, in large parts of Europe, diverse forms of enslavement of indigenous individuals such as serfdom existed. Finally, also Europeans—such as the people living at the Italian coasts or crews and passengers from ships that travelled the Mediterranean—were enslaved by agents from North Africa.³ Even as regards the enslaving parties engaged in the Atlantic slave trade, not all participants were winners or even voluntarily involved in the events. The—by the way, very diverse—crews of the ships were in some cases forced aboard and many of them died either by the hand of their captains, of illness, or in fights with those who they had enslaved.⁴ An important, yet not all too often mentioned aspect is that the by far largest percentage of those who were chained together on the ships had not been hunted down and taken captive by the ships' crews. Africans hunted Africans, caught them, transported them over long distances and sold them to the ships waiting for them especially in the river estuaries and at the coasts of West Africa.⁵ Those aspects are probably not addressed as often as they should because of the fear to be accused of relativizing the issue. In some cases, this might even be the

² Götz Aly, *Das Prachtboot. Wie Deutsche die Kunstschatze der Südsee raubten* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2021).

³ Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁴ Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and Their Captive Cargoes, 1730–1807* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁵ Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008).

case. As a matter of fact, though, the goal is to understand slavery and—in the context of this special issue—especially its consequences and the possibilities of what is considered here as cure in a comprehensive manner. To approach the North American experience as a paradigmatic point of departure for such a discussion can be no more than an opening.

As I said above, I have learned a lot working for GSP. I would like to use the section *Dossier* and—quite in accordance with my character and based on the observation of the last couple of years—critically address some developments in the field and make some suggestions as to how they could be dealt with...

In the meantime, farewell and see you soon at a different place.

Christian Gudehus

Meet the GSP Team: Featured Profiles

Christian Gudehus was GSP's Editor in Chief from 2014 till the end of 2021. He is senior researcher at the [Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict](#) and Permanent Fellow at the [Kilian-Köhler Centre for Social & Cultural Psychology and Historical Anthropology](#), both at the [Ruhr-Universität Bochum](#). His research focus is on collective violence. Be it violent professions, violent practices, psychologies of violence or the combination of social theoretical concepts with empirical approaches. In addition, there is a keen interest in methodological questions with a special focus on digital tools and networks for teaching and research. One of such projects is the [Online Encyclopaedia Practices of Violence](#) a collaborate research project for Students. His next (English) publishing endeavour after leaving GSP is the Journal of HARM which he co-founded with Pradeep Chakkarath and that will start publishing early in 2022. Updates on his activities are on his [personal website](#).

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Kirril Shields, PhD, is GSP's incoming Editor-in-Chief. He works for the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P Centre), overseeing and helping with several grassroots projects aiming to curb sexual and gender-based violence and hate speech in Southeast Asia. He lectures at the University of Queensland in the Schools of Political Science and International Studies, History and Philosophical Enquiry, and Communication and Arts, teaching on subjects such as the history of genocide, humanitarianism, literary studies, cultural studies, and film and television studies. Kirril has worked as a journalist, writing for numerous architecture and design magazines, and was English Editor of Mongolia's *UB Post*, while also writing for a variety of international news outlets. Kirril is currently working with the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect to develop an atrocity prevention course aimed at students from Southeast Asian tertiary institutions, in partnership with Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok) and the University of Gadjah Mada (Jogjakarta) to implement a first iteration of the course in 2022. He is co-editor of two of the *Genocide Perspective* series books and is an Auschwitz Jewish Center Fellow, and a Summer Fellow of the Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilisation at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is also father to a four-month-old boy called Ira, and is currently very, very tired.

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