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BOOK PUBLICATIONS

Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures

By Elizabeth M. Deloughrey, University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, 352 p., 4 maps.

Routes and Roots is the first comparative study of Caribbean and Pacific Island literatures and the first work to bring indigenous and diaspora literary studies together in a sustained dialogue. Taking the "tidaectic" between land and sea as a dynamic starting point, Elizabeth Deloughrey foregrounds geography and history in her exploration of how island writers inscribe the complex relation between routes and roots.

The book moves beyond restrictive national, colonial, and regional frameworks and makes a compelling argument to foreground how island histories are shaped by geography. It offers an innovative and interdisciplinary approach that places postcolonial islands in a dialogue with each other as well as with their continental counterparts, engaging with writers such as Kamau Brathwaite, Derek Walcott, John Hearne, Epeli Hau'ofa, Albert Wendt, Keri Hulme, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff. Overall, this book navigates uncharted spaces in postcolonial studies by historicizing the ways in which indigenous discourses of landfall have mitigated and contested productions of transoceanic diaspora. The result is a powerful argument for a type of postcolonial sovereignty that is global in scope yet rooted in indigenous knowledge of the land.

Routes and Roots engages broadly with history, anthropology, and feminist, postcolonial, Caribbean, and Pacific literary and cultural studies. It productively traverses diaspora and indigenous studies in a way that will facilitate broader discussion between these often segregated disciplines.

Race, American Literature and Transnational Modernisms

By Anita Patterson, forthcoming, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Exploring the cross-fertilization of experimental modernism, Harlem Renaissance lyricism, the poetics of Négritude, and other revisionary modernisms in the Francophone and Anglophone Caribbean, this book considers modern poetry's complex racial boundary-crossing, as well as transatlantic contexts of empire-building and migration with their attendant cultural transformations. Patterson traces the New World poetics of the frontier in Whitman and T.S. Eliot, and considers Poe's shaping effect on reciprocal influences between Eliot and St.-John Perse that would foster the growth of poetic modernism in the Caribbean. The study's transatlantic scope is then broadened to document Eliot's affinities with Langston Hughes whose jazz representations, like Eliot's, were imbricated with European modernist precursors such as Laforgue and Baudelaire. In the Francophone context, Patterson finds echoes of Perse in Hughes's poetic rhythms, and documents their mutual influences on Négritude



poet Aimé Césaire, as well as Jacques Romain, co-founder of Les Indigènes. Turning, finally, to the Anglophone Caribbean, Patterson describes how Wilson Harris and Derek Walcott adapted the styles of Whitman, Eliot, Pound, and Crane to recover an unwritten history of their region. This book will be of interest to the scholarly audience for American and African-American literature, experimental modernism, postcolonialism, and Caribbean poetry.

Płynność i egzystencja. Doświadczenie lądu i morza a myśl Hermana Melville'a

[*Liquidity and Existence: The Experience of the Land and the Sea in Herman Melville's Thought*]

By Paweł Jędrzejko, forthcoming, BananaArtPI/ExMachina/M-Studio, 2007, ca. 360 p.

Liquidity and solidity, the human and the inhuman, existence and experience, philosophy and literature – these are the key concepts of the reflections of Jędrzejko's forthcoming book. In its most general dimension, his important study aims at a revision of Herman Melville's *oeuvre* in an alternative perspective from those adopted by scholars representing traditional (canonical) critical approaches. In his book, he endeavors to show Melville not only (and certainly not exclusively) as a romantic writer, but as a 19th-century thinker, who evolved a unique philosophy of existence, communicable through the language of romantic literature, and thus to present him not as an author of "creative fiction," but as a philosopher rooted in the climate of his epoch and striving to discover and communicate the truth of the world – and of the human within it.

A meticulously organized sequence of theoretical and analytical chapters allows one to locate Melville's thought within the broad spectrum of Western existentialist thought and makes the revision of the historical conditioning of the evolution of the existentialist trends in the space of the American thought of 20th and 21st centuries possible. The book's final chapter offers considerations on Herman Melville-the thinker in the context of a broad reflection on liquidity, passage of time, and tranquility born out of philosophical search for "good faith." The existentialist digression on Melville and the ultimate matters, offered in lieu of conclusions, serves as an invitation to reflect upon the art of living: the serene art of making sense of one's own existence against ubiquitous liquidity, which painfully marks the human condition with the brand of uncertainty. (<http://www.jedrzejko.eu/index.php?k=389#eng>)

Melville w kontekstach, czyli prolegomena do studiów melvillistycznych

[*Melville in Contexts. Prolegomena to Melvillean Studies*]

By Paweł Jędrzejko, BananaArtPI/ExMachina/M-Studio, 2007, 157 p.

In writing his *Melville in Contexts*, Jędrzejko was driven by the hope that the synthesis it offers might become the source of inspiration for Polish literary scholars and stu-

dents of literature and culture and thus, trigger processes leading to the eradication of the yawning gap in the Polish Americanist bibliography. The present *Prolegomena*, the first full-fledged academic book in Polish dedicated solely to Melville, were created to serve an ancillary function: the book, informed by its author's original vision of Melville-the-thinker, collects information compiled on the basis of research carried out throughout the past century by numerous Melvilleans: literary scholars, biographers and historians alike, whose work is either completely unknown to the Polish reader—or its circulation is limited to a narrow group of specialists.

The synthesis offered here does not presume to replace or substitute works by eminent Melville scholars from all over the world: conversely, in response to the need for reliable information concerning the writer, the present book proposes a convenient starting point for further, in-depth research and facilitates navigation through the different trends of Melville studies, especially those deriving from the USA. It will be extremely useful to scholars with beginning interests in Melville, students of literature (especially graduate and post-graduate students working on dissertations), teachers of 19th-century American literature, and Melville fans. This introductory synthesis may prove to be useful in temporarily filling the existing void in the Polish scholarly bibliography regarding this author, thus potentially inspiring Polish studies on the life and work of one of the most eminent thinkers and writers of the 19th century. (<http://www.jedrzejko.eu/index.php?k=388>)

New World Poetics: Nature and the Adamic Imagination in Whiteman, Neruda, and Walcott,

By George Handley, forthcoming, University of Georgia Press, 2007.

A simultaneously ecocritical and comparative study, *New World Poetics* plumbs the earthly depth and social breadth of the poetry of Walt Whitman, Pablo Neruda, and Derek Walcott, three of the Americas' most ambitious and epic-minded poets. In Whitman's call for a poetry of New World possibility, Neruda's invocation of an "American love," and Walcott's reinvestment in the poetic ironies of an American epic, the adamic imagination of their poetry does not reinvent the mythical Garden that stands before history's beginnings but instead taps the foundational powers of language before a natural world deeply imbued with the traces of human time. Theirs is a postlapsarian Adam seeking a renewed sense of place in a biocentric and cross-cultural New World through nature's capacity for regeneration in the wake of human violence and suffering. This book introduces the environmental history of the Americas and its relationship to the foundation of American and Latin American studies, explores its relevance to each poet's ambition to recuperate the New World's lost histories, and provides a transnational poetics of understanding literary influence and textual simultaneity in the Americas. This study provides in-depth ecocritical readings



of each poet's major poems, insisting on the need for thoughtful regard for the challenge that nature's regenerative powers pose to human imagination; nuanced appreciation for the difficulty of balancing the demands of social justice within the context of deep time; and the symptomatic dangers and healing potential of human self-consciousness in light of global environmental degradation.

The New North American Studies: Culture, Writing and the Politics of Re/Cognition

By Winfried Siemerling, Routledge University Press, 2007.

In this original and ground-breaking study, Winfried Siemerling examines the complexities of recognition and identity, rejecting previous nationalized thinking to approach North American cultural transformations from transnational and interdisciplinary perspectives. Using material from the United States and Canada as case studies and drawing on a wide range of texts and theorists, he examines postcoloniality and cultural emergence from the sixties to the present against earlier backgrounds. Siemerling's argument for a re-theorization of the field takes on the full history of multiculturalism debates, including radical readings of W.E.B. DuBois and Charles Taylor and their relation to G.W.F. Hegel, and challenging many of the models of multiculturalism in use today. Tackling controversial subjects such as identity politics, *The New North American Studies* proposes a fresh outlook on the most central issues of North American cultural politics, from debates on canon formation to the role of racial and linguistic difference. Concluding with a look at the future of cultural difference, Siemerling's study is an innovative rethinking of the whole field of North American Studies.

Les jardins des Amériques: éden, "home" et maison: le Canada et les Amériques

by Patrick Imbert (dir.), Ottawa, Chaire de recherche de l'Université d'Ottawa : Canada : jeux sociaux et culturels dans une société du savoir, 2007, 246 pp.

Comment le rêve du Jardin d'Éden est-il recontextualisé dans les Amériques? On peut le voir dans ses espaces contemporains comme le terrain de baseball, à la fois protecteur et ouvert sur l'illimité de la frontière, ou le bungalow et sa cour arrière. Cette maison de banlieue, entre ville et campagne, déplace l'opposition barbarie/civilisation qui a fondé les cultures du Nouveau Monde. Celles-ci ont rejeté le nomadisme des Autochtones pour valoriser l'enracinement par la maison et la nation. Cette territorialisation est transformée par la mondialisation. La maison devient un 'home', une maison transportable qui prend son sens par un système de valeurs. Alors, l'identité se transforme en images de soi caméléones explorant le transculturel.

Dans ce contexte, que deviennent les métaphores de la racine et de l'arbre généalogique des discours théoriques, de leurs champs de recherche, de leurs études de terrain et de leurs embranchements? Elles se muent en réseaux rhizomatiques liés

à la légitimation des déplacements géographiques et symboliques. Le jardin cède la place aux réseaux. Ils stimulent ceux qui, partis du jardin d'Éden perdu, tentent d'explorer les dynamiques démocratiques et libérales dans un devenir ouvert sur les possibles des rencontres.

Visibility Beyond the Visible: The Artistic Discourse of American Transcendentalism

by Albena Bakratcheva, New Bulgarian University Publishing House, 2007, 350 pp.

This book deals with the poetics of American Transcendentalism. Beginning with the idea that the major New England transcendentalists were of the utmost literary significance, and focusing on their many-sided artistic discourse, the book's inevitable European perspective enhances its preoccupation with the Americanness of the movement, thus emphasizing the uniqueness of the interrelation between sense of place and artistry that the transcendentalists' writings offer. Moving from an exploration of the Transcendentalists' Puritan background to the complex relations of American Transcendentalism with British Romanticism, the book ends with a lengthy consideration of Emerson's ideas of self-reliance, in comparison to those of Thoreau.

From Lowbrow to Nobrow

By Peter Swirski, McGill-Queen's UP, 2006.

Swirski begins with a series of groundbreaking questions about the nature of popular fiction, vindicating it as an art form that expresses and reflects the aesthetic and social values of its readers. He follows his insightful introduction to the socio-aesthetics of genre literature with a synthesis of the century-long debate on the merits of popular fiction and a study of genre informed by analytic aesthetics and game theory. Swirski then turns to three "nobrow" novels that have been largely ignored by critics. Examining the aesthetics of "artertainment," he sheds new light on the relationship between popular forms and highbrow aesthetics.

All Roads Lead to the American

by Peter Swirski, City (HKUP, 2007).

Examining the history, cinema, literature, cultural myths and social geography of the United States, Peter Swirski's new collection, *All Roads Lead to the American City*, puts some of the greatest as well as the 'baddest' American cities under the microscope. Examining the role of the roads that crisscross and connect the cities, it looks for ways to understand the people who live, commute, work, create, govern, commit crime and conduct business in them. Cities, for the most part, are America. Their values and problems define not only what the United States is, but what other nations perceive the United States to be. Roads and transportation, on the other hand, and



their impact on the American culture and lifestyle, form not only the integral part of the historical rise-and-shine of the modern city, but a physical release from and a cultural antidote to its pressure-cooker stresses. *All Roads Lead to the American City* opens with an essay by a historian, Priscilla Roberts. Panoramic in dimensions, 'All Roads Lead from the American City? The Land of the Urban Frontier' traces in detail the rise of cities and urban culture in America, bringing a consistently political perspective on the volatile debates surrounding the American city. In Chapter Two, 'On the Road in Asian American film: My America ... or Honk if you Love Buddha.' Gina Marchetti, a film scholar, travels in the footsteps of an Asian American filmmaker who records her experience of striking out in search of her own and her country's identity. The twin protagonists of the central chapter, 'A Is for American, B Is for Bad, C Is for City: Ed McBain and the ABC of Urban Procedurals,' are the celebrated novelist Ed McBain and the urban environment of New York City. With an eye towards McBain's documentary aesthetics, literature scholar Peter Swirski takes a detailed look at narrative fiction as socio-urban history. In Chapter Four, "Just Apassin' Through: Betterment and Its Discontents in America's Literature of the Road," literary and religious comparatist, Earle Waugh, takes multi-cultural stock of American road myths and dreams that have lingered from colonial times to this day. Motivated, like all the chapters, by the unease about the human condition in urban society, William John Kyle's 'Urbs Americana—A Work in Progress' concludes the collection. Replete with fact and image, it revisits the themes that animate it throughout: historical settlement, continental expansion, immigration and employment patterns, urban plight and flight, and efforts at renewing the American city and its human resources.