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Abstracts, Notes of Contributors, Editorial Board

Anne Collett

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HELEN COUSINS

‘Banana Rebellion: Food and Power in Lindsey Collen’s Mutiny’

In her novel, *Mutiny*, Lindsey Collen employs the humble banana as a potent symbol of resistance to oppression. For the inmates of Porlwi women’s prison food is rationed; minds that are obsessed with hunger cannot think of rebellion. Juna, the novel’s narrator, finds a way of using food against the authorities through a game of exchanging recipes. The rules forbid talking or thinking about food outside of the game that thereby creates space in the prisoners’ minds for those thoughts of rebellion the authorities would like to suppress. Furthermore, Collen uses the theme of food to explore notions of political corruption and class difference.

JANE DOWNING

‘A Cookbook for the Tropics’

The *Kochbuch für die Tropen* — Cookbook for the Tropics — first published in Berlin in 1907, was compiled by Antonie Brandeis née Ruete. The cookbook went to four editions (all in the original German), whether by virtue of the quality of the recipes or the name of the author it is difficult to say. Antonie Brandeis clearly wanted her maiden name advertised. The German book-buying public, and more especially those interested in the colonies of the tropics, would recognise the name ‘Ruete’ for Antonie’s mother, Emily, had published a popular memoir at the end of the nineteenth century that told the exotic tale of a woman born Princess of Zanzibar and Oman. This essay explores the background of Antonie Brandeis and its relationship to her manual for the colonial *hausfrau*.

JONATHAN HIGHFIELD

‘Refusing to be Fat Llamas: Resisting Violence through Food in Sozaboy and Purple Hibiscus’

Food and foodways are among the most potent of cultural expressions. The food people eat and the way it is prepared speaks volumes about their relationship to their culture, their place in society, and their interaction with the environment. Food has the ability to remember home, to reconstruct cultural memory from the integration of ingredients, seasonings, and preparations. This article examines the way two Nigerian novels, *Sozaboy* by Ken Saro-Wiwa and *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimanda Ngozi Adichie, use food to speak to the protagonists’ distance from their community and culture, and through that distance to look at the health of Nigerian society. The inequity of foodways serves to highlight the continuing divisions in society, the scars left by the colonial era which must be healed in order for true freedom to come to Africa.
B. W. HIGMAN

‘Lady Nugent’s Second Breakfast’

*Lady Nugent’s Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805* is among the most commonly cited sources for the last years of the Atlantic slave trade in the British Caribbean. The author, Maria Nugent, wife of the Governor of Jamaica, maintained a detailed record of table guests and table manners, particularly the excesses of the creole ‘second breakfast’ which was a meal much loved by the slave-owning classes. Although superior in attitude and ambivalent in taste, Nugent necessarily attended many such rituals, noting their times and occasions, and recording in rich detail the foods served, from cassava cakes to exotic fruits, pigeon pies, hams, salt fish, oysters, chicken soup, confectionary, ginger sweetmeats, with claret and hock-negus, Madeira and sangaree, mixed liquor, coffee and tea. Her experience of second breakfast reflected the eclectic mix of endemic, indigenous, naturalised and imported plants and animals that characterised Jamaican food culture and its creole status.

DOROTHY JONES

“‘A Language We All Speak”: Food in Marion Halligan’s Writing’

Marion Halligan describes her memoir, *A Taste of Memory*, as a set of stories of her life in food, travel and especially gardens, those ‘nourishing spaces’; but it also commemorates her husband, Graham, and their thirty-five year marriage. Food and gardens often appear as related themes in Halligan’s fiction, where gardens often symbolise suburban domestic space and food may be used to express both desire and social connection. This essay explores how, in *A Taste of Memory* and the two novels immediately preceding it, *The Fog Garden* and *The Point*, food and gardens are linked to themes of bereavement and loss.

ELLEN McWILLIAMS

‘Margaret Atwood’s Canadian Hunger Artist: Postcolonial Appetites in *The Edible Woman*’

This essay examines the importance of food and hunger to the feminist and postcolonial dimensions of Atwood’s novel *The Edible Woman*. It will argue that while the motif of consumerism is crucial to the novel’s investigation of gender relations, an important component of Atwood’s recipe for self-preservation is an awareness of Canada as a national context for the character’s increasingly troubled relationship with food; this can be read as an early expression of the co-relation of gender and postcolonial discourses so characteristic of Atwood’s later writing, and as marking an important transitional moment in the author’s interest in survival as a Canadian theme. The essay also includes a number of illuminating references to unpublished material and early drafts of *The Edible Woman* in the
Atwood Collection, which shed further light on the points of contact between individual and national crises of identity in Atwood’s early fiction.

MEENAKSHI SHARMA

‘Indian Writing on Food: A Skewed Representation of Contemporary Social Reality’

In a country as diverse as India with every conceivable contrast co-existing even in contemporary times, Indian writing on food is an interesting genre in which the deep sociological and psychological rifts in society leave their mark in unsettling ways. While the economy is on an upswing with the impact of liberalised policies taking concrete shape in many areas, there still remain very large numbers of the population for whom food is not an assured reality. Writing on food assumes a certain class divide not only by the exclusion of economically disadvantaged classes but also, in the case of writing in English about elite cuisine and exotic places to eat in, that of much of the middle classes as well. Taking one of the best known contemporary writers on food as a case in point, the essay analyses these assumptions of class that are completely unacknowledged and that result in a highly skewed representation of contemporary social reality. The glossing over of the reality in terms of affordability of food per se and certain foods in particular, and of the experience and knowledge base of readers, produces a hazy picture of ‘Indians’ as a homogenous mass that is completely at odds with the extreme heterogeneity of Indian society.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

MERLINDA BOBIS grew up in the Philippines. The author of poetry, fiction and drama, she has received the Prix Italia, the Steele Rudd Award for the Best Published Collection of Australian Short Stories, the Philippine National Book Award, the Australian Writers’ Guild Award, and most recently the Philippine Balagtas Award. Her novel, *Banana Heart Summer*, was short-listed for the Australian Literary Society Gold Medal, and her poetry book, *Summer Was A Fast Train Without Terminals*, for The Age Poetry Book Award. Merlinda’s latest novel, *The Solemn Lantern Maker*, will be published in March 2008.

BEVERLEY BRAUNE brought out poetry collections *Dream Diary* with Savacou (1982) and *Camouflage* with Bloodaxe Books (1998). Her poetry and essays have appeared in many anthologies and literary magazines. She graduated from the University of Wollongong in 1999 with her creative and scholarly thesis: “Skulváði Úlfr: Historical Lacunae and Poetic Space”. Bev’s special areas of interest and expertise are poetics, the poetry of the ancient Americas, and Old Norse/Old Icelandic poetry. She lives in Sydney.

CHRISTINE CHECINSKA [SHAW] is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths College, London. Her research interests include biographies of material culture, cultural exchange, and the relationship between culture, fashion and race.

HELEN COUSINS completed her PhD in African woman’s writing from Birmingham University, England in 2001. Her main focus of research is African feminism and violence against women in African literary contexts. Currently, she works at Newman College of Higher Education, Birmingham, England as a Senior Lecturer in English.

Professor in Visual Arts, Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, DIANA WOOD CONROY has a B.A. (Hons) in Archaeology from the University of Sydney and a Doctor of Creative Arts degree from the University of Wollongong. In the 1970s she became a tapestry weaver, although continuing her research interests in archaeology and anthropology. Her involvement with Aboriginal communities began in 1974 when she was co-ordinator of Tiwi Designs, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory. Her exhibition work explores relationships between classical, Aboriginal and personal worlds in tapestry and drawing, and has been selected for survey shows touring nationally and internationally.

JANE DOWNING is currently writing a novel based on the lives of Antonie Brandeis and her mother Emily Ruete, born Princess of Zanzibar and Oman, as part of a Doctor of Creative Arts at the University of Technology, Sydney. She first came across the work of Antonie when she herself lived in the Marshall Islands.
Jane’s previous two novels are set in the Pacific and were published by Pandanus Books, Australian National University (The Trickster 2003, The Lost Tribe 2005).

MARCELLE FREIMAN is a Sydney poet who migrated from South Africa in 1977, spent four years in England, arriving in Australia in 1981. She lectures in creative writing and post-colonial and diaspora literatures at Macquarie University, Sydney. Her poetry has appeared in a range of literary journals and anthologies. Her book, Monkey’s Wedding (1995), was Highly Commended for the Marjorie Barnard prize.

ZENY GILES (Zenovia Doratis) was born in Sydney in 1937, her father having migrated from Cyprus, her mother from the island of Castellorizo. She now lives in Newcastle. Her first novel, Between Two Worlds, was published in 1981, the year in which she won The Age short story competition and the Anne Danckwerts Poetry Prize. A collection of stories, Miracle of the Waters, was published in 1989 (highly recommended in the literature section of the Human Rights Awards) and in 1995 she was one of the winners of the ABC Radio’s Books and Writing Short Story Competition. Zenny collaborated with the photographer Allan Chawner in 1997 to produce Journey of Visions, and with the composer Michael Atherton, to write the text of Inside the Storm (performed May 1998, by the Hunter Singers). Essays, poems and stories are collected under the title Caught in the Light, a Celebration of Newcastle (Catchfire 2002).

MARION HALLIGAN has published eight novels, including Lovers’ Knots, The Golden Dress, The Fog Garden and The Point; collections of short stories; books of autobiography, travel and food; and a children’s book. Taste of Memory: An Autobiography in Food and Gardens, was published in 2004. Her most recent novel is The Apricot Colonel (2006), a murder mystery set in Canberra, where she now lives and and which she finds a most fertile ground for writing. She has been short-listed for most of the prizes on offer, and has won some.

MICHELLE HAMADACHE is completing a Creative Writing PhD in English at Macquarie University, NSW, Australia. The focus of her work is biographical memoir set in Algiers, drawing on her Algerian husband’s experiences and her own as a visitor to Algiers and the years spent together in Italy. Michelle has had work published in the 1997 UTS Anthology, and in Island 106.

JONATHAN HIGHFIELD is an Associate Professor of English at Rhode Island School of Design, where he teaches a wide range of courses in colonial and postcolonial literatures. He has published in The International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability, Atlantic Studies, the Canadian Journal of Irish Studies, and Passages: Interdisciplinary Journal of Global Studies. Jonathan is also the co-editor (with Kwadwo Opoku-Agyemang and Dora Edu Buandoh) of a collection of essays entitled The State of the Art(s):
African Studies and American Studies in Comparative Perspective (Afram Publications 2006). He lives in North Scituate, Rhode Island, and likes to cook with the vegetables from his garden.

B. W. HIGMAN is a Professor of History in the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, Canberra, and Professor Emeritus of the University of the West Indies. His book Jamaican Food: History, Biology, Culture will be published by the University of the West Indies Press in 2008.

Although DOROTHY JONES would rather eat food than cook it, she also enjoys reading books about it and is currently writing about culinary memoirs. She is also greatly interested in post-colonial women’s writing, an area where she has published extensively. Dorothy is an honorary fellow in the English Literatures Program, at the University of Wollongong.

KATE LLEWELLYN is the author of eighteen books comprising travel, poetry, memoir, essays and nature writing. The Waterlily, a Blue Mountain Journal was a best seller (and, along with her essays and her book set at Woonona called Playing With Water, has been made into a talking book). Her forthcoming autobiography, The Dressmaker’s Daughter, is to be published by HarperCollins in 2008. She is currently the recipient of a Senior Fellowship from the Literature Board of the Australia Council.

ELLEN McWILLIAMS teaches nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature at the University of Bristol. She has research interests in women’s writing and Canadian and Irish literature and is currently working on a book on Margaret Atwood and the female bildungsroman, which is forthcoming with Ashgate in 2008.

ANA ROSA MARGINSON is the illustrator of ‘Dwell’ by Merlinda Bobis. Ana Rosa is aged eleven and loves to read books. She is also a writer. She lives in Melbourne and is in Grade 5 at Footscray Primary School. Her favourite books include the Harry Potter series, The Vampire Diaries, and absolutely anything about dragons or werewolves. Ana Rosa learnt how to read at the age of 5. She is doing ok at school, so she will continue to aspire to become one day, a great writer.

HAL PRATT was born in Sydney in 1940. He went to school in Parkes in the Central West of NSW. From the age of six he pursued a vocation in architecture until he became disillusioned with the business of architecture with its mounting regulations and paperwork that restricted the creative process. In the mid nineties he started anew in photography. Each year Hal worked towards a solo exhibition until 2003 when he was contracted by the State Library of NSW to photograph grain silos.
MEENAKSHI SHARMA obtained her Masters and PhD from the University of Queensland, Australia. Her research and publications have been in the areas of Post-Colonial Theory and Indian Writing in English. Her areas of interest are English in India, the Indian diaspora, cultural studies, and tradition and modernity in Indian writing in English. She is currently based in India, close to Delhi, and is Associate Professor at the Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad.

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