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REFERENCES

Catherine Delmas and André Dodeman, eds. *Re/membering Place*. New York/Bern: Peter Lang, 2013. 343 pp. ISBN (pb): 978-30343-1281-3. £65

- 1 There is no shortage of books devoted to place or memory in postcolonial studies, not only because these two notions are at the core of the experiences of settlement, relocation or repossession, which are key landmarks in the postcolonial experience, but also because place and memory have taken on new meanings in the last decades, in particular as spatiality and location have been redefined by anthropologists and by geographers. The process of re-membering itself has been largely interrogated in relation to the social, political and historical stakes involved in the process of collective re-membering of the past. These changes have forced scholars to re-map the moving contours of the discursive geography of remembrance and chart the ongoing progress of strategies to articulate the wide spectrum of experiences linked to the mental reshaping of a lost homeland.
- 2 The present volume, the title of which “re/membering place” – and its almost convincing way of dressing up the now slightly hackneyed hyphen into a slash – offers a genuine contribution to the field of postcolonial and diasporic writing, and while conference proceedings can easily prove to be such a hotchpotch of ill-assorted texts with only a couple of genuinely interesting contributions, the present volume is not and will be a timely addition to the field, of interest to both academics and undergraduate students. The book spans a broad spectrum of topics and geographic locations. The articles are organized according to four sections: part I, “Re/membering: home and displacement,” gathers texts which, as one would expect, deal with the loss of one’s home and its consequences. Part II, “Forgetting and Re/membering Disruption

and Trauma,” investigates the ways in which the traumatic memory of loss is converted into narrative memory. The aptly named third part “Re-negotiating: East and West” interrogates the contrapuntal focus which has naturally resulted from the colonial situation and developed into a resilient bipolarity of East versus West. Part IV, “Re-creating, Re-imagining, Re-visualizing place,” opens onto narrative reshapings of space.

- 3 The first part, “Re/membering: Home and Displacement,” has the merit of offering fresh perspectives on topics that have already garnered some critical interest. For example John Thieme’s investigation into botanical tropes in Caribbean writing, through a focus on Jamaica Kincaid, Jean Rhys, Wilson Harris and other writers, does not foreground the pastoral mode of colonial nostalgic musings but the systematic approach characteristic of the way botany was developing as a modern science with a strict system of classification and the Linnaean system of naming. Anne-Florence Quaireau’s stimulating study of Anna Jameson’s *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* positions itself in relation to both travel writing and gender studies as well as in the wake of the redefinition of spatiality by anthropologists in the twentieth century. This triple focus allows Quaireau to convincingly show how the diary as a locus of personal remembrance becomes a locus of collective memory, whilst foregrounding a metonymic reading of the travel narrative in its multireferentiality in the sense that through the refraction of the locus, Canada, it is also England which is evoked and, to a certain extent, duplicated. Canada is also the focus of Christine Lorre-Johnston’s article on Alice Munro, one which reassesses the role of oblivion as the contrastive agent of remembrance. Nathalie Martinière’s article suggests an interesting reflexion on the status of the home through the motif of the fantasized home which creates an imaginary homeland.
- 4 The second part of the book seeks to take on board the contribution of trauma studies and uses them as an insightful entry point to reassess a corpus of texts by authors such as Australian writer Kim Scott or Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in Catherine Pessoa-Miquel’s brilliantly crafted article. Birgit Neumann follows in the path opened by Paul Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic*. The impact of unprocessed trauma is at the heart of Sheila’s Collingwood-Whittick’s article in which she evidences the process of circulation and shaping of collective memory in Australia and the instrumentalization of the attachment of Indigenous peoples to place.
- 5 In Part III, Christine Vandamme questions the ethical implications of mnesic transfers through a focus on David Malouf’s novel *Conversations at Curlow Creek* while Elodie Raimbault interestingly shifts the traditional focus on otherness back to Englishness in her analysis of Kipling’s Anglo-Indians. Suhasini Vincent’s article on Kiran Desai and Biljana Djoric Francuski’s article on Ruth Praver Jhabvala both open an Indian perspective.
- 6 Part IV opens on Chitra Krishnan’s illuminating article which offers a brilliantly crafted overview of the image of India in the literatures of displacement; Krishnan also revisits literary filiations and reassesses Kipling’s place as the first Indian citizen. This paper is followed by another insightful contribution, Claire Omhové’s article on “The Memory of Landscape: Canadian Explorations on site,” which positions itself in relation to a cultural approach to landscape by stressing that it is always the product of a subjectivation and as such is never natural. The next two articles focus on Africa: Gilles Teulié reassesses collective memory through a study of King Shaka and the Zulu military past. Robert Kusek’s article is devoted to Coetzee’s *The Master of Petersburg* and

the last article focuses on the doubling of space in dystopian narratives, using De Certeau's works on space as an entry point.

- 7 In this volume, the two editors, Catherine Delmas and André Dodeman, have brought together conceptually rich contributions to the field of postcolonial and diasporic studies. The strong theoretical positioning as well as the perceptive and detailed analyses make the volume a genuine contribution to the field and the variety of topics as well as approaches provides substantial coverage of the main analytical tools. As in every book, some points could have been further developed; for example, the work of David Harvey or even that of Edward Soja – who like Harvey draws extensively on Henri Lefebvre – could have led to some interesting reassessments of the internalization and conceptualization of space. The triptych of absolute space, representational space and relational space would have come in handy, in particular when discussing urban space.

AUTHORS

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Françoise KRÁL is Professor of English Studies and Postcolonial Literature at the University of Caen Basse-Normandie. She has published extensively on postcolonial and diasporic studies; her work has appeared in *The Journal of Post-colonial Writing*, *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, *Gothic Studies* and *Tropismes*. She is the author of *Critical Identities in Contemporary Anglophone Diasporic Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009), and she has edited two collections of essays: *Re-presenting Otherness: Mapping the Colonial 'Self'/Mapping the Indigenous 'Other' in the Literatures of Australia and New Zealand* (Nanterre: Publidix, 2004) and *Architecture and Philosophy: New Perspectives on the Work of Arakawa and Gins* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011) which she co-edited with Jean-Jacques Lecercle. She is currently finishing a book on social invisibility and the diasporic subject (forthcoming in 2014).