

of International American Studies

Review

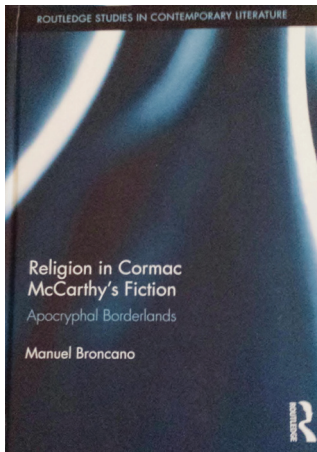
**DECODING AMERICAN CULTURES
IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT**

special issue

IASA ANNOUNCEMENTS

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

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*Decoding
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Manuel Broncano, *Religion in Cormac McCarthy's Fiction: Apocryphal Borderlands*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

This book addresses the religious scope of Cormac McCarthy's fiction, one of the most controversial issues in studies of his work. Current criticism is divided between those who find a theological dimension in his works, and those who reject such an approach on the grounds that the nihilist discourse characteristic of his narra-

tive is incompatible with any religious message. McCarthy's tendencies toward religious themes have become increasingly more acute, revealing that McCarthy has adopted the biblical language and rhetoric to compose an 'apocryphal' narrative of the American Southwest while exploring the human innate tendency to evil in the line of Herman Melville and William Faulkner, both literary progenitors of the writer. Broncano argues that this apocryphal narrative is written against

the background of the Bible, a peculiar Pentateuch in which *Blood Meridian* functions as the *Book of Genesis*, the *Border Trilogy* functions as the Gospels, and *No Country for Old Men* as the Book of Revelation, while *The Road* is the post-apocalyptic sequel. This book analyzes the novels included in what Broncano defines as the South-Western cycle (from *Blood Meridian* to *The Road*) in search of the religious foundations that support the narrative architecture of the texts.

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CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Institute of English Cultures and Literatures, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, and College of Arts and Sciences, Salem State University, USA, are happy to announce the international conference:

Ties and Knots. Bridges between Lands and Cultures
Ustroń, Poland
September, 18th–20th, 2014

CONFERENCE THEME

The conference has been conceptualized as a forum of interdisciplinary academic debate which aims to investigate the dialogic (perhaps dialectical as well) relationships between socially dissimilar and topographically distant cultures. The metaphor of ‘bridges’ becomes a scholarly construct gesturing towards globalization processes which –as the cultural understanding of the term wishes to indicate–pave the way for the intensification of cross-cultural and cross-ethnic interactions taking place within global socio-political systems whose scope goes well beyond the well-entrenched boundaries of local traditions or regional political structures chief among which is the national state.

The idea of bridges is also an invitation to theorize on the processes of individual and collective identity formation with respect to contemporary multicultural societies (Great Britain, the USA, Canada). The processes, philologically speaking, are necessitated by the willingness to understand and accept the language/languages of the Other, to *bridge* the chasm of mutual misunderstanding, distrust or suspicion. In this way, approaching the Other cannot be conceived as a purely linguistic challenge. Its cultural and moral (ethical) dimensions are also manifested by the critical imperative to overcome cultural differences by means of postulating a shared sphere of symbolic resources whose norms and val-

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ues may pave the way for the emergence of multilateral relations, generalized trust expectations and communicative rationalities.

Additionally, the conference is an attempt to delineate a methodological framework for discourses and theories that purport to conceptualize cultural spaces which—as opposed to objective, geographical areas—are characterized by the propensity to *bind* topographical distances by means of symbolic *ties* which foster and facilitate the familiarization of geographical places and subsume them within the perimeter of shared discourses of culture. The metaphor of *knots*, however, is also inviting a discussion of bonds that are so tightly entangled (for better or for worse, and in Darwinian discourse it defines his theory of evolution) as to become problematic and, perhaps, unresolvable. Needless to say, the conference becomes an opportunity to discuss the idea of space (but also what transcends ‘space and time’ as in metaphorical bridges) which is conceived as a cultural construct *in statu nascendi*, a distinct product of signifying practices, rather than an objective dimension of human practice.

When approached from a different perspective, *ties*, *knots and bridges* may function as metaphors illustrating methodological challenges and opportunities associated with cross-disciplinary discourses, projects or disciplines in the humanities, arts or social sciences. The conference, consequently, aims to explore processes by which supposedly dissimilar theories, concepts or notions are yoked by scholarly ingenuity to create the *discordia concors* of contemporary academic practices.

More specifically, the papers are expected to address possible juxtapositions and intersections of the following in socio-cultural, literary and other discourses:

- spatial and temporal dimensions of cultural practice;
- religious and ethical ‘ties and knots’ between lands and cultures;
- inter-connections between historical/literary/cultural epochs;

- cross-cultural relations that are problematically entangled together ('cultural knots' or 'Gordian knots' across cultures);
- discourses of cultural entanglement and cultural ensnarement, both on individual and social levels;
- cutting through cultural ties and attempts at disentangling relations in space, time and culture.
- theories of trust, social capital and intercultural competence;
- discourses of globalization, hybridization and cultural assimilation;
- mediascapes: digital networks and virtual realities as distinct forms of cultural spaces;
- transport and communication: technology vs. humanities;
- spaces and places as phenomenological categories;
- the social construction of urban and rural spaces;
- aesthetic bridges (accolades) between various cultures (in music, poetry and visual arts);
- methodological problems connected with contemporary cross-disciplinary initiatives;
- critiques of relationships between disciplines, arts, genres and discourses;
- bridging the impossible: utopianism in sciences, political discourses and the history of ideas;
- new spaces to occupy; new ideological spectacles in the age of Facebook and digital media.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Abstracts of papers within the range of 200–250 words should be submitted by e-mail to tiesandknotsconference@gmail.com by February 20th, 2014. The proposals should include the participant's name, academic title, affiliation, e-mail address as well as a short biographical note (100 words, approx.).

The notifications of acceptance will be sent via e-mail by March 5th, 2014.

Conference proceedings will be published

FURTHER INFORMATION

Queries regarding the conference can be sent to: tiesandknotsconference@gmail.com

Please note that the relevant details concerning accommodation and conference fees will be provided in the subsequent CFP.

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS

- Prof. Jude Nixon, Dean of Arts and Sciences, Salem State University, MA, USA.
- Prof. Ewa Borkowska, Institute of English Cultures and Literatures, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.
- Dr. Agnieszka Adamowicz-Pośpiech, Institute of English Cultures and Literatures, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.
- Dr. Rafał Borysławski, Institute of English Cultures and Literatures, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.
- Dr. Tomasz Burzyński, Institute of English Cultures and Literatures, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.
- Dr. Tomasz Kalaga, Institute of English Cultures and Literatures, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.
- Dr. Maciej Nowak, Institute of English Cultures and Literatures, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland

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The Transatlantic Walt Whitman Association is pleased to announce:

Whitman Across Genres
The Seventh Annual International Walt Whitman Symposium
to be held at
Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg
Bamberg, Germany
July 25 & 26, 2014

Founded in Paris in 2007, the Transatlantic Walt Whitman Association (TWWA) invites students, researchers, and Whitman enthusiasts to participate in its 7th annual Whitman Week, consisting of a Seminar for advanced students interested in Whitman and Whitman's poetry, and a Symposium bringing together international scholars and graduate students. Previous Whitman Weeks have been held at Universität Dortmund, Germany (2008), Université Francois Rabelais, France (2009), Università di Macerata, Italy (2010), Universidade Estadual Paulista, Brazil (2011), Szczecin University, Poland (2012), and Northwestern University, USA (2013). The 2014 events will be held at the Otto-Friedrich-University in Bamberg, one of Germany's most beautiful medieval and baroque towns situated in a region known for its historical architectural sights, natural beauty and rich culinary culture.

TWWA'S MISSION

Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* remains a landmark of modern poetry and world literature. Every year new editions of Whitman's work are published in a variety of languages; an ever-expanding group of poets 'reply' to him in their poetry; his poems are set to music and are quoted in films; he is invoked in the discussion of political and cultural issues, as well as of gender and sexuality; and he continues to be a huge presence in college and university curricula globally. In order to respond adequately to this international

phenomenon, TWWA sponsors a yearly International Whitman Seminar, during which students from different countries come together for an intensive, credit-bearing Seminar taught by an international team of Whitman specialists.

SEMINAR STRUCTURE

In the morning classes, focusing on some of Whitman's major poems and selections from his prose, students will have an opportunity to confront Whitman's books, share their readings of key poems and clusters, and discuss Whitman's attempts at a multilingual English, his cohesive representation of human relations, and his work's international significance. In addition, there will be afternoon workshops on the reception of Whitman in various countries, as well as the translation of his poems into various languages, including German, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish and Asian languages. (The specific readings that will be the focus of the Seminar will be announced a month before the start of the Seminar.)

FACULTY

The team of international instructors for 2014 will be: Betsy Erkkila: Professor of American literary and cultural studies at Northwestern University; author of *Walt Whitman Among the French: Poet and Myth* (1980) and *Whitman the Political Poet* (1996); co-editor, with Jay Grossmann, of *Breaking Bounds: Whitman and American Cultural Studies* (1996); editor of *Walt Whitman's Songs of Male Intimacy and Love* (2011); Ed Folsom: Professor of American Literature at the University of Iowa; co-director of the online Whitman Archive; editor of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*; author, co-author and editor of over 20 Whitman-related books, including, most recently, *Walt Whitman's Democratic Vistas: A Facsimile of the Original Edition* (2010), *Re-Scripting Walt Whitman* (2007) co-authored with Kenneth M. Price, *Whitman Making Books / Books Making Whitman* (2005), and *Whitman East and West: New Contexts for Reading Walt Whitman* (2002); Walter Grünzweig: Professor American Literature and Culture

at the University of Dortmund, Germany; author of *Constructing the German Walt Whitman* (1995) and *Walt Whitmann: Die deutschsprachige Rezeption als interkulturelles Phänomen* (1991); contributor to, amongst others, *Breaking Bounds: Whitman and American Cultural Studies* (1996), *Whitman East & West: New Contexts for Reading Walt Whitman* (2002), and *A Companion to Walt Whitman* (2009); Peter J. L. Riley: Early career fellow in American Literature at the University of Oxford, UK; author of 'Leaves of Grass and Real Estate,' published in the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*; co-founder and committee member of the British Association of Nineteenth-Century Americanists; currently working on the book project *Moonlighting Modernity: American Poets at Work*.

HOUSING

International students will live together at no charge with Bamberg University students, thus creating opportunities for meaningful intercultural dialogue. Symposium Students are expected to attend and invited to take part in the Symposium, held immediately following the Seminar, and featuring scholarly papers by Whitman scholars and graduate students from various countries. A separate paper proposal must be submitted in order to participate in the Symposium. This year's Symposium theme is 'Whitman Across Genres.'

APPLICATIONS FOR THE SEMINAR

Applications for the seminar should include a curriculum vitae, a one-page statement of interest, and a short letter of support from an instructor who knows the applicant well. All of these materials, including the letter of recommendation, should be submitted electronically to the University of Bamberg Chair of the Seminar, Professor Christine Gerhardt at <twwa2014@uni-bamberg.de> by February 15, 2014.

AN OPEN CALL FOR PAPERS

TWWA welcomes papers that explore Whitman's accomplishments in genres other than poetry—Whitman as a journalist

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or fiction writer or letter writer or keeper of notebooks or essayist. In particular, we are looking for papers discussing the interrelations of his short fiction, novel, journalism, essays, private jottings, correspondence, etc., including interrelations between this body of writing and his poetry. We are also looking for presentations that investigate Whitman across all types of adaptations and reworkings in the work of later writers and artists who have talked back to Whitman: poets and translators, novelists that build upon Whitman's work, filmmakers who quote Whitman (or even portray him), musicians who set his work to music or respond to him in their own compositions. Papers should be no more than 25 minutes in duration.

One-page abstracts should be sent electronically, no later than February 15, 2014, to all four Symposium Organizers:

- Eric Athenot <eric.athenot@orange.fr>
- Stephanie Blalock <Stephanie-blalock@uiowa.edu>
- Christine Gerhardt <christine.gerhardt@uni-bamberg.de>
- Kenneth M. Price <kprice2@unl.edu>