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Abstracts, Notes of Contributors, Editorial Board

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Abstract

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ABSTRACTS

Susan Cochrane, 'Black and White Family Album: A Personal View of My Parents' Work in Papua New Guinea 1949–75'.

A 'Black and White Family Album' is a story of interaction across cultures. It draws on and interprets rich original source material in my parents' archive, including biographical material and stories from my parent's published and unpublished manuscripts. The Cochrane Papua New Collection is held at the Michael Birt Library, University of Wollongong. The material in the archive includes published and unpublished manuscripts, radio and film scripts, newspaper columns, reel-to-reel recordings, photographs, personal documents and ephemera, originated and collected by my parents, Percy and Renata Cochrane.

Detlev Gohrbandt, 'Embracing the Alien Inside: Bessie Head and the Divided Self'.

In the course of her life and writing, Bessie Head developed a non-conventional understanding of individual and social identity that led her to accept dividedness and conflict as formative constituents of the self. She learned that coming to terms with her 'bust ego' was necessary in order to understand and value herself as a developing person and writer in Africa. These ideas about Head are explored on the basis of Jonathan Glover's dynamic philosophy of identity, in which personal unity is redefined as survival (of a changing self) and relation (between the self and others), and fragmentation is seen as a precondition for self-understanding and truth. Glover's analysis of the ways in which self-perception leads to narrative acts of autobiographical self-creation proves enlightening for the analogous strategies employed by Head with regard to her own person and her fictional characters, especially with regard to the ethical dimensions of value and action.

Dave Gunning, 'Caryl Phillips' *Cambridge* and the (Re)Construction of Racial Identity'.

This essay reads Caryl Phillips' 1991 novel, *Cambridge*, as a comment upon the construction of ideas of racial whiteness, and an attempt to reveal the fragility of such paradigms. The forensic attention to the historical archive, manifest in Phillips' use of passages taken directly from nineteenth-century accounts, allows for the ideological imperatives that drove the colonial construction of racial identity to be exposed, while his careful manipulation of the historical texts within the form of his fiction reveals the fault lines inherent in such discourse. This reconstruction of a seminal moment in the history of whiteness reveals Phillips' investment in the late-twentieth-century project to deconstruct racial essentialism. The essay concludes by examining the epilogue of the novel and suggests that Phillips presents the beginnings of a voice that might speak outside of racialising limitations, though this articulation necessarily remains transient and tentative.

Joel Gwynne, “Riley’s Handbook”: “Exegesis to His Cryptic Utterance”.

This essay interrogates Maurice Duggan’s most complex yet critically neglected work ‘Riley’s Handbook’, and focuses on contextualizing the piece within the cultural, and to a certain extent ideological, landscape of the period. It considers Duggan’s appropriation of Beckett and Cartesian ontology, influences external to the artistic climate in which he wrote, yet also considers the text in relation to regional thematics in order to establish both the locality and universality of ‘Riley’s Handbook’.

Anne Howell, ‘The Rhizomatic Art of Kurt Brereton’.

The art of Kurt Brereton engages with the concept of rhizomatics. Across a range of visual and new media art forms, Brereton applies the notion of the rhizomatic machine first put forward by the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari to explore aesthetically a range of ecological and environmental issues. Using the idea of the ‘image machine’, Brereton’s art challenges conventional ideas of what an ‘art work’ is as a discrete or singular object. Instead, Brereton’s images grow in non-linear directions like mangrove forests, swarms of bees or internet webs.

Michael Jacklin, “What I Have Done, What Was Done to Me”: Confession and Testimony in *Stolen Life: Journey of a Cree Woman*’.

Stolen Life: Journey of a Cree Woman by Rudy Wiebe and Yvonne Johnson is a book that is permeated by trauma. The collaboratively written text is an account of Johnson’s life-long experiences of sexual abuse which culminated in her participation, with three others, in the killing of man they suspect of being a sexual abuser and a threat to Johnson’s own young children. *Stolen Life* is confronting: it shocks in its descriptions of the abuse Johnson has suffered; it also shocks in its accounts of the crime she committed. Testimony and confession appear troublingly proximate in this text, and the claims each makes upon us provoke conflicted responses. This essay acknowledges that trauma is involved in both, and offers a reading that is guided by Johnson’s assertion that her book should be understood as a spirit bundle, a Cree power object needing to be handled with caution, care and respect.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

CARA CILANO is an assistant professor in the Department of English at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, USA, where she teaches courses in postcolonial theory and literature. Her work has appeared in *The Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*, *The Contemporary Pacific*, and in the collection *Beyond the Borders: American Literature and Post-Colonial Theory*. She has recently co-edited, with Elizabeth DeLoughrey, a special cluster of essays for *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and the Environment* on eco-criticism and postcolonialism, and she is completing a manuscript on historical contrition in Hawai‘i and Pakistan.

SUSAN COCHRANE grew up in PNG and has continued family and professional relationships there. Her research interests and curatorial specialty is in contemporary Pacific art and she has published extensively in this field. Her latest book is *Art and Life in Melanesia* (2007, Cambridge Scholars Publishing).

TEJ N DHAR has held teaching positions in Universities in Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Asmara, where he was also Dean of the Faculty of Arts until January 2007. He has published over forty essays in journals and anthologies in India and abroad in the areas of American literature, African literature, Indian English writing, Canadian fiction, and Postcolonial theory and practice. He has also published two books: *History-Fiction Interface in Indian English Novel* (Prestige 1999) and *Under the Shadow of Militancy: The Diary of an Unknown Kashmiri* (Rupa 2002; rpt 2004).

DETLEV GOHRBANDT teaches Cultural Studies and English as a Foreign Language at the University of Koblenz-Landau at Landau, Germany. He is currently working on topics in visual culture and preparing a critical edition of English *Struwwelpeter* satires. Publications include articles on the history of the English fable, George Eliot and Anglophone literature in Africa. He was involved in the Saarbruecken Modern Self-Referential Poetry Project, documented in *Self-Referentiality in 20th Century British and American Poetry* (1996, co-edited with Bruno von Lutz) and *Seeing and Saying: Self-Referentiality in British and American Literature* (1998, also co-edited with von Lutz). More recently he has worked on theories of genre and reading, as in *Textanlässe, Lesetätigkeiten: Poetik und Rhetorik der Unabgeschlossenheit* (1998). Translations include stories and poetry by Dylan Thomas and Bessie Head's *Maru* (1998, with Gisela Feurle) and *When Rain Clouds Gather* (2000, with Feurle).

DAVE GUNNING is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Birmingham, UK. He is the author of several articles on black British and British Asian literature and culture.

JOELGWYNNE is currently studying for his doctorate on stylistic dichotomization in New Zealand short fiction at the University of Hull, UK. He has previously published work on New Zealand fiction in the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*.

ANNE HOWELL has been arts editor of the *Eastern Herald*, and written on the arts for *The Illawarra Mercury* (Wollongong), *The Advertiser* (the Illawarra) *Tension* (Melbourne) and New York's *Egg* magazines. She was also the last editor of Illawarra's arts, culture, youth and environment magazine *Sparx*. Anne is currently completing a satiric novel set in the 80s, Sydney conceptual art movement (with the supervision of Australian poet and novelist Alan Wearne).

MICHAEL JACKLIN gained his PhD from Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia) in 2005. His research focuses on life writing, collaborative writing, and Indigenous literature. In 2007 he became an Associate Research Fellow at the University of Wollongong. He has published in *Australian Canadian Studies*, *Life Writing*, *New Literatures Review*, *Antipodes*, and *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*.

PAMELA MORDECAI immigrated to Canada in 1994. However, her birthplace, Jamaica, continues to be the focus of her poems and stories, which often 'take serious ting make joke'. Mordecai's thirty plus books include: *Culture and Customs of Jamaica* (2000, with husband, Martin Mordecai), *Rohan Goes to Big School* (2000) and *The Costume Party* (2000) for children, *Certifiable* (2001) and *The True Blue of Islands* (2005), collections of poetry, and *Pink Icing: Stories* (2006). An anthologist with a strong interest in the writing of Caribbean women, she has edited groundbreaking anthologies including *Jamaica Woman* (1980, 1985 with Mervyn Morris) and *Her True-True Name* (1989 with Betty Wilson). Pamela lives in Toronto.

GILA TAL has an MA in Creative Writing from Bar Ilan University, Israel. Her stories have been published in *Fiction Magazine*, *The Saranac Review*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *Bridges: A Jewish Feminist Journal* and a new anthology of Israeli-English literature titled, *Jane Doe Buys a Challah*. 'The End of Jewish Jerusalem' was short-listed for the Walrus Literary Award 2006 (Judged by Margaret Atwood).

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