

Abstract

Prof. Dr. Rüdiger Kunow (Potsdam)

"The White Man's Medical Burden: US Colonialism and Disease Ecologies in Jack London's Hawai'ian Stories"

In this paper, I seek to explore a form of literary regionalism which unfolded at a critical juncture of U.S.-American history. I will show how at the end of the 19th century the imperial expansion of the United States re-configured the relationship between humans and environment. A new biopolitics of location emerged as American colonizers found themselves exposed to hitherto unknown disease ecologies which threatened to countermand their exceptionalist visions of a superior masculinity and whiteness. I will trace the contours of this unfolding colonialist dialectics between expansion and exposure in readings of selected examples from Jack London's Hawai'ian tales.