



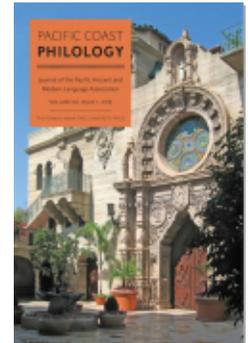
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Editors' Note

Roswitha Burwick, Friederike von Schwerin-High

Pacific Coast Philology, Volume 50, Issue 1, 2015, pp. 1-4 (Article)

Published by Penn State University Press



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Editors' Note



ROSWITHA BURWICK AND
FRIEDERIKE VON SCHWERIN-HIGH

Although the spring issue of *Pacific Coast Philology* does not have a theme and is open to all topics in languages and literatures represented in the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association, the journal has again assembled six essays that happen to share common lines of inquiry: all of the contributions explore textual representations of marginalized, racialized, orientalized, or dehumanized Others. Several of the articles expose the failure of entrenched Western subjectivity to recognize fellow human beings and animals as worthy of living dignified lives and dying dignified deaths, while other essays concentrate on interrogating the creation of essentialist identity constructions.

Natalia Andrievskikh situates the figure of the Dog-Woman in an interstice, from where the Dog-Woman threatens but also participates in established norms and traditions. Carmen Sanjuán-Pastor discusses the identity of a border-woman who inhabits a space that bridges the “inside”—belonging to—and the “outside”—being estranged from—communal life. Mikayo Sakuma identifies a discursive landscape in Melville’s writings where inhabitants of a common life world, whether they are animals or humans, coexist in mutual dependency. Susan C. Anderson charts new representations of the third space, where metaphors and concepts of bridging are no longer applicable. Both Kevin R. Swafford and Catherine Irwin investigate narratives of war that interrogate the Manichaen divisions attributed to the warring parties

and in which the reporting voice recognizes its own, inescapable complicity. Whereas Swafford investigates the genre of war reporting at the turn of the nineteenth century, Irwin analyzes the poems written by soldiers serving in the post-9/11 conflict in Iraq.

In her essay “The Taste of Fairy Tale: Consumption as Theme and Textual Strategy in *Sexing the Cherry* by Jeanette Winterson,” Natalia Andrievskikh agrees that current feminist readings, critical of the novel, are well grounded in textual evidence, particularly, since *Sexing the Cherry* destabilizes established conventions of gender signification. She argues, however, that Winterson problematizes the notion of a strong heroine by relying on both character representation and narrative strategies. Employing consumption as manifestation of power, the Dog-Woman is a tragic as well as comic character. She threatens the prevailing power paradigm while also trying to exist within it. Focusing on consumption, *Sexing the Cherry* undermines the mainstream patriarchal tradition of gender signification while exploring orality as marginalized sexual experience.

In “Am I Catalan, Mom?” Figuring a ‘Common Public Culture’ from the Borderland in Najat El Hachmi’s *Jo també sóc catalana*,” Carmen Sanjuán-Pastor traces Najat El Hachmi’s apprehension of being in a state of deracination and her reflections on the discursive and material conditions required to be both Catalan and Amazigh. Sanjuán argues that El Hachmi has constructed the identity of a border woman that can be read through the discourse developed by the women of color movement in the 1980s and 1990s. She further suggests that El Hachmi’s notion of a Catalan-Amazigh identity counters essentialist definitions of Catalan-ness (*catalanitat*) that are narrowly based on linguistic or cultural assimilation into a dominant Catalan identity. By representing her practicing Catholic neighbors as positive models of multicultural conversation, El Hachmi succeeds in providing a multidimensional perspective on the society she experiences.

In her article “Water under the Bridge: Unsettling the Concept of Bridging Cultures in Yoko Tawada’s Writing,” Susan C. Anderson carefully delineates the critical cultural concept of the third space, which has moved away from such metaphors as bridging or blending. It is increasingly seen as a site of unpredictable creativity that highlights the non-static character of cultural and intercultural phenomena. Anderson proceeds to examine the types of dynamic third spaces found in Tawada’s imaginative explorations of foreignness and her memorable—sometimes humorous and at other times unsettling—critiques of conventional and Eurocentric cultural constructs in the everyday lives of her protagonists, and in particular in Tawada’s story “In Front of Trang Tien Bridge,” which is set in Vietnam. Focalized through its main character, Kazuko, the story interlaces Japanese, heterogeneously Vietnamese, German, global

consumerist, touristic, postwar, and postcolonial perspectives to interrogate the very idea of “bridging.” The article traces Kazuko’s evolving politicized worldview even as she accumulates an ever more confounding sense of her own identity in the presence of various Vietnamese, Japanese, American, and European Others. As Anderson explains, in Tawada’s texts, “attempting to maneuver between cultures can open so many possible connections already at play within them that any aim of neatly bridging them fails.”

Taking Ishmael’s encompassing view of animals in *Moby-Dick* as her point of departure in “Rethinking Cultural Awareness Toward Nature: Oriental Animals in Herman Melville’s *Clarel*,” Mikayo Sakuma ultimately concentrates on the depiction of animals and human beings in Melville’s later writings, which include his travel journals and his verse epic *Clarel*. She shows that the population of the Levant as described by Melville in these writings neither sentimentalizes nor anthropomorphizes animals—whether they are elephants, horses, donkeys, monkeys, or dogs—but treats them as rightful members of the same lifeworld, a world in which animals and humans, nature and culture constitute and depend upon one another. As Sakuma demonstrates, these nuanced, positive depictions can be said to imply a critique of modern, Western attitudes toward animals and nature and to powerfully prefigure many of the insights that characterize environmentalist thinking today. Investigating Melville’s awareness of nature in cultures, Sakuma advances the argument that “in *Clarel*, nature is an environment that provides us with the place to survive with animals.”

Kevin R. Swafford’s article “In the Thick of It’: The (Meta)Discourse of Jack London’s Russo-Japanese War Correspondence,” suggests that London’s willingness to travel half the world to report for the Hearst newspapers on the now relatively forgotten, but in its own time much debated, Russo-Japanese War was rooted in serious artistic concerns. These included dialogical, meta-discursive, and reputational interests as a war correspondent, while London’s socialist leanings also came into play. The circumstances in which London found himself in the war theater in Japan, where the authorities frequently denied or limited his access to sources and where he began to question his own role, did not match the presumed situation of the war reporter, leading London to develop a skeptical, double-voiced, and at times satirical rhetoric about war reporting. As Swafford persuasively illustrates, London’s writings from the war emphatically included an account of the difficulties of the conditions, power constellations, and ideologies underpinning war correspondence itself: “Deconstructing the image of correspondents as heroic, transcendent, vital witnessing agents, London portrays them (as well as himself) as relatively powerless players reduced to bit parts in a larger historical drama.”

In “Framing War: The Politics of Embedded Reporting in Brian Turner’s *Here, Bullet*,” Catherine Irwin investigates how embedded reporting that defined the war in Iraq as a fight against terrorism exposed the unequal precariousness of Iraqis and Americans by sustaining a post-9/11 form of military Orientalism that established different norms of recognition for mourning and valuing bodies. Moreover, the narrating voice shows how American soldiers are disciplined within a military culture that defines itself as a civilizing force in contrast to a dehumanized Other. Although there is evidence to decenter white male subjectivity and recognize the humanity of the Iraqi people, representations of the West’s control over the East are rarely questioned; even if white male subjectivity is decentered, the American soldier still operates as a civilizing, moral force. The poems address this schism in the U.S. rationality of war and the failure to grieve for Iraqis who are abused or killed by the U.S. military. By calling himself an embedded poet, Turner is conscious about his own complicity; it is this consciousness that enables Turner to expose the norms and discourses in which bodies are rendered valuable or not valuable, grievable or not grievable, in the economy of war.

As in previous years, our authors and readers were exemplary in their cooperation and support: it is our referees’ thoughtful and meticulous critical assessments that allow *PCP* to maintain its high quality and selectiveness. Lina Geriguis, *PCP*’s book review editor, carefully identified and worked very closely with the reviewers whose book reviews are featured in the current issue. We would also like to thank the journals manager, editorial manager, production coordinator, and copyeditor—Diana Pesek, Astrid Meyer, Julie Lambert, and David Coen—for their patience and untiring efforts to assist us in our work. Their expertise and advice made our project enjoyable and gratifying.