



ABSTRACTS AND NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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**Imagining Rivers:
The Aesthetics, History, and Politics of American Waterways.
A Conversation between Lawrence Buell and Christof Mauch**

This contribution features a transatlantic conversation between Christof Mauch, environmental historian and Americanist from Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, and Lawrence Buell, literary scholar and ‘pioneer’ of ecocriticism from Harvard University. Buell’s *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (1995) marked the first major attempt to understand the green tradition of environmental writing, nonfiction as well as fiction, beginning in colonial times and continuing into the present day. With Thoreau’s *Walden* as a touchstone, this seminal book provided an account of the place of nature in the history of Western thought. Other highly acclaimed monographs include *Writing for an Endangered World* (2001), a book that brought industrialized and exurban landscapes into conversation with one other, and *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (2009), which provides a critical survey of the ecocritical movement since the 1970s, with an eye to the future of the discipline.

Keywords: American rivers, literature, environmental criticism, ecocriticism, aesthetics

Lawrence Buell is Powell M. Cabot Professor of American Literature Emeritus at Harvard University. His books include *The Environmental Imagination* (1995), *Writing for an Endangered World* (2001), and *The Future*

of *Environmental Criticism* (2005). He has held research fellowships from the Guggenheim and Mellon foundations and from the National Endowment for the Humanities. During the last quarter century, he has lectured widely on environmental humanities in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. In 2007, he received the Modern Language Association's Jay Hubbell Award for lifetime contributions to American Literature studies (2007). His current book-in-progress is on the *Art and Practice of Environmental Memory*.

Christof Mauch is Director of the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society and Chair in American Cultural History at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. He received a Dr.phil. in Modern German Literature from Tübingen University (1990) and a Dr. phil. habil. in Modern History from the University of Cologne (1998). Mauch is an Honorary Professor and Fellow at the Center for Ecological History at Renmin University in China, a past President of the European Society for Environmental History and a former Director of the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. (1999–2007). His publications include *Rivers in History: Perspectives on Waterways in Europe and North America* (2008, with Thomas Zeller), and *Slow Hope: Rethinking Ecologies of Crisis and Fear* (2019).

STÉPHANE CASTONGUAY AND HUBERT SAMSON

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**Atikamekw and Euro-Canadian Territorialities
around the Saint-Maurice River
(1850–1930)**

This essay focuses on the processes of territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization through which Euro-Canadian society extended its control along the valley of the St. Maurice River between 1850 and 1930. That territory had been settled by the Atikamekw people where they had established their hunting and fishing grounds for centuries. However, the Atikamekw people were confronted by environmental and technological transformations around the St. Maurice River with the implementation of sociotechnical systems during that time period, as two successive phases of industrialization based on specific water use brought along a proliferation of urban centers and the arrival of the large-scale industry. This was particularly the case when the proliferation of hydroelectric dams along the St. Maurice River and its tributaries followed the construction of fluvial infrastructure to facilitate the floating of wood pulp harvested in the upper basin of the river. Not only did the technical activities surrounding the construction of hydroelectric facilities materially transform the St. Maurice River watershed, they also allowed a symbolic appropriation of the land by the production of maps and surveys that 'erased' the presence of the Atikamekw. Physical and symbolic boundaries resulting from these new forms of organiza-

tion and configuration of the territory restricted the spatial practices and representations of the Atikamekw. Logging confined these people within isolated enclaves (the so-called “Indian reserves”), while dams bypassed their networks of exchange and communication. The aim of this essay is to understand the conflicts between the territorialities of the Atikamekw and that of the Euro-Canadians by focusing on the place of water uses within the geographical imaginations and the land use patterns of these populations.

Keywords: Canada, Saint-Maurice River, Atikamekw, territory, watershed, industrialization

Stéphane Castonguay is Professor of history at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. He coedited *Metropolitan Natures* (2011) with Michèle Dagenais, and *Urban Rivers* (2012) with Matthew Evenden, both in the History of the Urban Environment series from the University of Pittsburgh Press. His most recent book, *The Government of Natural Resources. Science, Territory and State Power in Quebec, 1867–1939* (UBC Press, 2021), deals with the historical geography of state formation and natural resource exploitation.

Hubert Samson is currently employed at Groupe DDM. While studying at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR), he developed a special interest in environmental issues. Under the supervision of Professor Stéphane Castonguay, he completed his master’s degree at UQTR with a thesis focusing on the industrial transformation of the St-Maurice valley between 1900 and 1930. He has worked on the territorial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as well as the socio-environmental repercussions of industrialization in the lands of the Haute-Mauricie Atikamekw communities.

TRICIA CUSACK

Ireland

The Chosen People: The Hudson River School and the Construction of American Identity

This text considers nineteenth-century riverscapes of the Hudson in relation to the formation of American identity. It argues that riverscapes in the United States contributed to welding a national identity to a Christian one, although officially the identities were distinct. I examine the role of the Hudson River School in the creation of the ‘wilderness’ as an image of American homeland, and how this construct incorporated the iconic figure of the Euro-American Christian ‘pilgrim-pioneer.’ America looked more to the future than to the past for its national narrative, and an orientation to the future was symbolized in art by the flow of the Hudson toward distant horizons, while the pioneer identity was extended to embrace the entrepreneur-developer. The pioneer has remained an iconic figure for American nationalism, but is now more firmly located in the nation’s past; Janus’s

gaze has been adjusted, demonstrating the potentially fluid character of nationalist discourse.

Keywords: painting, the Hudson River School, American Identity, Christian identity, pilgrim-pioneer, fluidity, nationalist discourse

Tricia Cusack has taught at the Open University, Cardiff Metropolitan University and the University of Birmingham. Her research focuses on how visual art in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries embodies ideas about national and cultural identities. Books include *Riverscapes and National Identities* (Syracuse, N.Y., 2019) and three edited volumes: *Framing the Ocean, 1700 to the Present: Envisaging the Sea as Social Space* (Abingdon, 2016); *Art and Identity at the Water's Edge* (Abingdon, 2016); and *Art, Nation and Gender: Ethnic Landscapes, Myths and Mother-Figures* (Abingdon, 2018), co-edited with Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch. She has published articles in diverse journals including *Art History*; *Nations and Nationalism*; *National Identities*; *New Formations*; *Irish Review*; *Journal of Tourism History*; *Nineteenth Century Studies*; and the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*. Tricia's forthcoming book, *The Reading Figure in Irish Art in the Long Nineteenth Century* will be published by Anthem Press in 2021.

MANLIO DELLA MARCA

Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU), Germany
Guest Editor

Manlio Della Marca is an Assistant Professor of American Literature at LMU Munich and holds a Ph.D. in English-language literatures from the "Sapienza" University of Rome. Before joining LMU's Department of English and America Studies, he was a Doctoral Fellow at the International Forum for US Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2010) and a BAA Research Fellow at the Eva Hesse Archive of Modernism and Literary Translation in Munich (autumn 2013). In 2014, he was awarded a DAAD postdoctoral fellowship for his project on the unpublished correspondence of Ezra Pound with the media theorist Marshall McLuhan and Eva Hesse. His publications include essays on Ezra Pound, Edith Wharton, Thomas Pynchon, Philip K. Dick, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Leslie Marmon Silko. He is currently working on a book titled *Homo Legens: Modes and Moods of Reading*.

PAUL FORMISANO

University of South Dakota, USA

"First in Time, First in Right": Indigenous Self-Determination in the Colorado River Basin

This article adopts the premise "first in time, first in right" to bring Indigenous knowledge about the Colorado River Basin and the natural world more broadly out of the mainstream's obscurity to reposition these perspectives at the foreground of the region's water cultures. To initiate what is in essence a decolonization of Colorado River Basin

water knowledge, I examine texts representing various tribal affiliations and genres to consider how their particular use of story engages the historic and ongoing environmental injustices they have faced and continue to negotiate in their fight to preserve their sacred lands, identity, and access to reliable, clean water. Such a decolonization occurs through these texts' use of narrative to work within and against the scientific and instrumental discourses and their respective genres that have traditionally constructed and dictated mainstream Colorado River knowledge and activity. My treatment of narrative within the Ten Tribes Partnership Tribal Water Study (2018) and the Grand Canyon Trust's "Voices of Grand Canyon" digital project (2020) sheds greater light on the essential relationships the Basin's nations and tribes have with the Colorado River. Through these counternarratives to the West's dominant water ideologies and cultures, the Basin's tribal nations draw attention to past and ongoing struggles to secure equitable water access while amplifying their resilience and determination that defines their calls for environmental justice.

Keywords: Colorado River, environmental justice, Indigenous studies, literary studies

Paul Formisano is Associate Professor and Director of Writing at the University of South Dakota. His teaching and research in the environmental humanities brings together literary and rhetorical studies to address the complex, interdisciplinary issues regarding Western water management. This focus is the subject of his manuscript *Tributary Voices: Literary and Rhetorical Explorations of the Colorado River*. He is also working on an anthology on the literature of dams. Dr. Formisano's research has appeared in various journals and collections including *The Journal of Ecocriticism*, *Landscapes: The Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language*, *Iperstoria*, *Western American Literature*, *Make Waves: Water in Contemporary Literature and Film*, and *Reading Aridity in Western American Literature*.

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ADRIAN TAYLOR KANE

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Central American Rivers as Sites of Colonial Contestation

In the introduction to *Troubled Waters: Rivers in Latin American Imagination* (2013), Elizabeth Pettinaroli and Ana María Mutis have argued that rivers in Latin American literature constitute a "locus for the literary exploration of questions of power, identity, resistance, and discontent." This thesis would seem to be supported by the many works of testimonial and resistance literature that were written during and about the Central American civil wars of the 1970s and 1980s as a means of denouncing and resisting various forms of oppression. In the 2004 film *Innocent Voices*, directed by Luis Mandoki, Mario Bencastro's 1997 story "Había una vez un río," and Claribel Alegría's 1983 poem "La mujer del Río Sumpul," the traumatic events in the protagonists' lives that occur in and near rivers create an inversion of the conventional use

of rivers as symbols of life, purity, innocence, and re-creation by associating them with violence, death, and destruction. At the same time, the river often becomes a metaphor for the wounds of trauma, which allude to the psychological suffering not only of the protagonists, but to the collective pain of their countries torn asunder by war. Arturo Arias's 2015 novel *El precio del consuelo* also features a river as the site of state-sponsored violence against rural citizens during the civil war period. In contrast with Bencastro's and Alegria's texts, however, Arias's novel highlights issues of environmental justice related to the use of rivers in Central America that continue to plague the region to date. In the present essay, I argue that these works are compelling representations of the ways in which rivers have become sites of contestation between colonial and decolonial forces in Central America.

Keywords: rivers, Central America, Arturo Arias, Claribel Alegria, Mario Bencastro, Oscar Torres, *Voces incoentes*, Sumpul River

Adrian Taylor Kane is a Professor of Spanish at Boise State University. He is the author of *Central American Avant-Garde Narrative: Literary Innovation and Cultural Change* (Amherst: Cambria, 2014) and editor of *The Natural World in Latin American Literatures: Ecocritical Essays on Twentieth-Century Writings* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010). His areas of research include Central American literature and Latin American environmental literature. He holds a Ph.D. in Spanish from the University of California, Riverside.

UWE LÜBKEN

Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU), Germany
Guest Editor

Uwe Lübken is professor of American history at Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich. He has held teaching and research positions at the universities of Cologne, Munich, Münster and at the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. His publications include a prize-winning book on the US perception of the National Socialist threat to Latin America and several edited volumes, special issues, and articles on (American) transnational history and the history of natural hazards and catastrophes. He has published a history of flooding of the Ohio River (2014) and co-edited volumes on urban fires (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), the management of natural resources (Berghahn Books, 2014) and city-river relations (Pittsburgh University Press, 2016). His current work explores the intersections of mobilities and the environment.

T.S. MCMILLIN

Oberlin College, USA

“Strangers Still More Strange”: The Meaning of Rivers Bedeviled

Steamboats transformed rivers in the nineteenth-century United States, providing what many people considered a kind of mastery over nature. In literature from the period, while most writers marveled at or exulted in that perceived mastery, some questioned the origins

of the reputed conquest. Did it result from human ingenuity? divine inspiration? a deal with the devil? Amid all the fog, smoke, and other vapors associated with the steamboat, vivid stories, compelling dramas, and comic searches for meaning took shape, and no literary work captured the tension informing, uncertainty surrounding, and ramifications emerging from this instance of technological innovation as powerfully as *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (1857). Herman Melville's last novel, *The Confidence-Man* explores the author's notion that "Books of fiction" can perhaps give readers more truth, "more reality, than real life can show." Literature, for Melville, was an opportunity to reconsider the nature of things and our means of understanding that nature. In *The Confidence-Man*, he presented readers with a different view of the Mississippi River and the curious vessels working its waters. The novel imagined The Devil himself to be on board the steamboat, imperiling the soul of America.

Keywords: Mississippi River, steamboat, Herman Melville, literature and interpretation

T.S. McMillin is the author of *The Meaning of Rivers: Flow & Reflection in American Literature* (University of Iowa Press, 2011) and *Our Preposterous Use of Literature: Emerson & the Nature of Reading* (University of Illinois Press, 2000). He has published numerous articles on the Transcendentalists, including "Beauty Meets Beast: Emerson's English Traits," essays on Thoreau and Emerson in the MLA's "Approaches to Teaching" series, and "The Discipline of Abandonment: Emersonian Properties of Transdisciplinarity & the Nature of Method." Recent writings and photo-essays on the Los Angeles River have appeared in a variety of journals and collected volumes, and he is at present completing a digital book on the river.

EUNICE NODARI AND MARCOS GERHARDT

*Federal University of Santa Catarina, UFSC, Brazil
and University of Passo Fundo, UPF, Brazil*

The Uruguay River: A Permeable Border in South America

The Uruguay River basin in South America has held a social, cultural, environmental, and economic relevance for many centuries. The river flows for about two-thousand kilometers, linked to an important remnant of native forest, the Selva Misionera in Argentina, and to a Brazilian conservation unit for biodiversity, the Turvo State Park. The Uruguay River is fed by several other important rivers, forming a basin region in which thousands of people live and work. The history of the Uruguay River is intensively linked to the permeable borders between Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay where different social groups circulated in diverse historical time periods. Forests along the river played a very important role with emphasis on the extraction and trade of yerba mate (*Ilex paraguayensis*, Saint-Hilaire), a forest product widely consumed in southern America, and also the timber extraction from native forests, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a result, a profound socio-environmental

transformation took place with the reconstruction of regional landscapes shaped by the Uruguay River basin.

Keywords: biodiversity, forests, Uruguay River, parks, landscapes

Eunice Nodari holds a master's degree in European history from the University of California at Davis, and PhD in history at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. She is a full professor at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil, where she develops teaching, research and advising students in the Graduate Programs of History and Interdisciplinary Humanities. She was a visiting researcher at the Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis at Stanford University (2015–2016) and a Fellow Researcher at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (2019–2020). Since 2010 she has been a fellow researcher in productivity at the National Research Council, Brazil. She is the coordinator of the Laboratory of Immigration, Migration and Environmental History (www.labimha.ufsc.br). She has published in specialized journals, edited collections, book chapters, and book monographs on nature and society in southern Brazil and Argentina. Her main research interests are in global environmental history, migration studies, forest and biodiversity and environmental disasters.

Marcos Gerhardt (<http://gerhardt.pro.br>) holds a master's degree in History from the Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Brazil and PhD in History at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil. Currently, he is an associate professor and researcher at History Graduate Program in the Universidade de Passo Fundo, Brazil, and a member of the Laboratory of Immigration, Migration and Environmental History (www.labimha.ufsc.br). He has teaching experience and publications in history, with emphasis on environmental history, forest conservation and migration

DOROTHY ZEISLER-VRALSTED

Eastern Washington University, USA

**Working Lives on the Mississippi and Volga Rivers
Nineteenth-Century Perspectives**

Throughout the nineteenth century, major rivers assumed multiple roles for emergent nation-states of the western world. The Thames in England, the Seine in France, and the Rhine in Germany all helped to fuel a growing sense of national identity. Offering a sense of unity and uniqueness, these rivers were enlisted by poets, artists, and writers to celebrate their country's strengths and aesthetic appeal. The Mississippi and Volga Rivers were no exceptions to this riverine evolution. At the same time, however, less vocal populations experienced the rivers differently. To African Americans—enslaved and free—laboring on the Mississippi offered a freedom of movement unknown to the land-bound. While employed on steamships, African Americans escaped vigilant overseers and the possibility of escaping bondage. Still, the work

was demanding and relentless. To the burlaki, the Volga was taskmaster and nurturer. For both groups, laboring on the rivers resulted in connections that were immediate, intimate, exacting, often tedious and brutal, concomitant with marginalized lives, consigned to society's fringe. Still, the lives shaped by working on these rivers, produced rich cultures revealing alternative riverine histories. In these histories, the rivers possessed an agency, enshrining the ambiguity of the human relationship with the environment; a complexity often missing in the national narratives.

Keywords: rivers, labor, race, barge hauler, African American

Dorothy Zeisler-Vralsted is Professor Emeritus of International Affairs at Eastern Washington University where she taught classes on modernization and nature, the contemporary politics of water, and modernization and Indigenous peoples. A recipient of two Fulbright awards, her research focuses on water history with publications on the historical development of major river systems, water use in the American West, and the intersection of race, gender and the environment. Her most recent publication is *Rivers, Memory and Nation- Building: A History of the Volga and Mississippi Rivers* (Berghahn Books, 2014). Her research has led to invited lectures in Australia, Armenia, Russia, United Arab Emirates and the US. She is currently under contract for two future publications, *African Americans and the Mississippi River: Race, History and the Environment* and an anthology of primary and secondary sources on water and human societies.

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