

and Edwidge Danticat, suturing a rupture between Jewish and other ethnic American writings noted by other critics (notably Hana Wirth-Nesher, Michael Kramer, Dean Franco, Benjamin Schreier, and Rachel Rubinstein, on whose work Hoberman builds).

Hoberman's focus on new topological approaches allows his study to expand the work of earlier critics using the spatialized critical lens of home and exile (Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, Brooke Frederikson, Murray Baumgarten, Barbara Mann). By focusing on a Jewish American frontier, exurbia, and other newly defined spaces, Hoberman demonstrates how powerfully Jewish American writers have interrogated and revised dominant American literary motifs. Hoberman concludes that "geographically inspired Jewish American writing functions as a stay against fragmentation and as an appeal to unity not only among Jews but across all manner of cultural divides" (157), demonstrating the broad implications of this study for critics engaged with spatial and ethnic writing in the Americas.

Hoberman engages effectively with many important voices in the study of Jewish American literature today. Given the study's focus on multicultural and diasporic Jewish writing, Hoberman might have made note of Alicia A. Kent, *African, Native, and Jewish-American Literature and the Reshaping of Modernism* or Judith Oster's *Crossing Cultures: Creating Identity in Chinese and Jewish American Literature*. Its focus on landscape renders more surprising the omission of two recent works by Sarah Phillips Casteel: *Second Arrivals: Landscape and Belonging in Contemporary Writing of the Americas* and *Calypso Jews: Jewishness in the Caribbean literary imagination*. Remedying these oversights, however, would simply have added further richness to an already stimulating study that significantly refigures Jewish American literature.

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Margaret Ronda, *Remainders: American Poetry at Nature's End*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018. 178 pages. ISBN: 978-1-5036-0314-1.

Ecocriticism's prime concern has been, and still is, representation. Some of the foundational texts in the field treated the representation of nature in Romantic poetry, such as Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth*

and the Environmental Tradition (1991) and Karl Kroeber's *Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind* (1994). However, the bulk of twenty-first century literary ecocriticism has been written on novels. Margaret Ronda's ambitious study of American poetry is therefore pertinent on the basis of its topic alone.

Yet the relevance of *Remainders: American Poetry at Nature's End* extends well beyond the primary material considered. In fact, Ronda's historical-materialist approach, drawing on Georg Lukács, Theodor Adorno, and Walter Benjamin, is particularly welcome at a time when many ecocritics seemingly substitute argument for trendy vocabulary. The main culprit here is of course perfunctory use of 'the Anthropocene', but there is also the almost compulsive inclusion of especially terms with Harawayian and Deleuzian origins (e.g. 'entanglement' or 'becoming'). In considering the "natural-historic" (13) contexts of the texts she discusses, Ronda focuses on the Great Acceleration instead – the postwar period of accelerated economic, industrial and population growth and accompanying environmental destruction. This allows her to curtail the by now almost inevitable discussion of the Anthropocene as a concept (without preventing its later use in a chapter on contemporary eco-poetics) and also facilitates a sustained discussion of the rise of environmentalism as a popular or even culturally dominant movement as a by-product (or remainder, if you will) of late capitalism. In doing so, the author convincingly highlights the uneven prosperity and adverse effects of economic growth. As a side note, 'capitalism' (or Jamesonian 'late capitalism') here tends to function as a catch-all in much the same way as 'the Anthropocene' does in most recent ecocriticism, but this does not detract from the astute connections made between increased consumerism and the environmentalist movement.

The multiple meanings of the titular "remainders" are cleverly exploited in the author's consideration not only of poetry about remnants such as waste or pollution, but also in reflections on the poetic medium itself as a remainder – sometimes literally taking the form of unsold volumes, as she remarks in the introduction – or, drawing on Raymond Williams, as a "residual" aesthetic mode that can no longer claim any cultural dominance (17–18). If fault is to be found with such a concise, readable and relevant study, it lies precisely in this slight but discernible tendency to regard poetry as a marginal and unfashionable mode of expression while simultaneously valorizing the unmodern or obsolete for the insights or tools it can provide in an admittedly dire environmental situation.

Although most of the poets considered are well known, Ronda also frequently strives to counter one or more orthodoxies of the environmental humanities or to broaden the scope of ecocritical inquiry. In Chapter 1, works by Lorine Niedecker and Gwendolyn Brooks represent the overlooked rural margins of Wisconsin and urban fringes of Chicago in the postwar United States. Ronda thus identifies acute awareness of environmental degradation in places routinely marginalized by 1950s middle-class suburbia, which, ironically, is not only implicated in driving reckless consumption, but also conventionally deemed pivotal in the growth and popularization of environmentalism. Chapter 2 juxtaposes John Ashbery's work of the 1960s and 1970s with the mainstreaming of environmental concerns especially regarding the air through the works of Rachel Carson and Barry Commoner. Here the focus is on what Ronda identifies as Ashbery's "complex evocations of larger, underlying dynamics of transience and accumulation" (54). Chapter 3 centers on Gary Snyder's *Turtle Island* (1974) and Diane di Prima's *Revolutionary Letters* (1971) as defiant "revolutionary pastoral" (67) volumes that "reject governmental, scientific, and technological solutions to a crisis they define as all-pervasive and tied to economic and liberal-humanist logics" (86). The third chapter ends in a rather disheartening discussion of how the imagination of a complete break with "capitalist realism" becomes ever more precluded in late-twentieth-century American poetics (88), and in Chapter 4, the emphasis is appropriately on loss, mourning and melancholy. Ronda persuasively shows that after "the end of nature" announced in 1989 by Bill McKibben's influential book of the same title, Juliana Spahr's long poem "Gentle Now, Don't Add to Heartache" (2005) reverses the traditional role of nature in the elegiac mode: nature conventionally facilitates mourning through providing "symbolic correlatives for loss and consolation" leading up to eventual "reintegration into natural cycles" (103). In Spahr's poem, however, nature is lost and substitutes are offered by "the human image and the commodity" (103).

Chapter 5 centers on North American ecopoetics of the 2000s, focusing specifically on the use of apostrophe and prosopopoeia in the poems discussed in the light of increased awareness of anthropogenic environmental destruction and the notion of the Anthropocene. Ronda's efforts to distance her critical approach from the predominant new materialist framing of much current ecocriticism (especially 138, n. 40) perhaps account for the fact that there is very little consideration of the relation between new materialist approaches, broadly conceived, and ecopoetic practices in this

chapter. This minor qualm aside, the chapter's emphasis on formal characteristics, coupled with the discussions of modes such as the lyric, pastoral and elegy in previous chapters, ensures that the analyses in *Remainders* never stay at the level of thematic representation. Finally, despite insisting that the poems discussed "sidestep optimistic accounts of environmental history and tend to engage with hope in skeptical and ambivalent ways" (131), the coda strikes a more hopeful note as Ronda argues that poetry provides "a complex vocabulary for navigating [the] difficult terrain" (132) of current and future environmental change.

Notwithstanding some references to internal ecocritical debates, *Remainders* is accessibly written and ought to be appreciated even by those not familiar with the field. And it definitely deserves to be spared the fate alluded to in its title.

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