

# CFP: Australian Association for Caribbean Studies Conference

3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> July 2015

University of Wollongong

**Theme:** Land & Water

*Columbus from his after-  
deck watched heights he hoped for,  
rocks he dreamed, rise solid from my simple water.*

*Parrots screamed. Soon he would touch our  
land, his charted mind's desire.  
(Kamau Brathwaite, 'The Emigrants')*

Given the long history of often disastrous relationship between land and water in the Caribbean – the sighting of land by stranger ships being exemplar of the vulnerability of island cultures; and more recent discussion of natural and manmade disasters in which the relationship between land and water is paramount, a conference dedicated to a Land & Water theme seems timely. The consequences of water-borne diseases like cholera that were precipitated recently by earthquake in Haiti; the catastrophic impact of hurricanes that regularly sweep across water to make landfall in the Caribbean; the destruction of mangroves with the rise and rise of waterfront hotels and over-development of foreshores – mangroves that act to defuse the force of wave action in storm; the Mutiny on the Bounty in part due to depletion of precious water supply spent to sustain breadfruit plants bound for the Caribbean across the Pacific; the forced migration of peoples from the land of their forefathers and mothers (African, Indian, Caribbean diasporas) across oceans to other lands: these are examples of a disruptive or disrupted relationship between land and water. But disruption of that relationship might also come with benefits – migration afforded some with opportunities for education, publication, improvement in economic status, the attainment of rights associated with sexual preference/difference, freedom from oppression, release from the tyranny of fear ... The beneficent association of Water and Land has a natural history but it also has cultural history, think of Kamau Brathwaite's *Mother Poem*:

*The ancient watercourses of my island  
echo of river, trickle, worn stone,  
the sunken voice of glitter inching its pattern to the sea*

The relationship between Land & Water is poetic, symbolic, political, ecological, geographical, social, cultural, historical, legal, economic ... There is so much to be said of that relationship but also of each element in its separateness and its Caribbeanness. We look forward to hearing your ideas.

We invite papers from all disciplines and encourage submission of panels with a particular focus on the general theme. Although we would prefer papers that speak to the theme, the association also accepts papers on other topics. Please send **proposals** of no more than **300 words** to the conference convenor, A/Prof Anne Collett, English Literatures Program, School of the Arts, English & Media – [acollett@uow.edu.au](mailto:acollett@uow.edu.au) – by **28<sup>th</sup> February 2015**.

**Note:** the AACS conference precedes a major literary studies conference on the theme of 'Literary Networks' to be held at the University of Wollongong from 7-11th July 2015. See [lha.uow.edu.au/lit-net2015](http://lha.uow.edu.au/lit-net2015) for more information. Especially if travelling a long distance for the AACS conference, you may wish to also participate in the 'Literary Networks' conference. Due to the size of this conference, accommodation may be hard to come by in the Wollongong area, so we strongly recommend early booking. Details of registration, accommodation and booking will be available for the AACS conference after Christmas.