

Review | EW

of International American Studies

OCEANS APART: IN SEARCH OF NEW WOR(L)DS

guest-edited by
Agnieszka Woźniakowska
and Anna Łakowicz-Dopiera

ISSN 1991-2773

RIAS Vol. 7, Spring-Summer № 1/2014

Review of International American Studies
Revue d'Études Américaines Internationales
RIAS Vol. 7, Spring–Summer № 1/2014
ISSN 1991–2773

OCEANS APART: IN SEARCH OF NEW WOR(L)DS

guest-edited by
Agnieszka Woźniakowska
and Anna Łakowicz-Dopiera



EDITORS

Editor-in-Chief: Cyraina Johnson-Roullier
Associate Editors: Paweł Jędrzejko, Giorgio Mariani, György 'George' Tóth
Senior copyeditor: Meghan McKinney

TYPOGRAPHIC DESIGN Hanna Traczyk / M-Studio s. c.

ISSN 1991-2773

PUBLICATION REALIZED BY



University of Silesia Press in Katowice
 ul. Bankowa 12b
 40-007 Katowice
 Poland

EDITORIAL BOARD

Amy Kaplan, Maureen Montgomery, Enikő Bollobás, Ulf Hannerz, Sun Youzhong, Jørn Brøndal, Amanda Lagerkvist, Christopher Saunders, Theo D'Haen, Liam Kennedy, Sieglinde Lemke, Ian Tyrell, Helmbrecht Breinig, Rosario Faraudo, Djelal Kadir, Anders Olsson.

ABOUT RIAS

Review of International American Studies (RIAS) is the double-blind peer-reviewed, electronic/print-on-demand journal of the International American Studies Association, a worldwide, independent, non-governmental association of American Studies. RIAS serves as agora for the global network of international scholars, teachers, and students of America as a hemispheric and global phenomenon. RIAS is published twice a year: Fall-Winter and Spring-Summer by IASA. RIAS is available in the Open Access Gold formula and is financed from the Association's annual dues as specified in the 'Membership' section of the Association's website. All topical manuscripts should be directed to the RIAS Editors. General correspondence and matters concerning the functioning of RIAS should be addressed to RIAS Editor-in-Chief.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Cyraina Johnson-Roullier	Postal address
University of Notre Dame	Department of English
260 Decio Faculty Hall	356 O'Shaughnessy
(001) 574-631-7069	Notre Dame, IN 46556
johnson.64@nd.edu	USA

HARD COPIES e-mail your order to johnson.64@nd.edu

WEBSITE www.rias-journal.org

COVER ART Mariusz Bartosik—'In Search of New Wor(l)ds'

CATALOGUING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

America—Civilization.
 America—American literature
 America—Intellectual life
 Western Hemisphere—Study and teaching (Higher)

OCEANS APART: IN SEARCH OF NEW WOR(L)DS

ED/
NOTE

Paweł Jędrzejko
RIAS Associate Editor

5 NEW WOR(L)DS

INTRO

Anna Łakowicz-Dopiera and Agnieszka Woźniakowska

7 INTRODUCTION

FEATU
RES

Regina Schober

9 THE WORLD WIDE SEA:

Oceanic Metaphors, Concepts of Knowledge
and Transnational America in the Information Age

Alicja Bemben

35 HISTORY AS AN OCEAN

Jolanta Szymkowska-Bartyzel

51 FROM THE AMERICAN WILD WEST TO BOJSZOWY:

Józef Kłyk's Westerns as Social Rituals

Justyna Fruzińska

73 THE YOUNG MEN AND THE SEA

Sea/Ocean as a Space of Maturation?

Pilar Martínez Benedí

85 REVOLVING THE VORTEX;

or, Working through Trauma at Sea

Valeria Gennero

105 PEARL S. BUCK

and the Forgotten Holocaust of the Two-Ocean War

Jacek Mydla

117 UNITED BY THE OCEAN?

The Romantic Conan Doyle
and the Transatlantic Sherlock Holmes

Hitomi Nabae

131 CREOLIZATION

in Lafcadio Hearn's New Orleans
and Martinique Writings

Claudia Ioana Doroholschi

151 THE 'OCEANIC FEELING'

in Stephen Crane's *The Open Boat*
and S.T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

163 ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

171 RIAS EDITORIAL POLICY/STYLESHEET

NEW WOR(L)DS

Perhaps the most striking feature of the International American Studies Association is that since its inception our Organization has been invariably true to its creed. Indeed, the word *international* in our name is a dual attribute. On the one hand, the *Association's* members are a community of scholars representing all inhabited continents of the world. On the other, the *Studies* carried out by IASA's academic community address questions transgressing geographical thresholds and political borders. Multinational, multiethnic and multicultural, our *International Association*, dedicated to the development of *International Studies of the Americas*, has developed a unique sensitivity to *polyphony*: the melody of multilingual narratives, the blending of diverse voices, the harmony of minds and hearts celebrating the richness of their individual cultural legacies reverberating in an open, friendly conversation.

Over the years, IASA has managed to steer its course (or, more specifically, its *three* courses: transatlantic, transpacific and hemispheric), thereby effectively decentralizing American Studies, a discipline whose name has long been considered to be an alternative label to US Studies—or would predominantly be associated with research whose central point of reference would be the United States of America. Respecting and appreciating the unquestionable importance of the US as the donor of cultural values and a major political player in the international arena, we pay equally careful attention to the cultures of Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, the Caribbean, Polynesia and other regions of the dual Continent. We re-visit its cultures paying attention to the entire compass

Paweł Jędrzejko
RIAS Associate Editor
University of Silesia
in Katowice
Poland

of musical tones, which, sometimes, become audible only when listened to from a distance. Methodologically, we have done away with the concept of the center, replacing it with the concept of a constantly shifting perspective: therefore we seem to find it easier to watch out for the inertia of the margin. Having deconstructed the binary opposition, in our studies we systematically empower both the the 'former margin' and the 'former center'—and we have been doing so without preference, without prejudice. And since 'words' have always-already been responsible for our conceptualization(s) of 'worlds', we have resolved to systematically energize a variety of concurrent quests for 'new words' which would then enter into dynamic relations with the 'old ones'. Listening and learning, we constantly re-visit the once (seemingly) 'familiar' Americas, appreciating their inexhaustible potential of meaning: pulsing with life, the Americas refuse to be frozen in the frame of one language, one methodology or one perspective. And so do our International American Studies. The present issue, guest-edited by our generous friends and colleagues—Agnieszka Woźniakowska from the University of Silesia in Katowice and Anna Łakowicz-Dopiera representing the University of Szczecin—testifies to the efficiency of IASA's intellectual practice.

Paweł Jędrzejko
RIAS Associate Editor

INTRODUCTION

For three summer days in August 2013 the *International American Studies Association* managed to attract scholars of all continents to travel to a Polish harbor town—Szczecin—to contribute to the discussions on America(s) separated from other continents by two oceans. The title ‘Oceans Apart’ turned out to be an intellectual provocation which proved that the oceanic separateness was illusory as the discussions oscillated around the topics which were recognized and resonant in distant parts of the world. As the organizers intended, the speakers searched for new words to give meanings to old texts. The works of authors such as Herman Melville, Pearl Buck, Jack London, or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle inspired scholars to ask questions pertaining to the complexity of human nature and served as referential points in debates on other more modern texts. The old problems of exclusion, prejudice or stereotyping found new exemplification both in literature and in geopolitical observations. The oceanic metaphors and associations triggered a wide range of topics and multiple ways of interpreting them, thus proving that the oceans connect rather than divide people.

The present issue addresses topics related to the notion of the ocean in two ways: those which concern issues outside of the world of literature and those which refer to specific literary texts.

The first paper selected for this issue has been written by Regina Schober and is entitled ‘The World Wide Sea—Oceanic Metaphors, Concepts of Knowledge, and Transnational America in the Information Age’. For this article, Professor Schober received the 2013 Emory

Anna Łakowicz-Dopiera
University of Szczecin
Poland
and
Agnieszka Woźniakowska
University of Silesia
in Katowice
Poland

Elliot Award, the award granted to an outstanding paper submitted for an IASA conference. The second text, 'History as an ocean' written by Alicja Bemben, investigates the question of what history is and it discusses the relation between history and literature. It is followed by Jolanta Szymkowska's text 'From the American Wild West to Bojszowy: Józef Kłyk's Westerns as Social Rituals' in which the author examines the extent to which the American film genre influenced the western production of Silesian amateur director, and discusses the ritual purposes of Józef Kłyk's productions.

The three articles are followed by papers in which the ocean metaphor is directly related to literary texts. Thus Justyna Fruzińska discusses the process of maturation of young men in relation to three fictional characters: Jack London's Humphrey Van Weyden in *The Sea Wolf*, Herman Melville's Captain Amasa Delano from 'Benito Cereno' and eponymous Billy Budd, and their experiences on the sea. Pilar Martínez Benedí, in 'Revolving the Vortex; or, Working through Trauma at Sea' also addresses Hermann Melville's work, *Moby Dick*, by attempting to examine relationship between a sea-vortex and the experience of working through trauma. Jacek Mydla's 'United by the Ocean? The Romantic Conan Doyle and the Transatlantic Sherlock Holmes' focuses on how the metaphor of the ocean/water functions in Doyle's story 'The Five Orange Pips'. Valeria Gennero's text 'Pearl S. Buck and the Forgotten Holocaust of the Two-Ocean War' discusses the notions of 'national identity' and 'gendered violence' in the context of Buck's novel *Dragon Seed*. Hitomi Nabae examines the representation of Creole culture in Lafcadio Hearn's writings. Last, but not least, in the final article Claudia Ioana Doroholschi offers a comparative study of Stephen Crane's *The Open Boat* and S.T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Anna Łakowicz-Dopiera
Agnieszka Woźniakowska

THE WORLD WIDE SEA-

Concepts of Knowledge, and Transnational America in the Information Age

‘It is an ocean of subtile intelligences,’ Henry David Thoreau quotes Confucius to illustrate that, in this world, we are never truly alone but always surrounded by the thoughts of our fellow men, both in the present and the past. He employs the metaphor of the ocean to allude to the elusive yet seemingly endless assemblage of knowledge, experience, and information contained within the universe and forming ‘the perennial source of our life’ (Thoreau, 1854: 215). Herman Melville, in *Moby Dick*, also connects images of the ocean’s wide open spaces with epistemological considerations: ‘I have swam through libraries and sailed through oceans’ (Melville, 1851: 116), Ishmael declares, comparing the demanding quest for knowledge to floating through the boundless widths of the sea. Elizabeth Schultz thus considers Ishmael’s epistemological journey a quest ‘that seeks knowledge from multiple sources and cultures regarding whales and their lives, one that affirms the value of a continued search for knowledge of all life’ (Schultz, 2001: 207). The ocean, for Melville’s narrator, is like an (un)intelligible medium composed of diverse and often contradictory sources. Ishmael’s futile struggle for attaining knowledge challenges notions of the sea as productive and integrative space, instead rendering it a threatening, overwhelming, and potentially destructive system. A more reciprocal notion of knowledge is suggested in Elizabeth Bishop’s poem ‘At the Fishhouses’, according to which the sea ‘is like what we imagine knowledge to be, / dark, salt, clear, moving, utterly free, / drawn from the cold hard mouth /

Regina Schober
University of Mannheim
Germany

of the world, derived from the rocky breasts / forever, flowing and drawn' (Bishop, 1983: 78–82). For Bishop, the ocean metaphor renders knowledge a concrete, material entity with which we enter a reciprocal heuristic exchange. Knowledge derives its information from constant interaction with the material world, yet it also remains elusive in its constant ephemeral to and fro. Carole K. Doreski notes that the sea, in this poem, figures as a 'powerful and ambitious metaphor that postulates knowing as a fluid, expressive, but chaotic, absorptive, and formless process expressed by the modifiers of "knowledge," "dark, salt, clear, moving, utterly free"' (Doreski, 1993: 67). The ocean, accordingly, represents the continuous yet ultimately futile aspiration towards transcendence, since 'to expect wisdom or nourishment from the known but imaginatively dead shore-world is an error, but to step from it into the dark, salt, flowing sea is to be a transcendentalist, and suicidal' (68). Knowledge, in Bishop's metaphorical vision, is both potentially accessible to the searching self and forever disclosed due to its impenetrable depths.¹

The ocean has frequently been related to human curiosity as well as to anxiety towards (yet) unknown terrains, reflecting the restless desire to travel, explore, and seek the 'truth'. Not surprisingly, therefore, the ocean has figured as one of the leading metaphors for the Internet, conceptualized as the mythical space in which knowledge is stored, generated, and from which it emerges.² Whether we navigate or surf on the World Wide Web, whether we immerse in data flows or get involved in swarm intelligence, sea imagery has been central in imagining the Internet from its inception. The ocean, however, is not the only metaphor for the vast arrays of knowledge and information that constitute the Internet. William Gibson's coinage of the term 'cyberspace' in his novel *Neuromancer* (1984), referring to a system of interconnected

1 Other literary engagements with the ocean or water that have a decidedly epistemological focus include, to name only a few, Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Old Man and the Sea* (1951), Adrienne Rich's poems 'Diving into the Wreck' (1972) and 'Solfeggietto' (1985–88), Walt Whitman's poem 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry' (1856, 1881) and Kurt Vonnegut's novels *Cat's Cradle* (1963) and *Galápagos* (1985).

2 See Woiskunski, 2001; Gehring, 2004; Tokar, 2009.

computers, regard the Internet in analogy to the exploration of hitherto unknown territories in the context of space missions. Other metaphorical realms such as 'data highway', 'global village' or 'network' emphasize the accelerated dynamics of flow and exchange that characterize the Information Age. What, then, are the particular cultural implications of conceptualizing the Internet in terms of the ocean metaphor? Which features of the Internet does this semantic realm highlight in the broader context of an 'American epistemology'?

According to Eva Gehring, the ocean paradigmatically embodies the sublime, the confrontation of the subject with an overwhelming experience. Like the ocean, Gehring argues, the Internet comprising the dichotomy of chaos and order, of irrationality and rationality, of transcendence and empiricism, of nature and culture, challenges the subject through its technological complexity.³ In contrast to other Internet metaphors that give preference to more technological-futuristic implications, the ocean metaphor evokes a deep-seated anthropological desire to connect to an often overwhelming environment. What is more, the ocean, as an open and infinitely complex ecosystem, emphasizes a view of the Internet as a global, transformative, and organic microcosm. Like outer space, the ocean is open, seemingly infinite, and more or less shapeless. Yet, it is a 'worldly' cosmos, in that it contains a rich and highly diverse ecosystem of organisms which interact, form associations, and depend on each other. Because of its structure as vibrant 'Lebensraum' below the surface, the ocean has figured as an archetype for the mysterious capacity of human creativity and the powers of the subconscious. It is this quality of the ocean as containing deep secrets and potentially hidden truths which has made it a favorable metaphor for the process of seeking, finding, and generating knowledge.

Yet, the ocean can also evoke anxieties. Water can be both enabler and threat to life, creativity, and growth. As Haskell Springer notes, water can be 'the joiner of human beings' and, at the same time, it can be 'the separator, the border, the dangerous boundary' (Springer, 1995: 1). The ocean's highly conflicting implications

3 See Gehring, 2004: 134

for human life and creativity as both utopian and dystopian realm have rendered the ocean an intriguing imaginary space for writers and readers, especially in the United States. As Klaus Benesch notes, especially in America, 'seascapes continued to provide a foil for various national, political, and philosophical projections' (Benesch, 2004: 10). Making an endless promise of discovery, progress, and transformation, the sea journey represents an American belief in mobility, self-renewal, and liberation.⁴ Springer declares:

Our receptiveness to sea literature rests in part on our sympathetic response to this archetypal journey, speaking as it does to truths that often transcend differences of culture and of gender. In this voyage-centered literature the sea assumes a double role: it is the field of action on which the separation and transformation are played out, and it is the thing itself, the heart of mysterious knowledge to which the protagonists aspire and with which they return. (Springer, 1995: 16)

The ocean's double function as 'field of action' and 'thing itself', however alluring it may be for US narratives of transcendental journeys, expresses a more universal, even global, and historically unceasing human desire to both find and utilize knowledge in the endless floods of experience and external signaling.

In my essay, I will look at a moment in history in which information and knowledge have attained a status that by far exceeds former ascriptions. I will explore the cultural functions of the ocean metaphor in relation to conceptions of knowledge, information, and experience in what Manuel Castells has called the 'Information Age' or the 'Network Society' (Castells, 2010). Although societies have always relied on information and knowledge for their communication, production, and wealth, the current age, according to Castells, is particularly determined by the complex flows of information. He sees the main reasons for this paradigm shift in a 'technological revolution, centered around information technologies, [which] began to reshape, at accelerated pace, the material basis of society' (Castells, 2010: 1). Secondly, Castells adds, '[e]conomies throughout the world have become globally interdependent, introducing a new form of relationship between economy, state, and society, in a system of variable geometry' (1).

4 See Springer, 1995: 21.

Against the backdrop of generally shifting political and economic relations towards more decentralized and diversified power structures, he calls this world a 'world of global flows of wealth, power, and images' in which 'the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental source of social meaning' (3). However, Castells emphasizes that the emergence of new digital technology alone has not created this shift towards informationalism but that, rather, it 'originated and diffused, not by accident, in an historical period of the global restructuring of capitalism, for which it was an essential tool' (13). As a result, information constitutes the 'core ontology' of our social, economic, and political patterns. This 'information technology paradigm' is so pervasive, Castells argues, since the new technologies exceedingly act on information, they pervade all processes of individual and collective existence, and they display a high level of flexibility in line with the networking logic of globalization and an increasing degree of technological convergence (70–71).

The correlating emergence between an information society and a global society has far-reaching implications both for the US' status as a nation state and for individual self-conceptions. Identity, whether national or personal, has not only, as Castells claims, become increasingly elusive, but, in fact, notions of what it means to be human have fundamentally changed towards posthumanist conceptions of the self as a node in a larger network of human and non-human agencies. 'In changing our understanding of the external world', Luciano Floridi remarks in relation to information and communication technologies, 'they also modified our conception of who we are' (Floridi, 2010: 8). The more we are influenced and dependent on information technology, the more we become aware of the fact that 'we are not standalone entities, but rather interconnected informational organisms or *inforgs*, sharing with biological agents and engineered artefacts a global environment ultimately made of information, the infosphere' (9). What Floridi calls 'inforg', in extending Donna Haraway's concept of the cyborg as a radically hybrid self⁵, is a notion of the self as fundamentally 'networked'. According to Katherine Hayles,

5 See Haraway, 1985,

such a posthumanist view does not mean to fall back on dystopian notions of the human as a disembodied cluster of information that is completely determined by technology but, rather, to assume a harmonious synthesis in which humans have an increased awareness of their interconnectedness with their (technological, biological, ecological) environment:

No longer is human will seen as the source from which emanates the mastery necessary to dominate and control the environment. Rather, the distributed cognition of the emergent human subject correlates with [...] the distributed cognitive system as a whole, in which 'thinking' is done by both human and nonhuman actors. [...] To conceptualize the human in these terms is not to imperil human survival but is precisely to enhance it, for the more we understand the flexible, adaptive structures that coordinate our environments and the metaphors that we ourselves are, the better we can fashion images of ourselves that accurately reflect the complex interplays that ultimately make the entire world one system. (Hayles, 1999: 290)

What is interesting in both Floridi's and Hayles' descriptions of a more distributed notion of identity, is that they employ semantics of ecology, environment, and, in Hayles' optimistic vision, even survival. To acknowledge that agency has become (or has always been) to a certain extent decentralized, is regarded as a key factor in understanding complex environments as a whole and, so it implicitly reads, to being able to preserve them. (Ironically, in making claims for the perspective of complexity, especially Hayles cannot evade an anthropocentric view altogether, ascribing the human the ultimate capacity and responsibility to 'understand' and act accordingly.) Informational and environmental complexity, so it seems, are conceived of in similar ways: they both form the backdrop to a (re)contextualization of human agency.

On the level of national identity, there have been similar tendencies towards adopting a decentralized perspective. In the course of the recent 'transnational turn', America's position in the world has been regarded less in terms of exceptionalist views of its status as 'world power', but rather in the context of its global interconnectedness, not only economically, but also in terms of geopolitics, communication, and ecology. As a 'symptom of massive transformation in the world political economy', transnational American Studies have invested in reconceptualizing America's

position in a world in which state sovereignty is becoming increasingly instable (Pease, 2011: 7–9). Since the ‘transnational prevents the closure of the nation’ (5), transnational perspectives have turned away from visions of America ‘as exempt and exceptional and relocate it as defined by and constitutive of the postnational forces of globalization, whose primary commitments evade and transcend the affective and political demands made by the nation-state on people who are now citizens of the world’ (17).

Transnational American Studies pose many questions, of which Donald Pease’s contestation that concepts of America as decentralized node in a global environment lead to new forms of American exceptionalism is only one. A major problem in regarding America as interconnected node in a transnational network is that networks are by no means democratic but that they have their own power laws. As network scientist Albert-László Barabási has demonstrated, networks are complex figurations that display emergent properties of self-organization and follow what he calls ‘power laws’ based on the network’s growth and preferential attachment: ‘No matter how large and complex a network becomes, as long as preferential attachment and growth are present, it will maintain its hub-dominated scale-free topology’ (Barabási, 2002: 91). This means that decentralized agency does not necessarily lead to equally distributed power relations, but certain nodes (hubs) may become stronger than others through ‘rich get richer’ processes. Pease goes so far as to say that transnational networks do not create equality but, on the contrary, ‘[t]he importance of interconnected networks of finance, goods, labor, and peoples changed the definition of sovereignty to mean the monopoly of control over networks of interconnectivity’ (Pease, 2011: 8).

In a globalized world, the United States undoubtedly still plays the role of a hub that governs the flows of information not only through providing technological and economic infrastructure but also in terms of maintaining an undeniable supremacy in the production of mainstream popular culture. Globalization, so claims Ulfried Reichardt, is therefore often perceived as being equivalent with ‘Americanization’. However, Reichardt notes that such a cultural imperialist perspective is too simplistic in ignoring both the pluralistic and therefore inherently global nature of American popular culture

and the highly creative processes of transnational hybridization.⁶ Even if the US represents a cultural hub in the transnational networks of media, the contents that circulate in these networks are increasingly being recontextualized and reappropriated on a local level (Reichardt, 2010: 106).

The Internet, as the world's most visible system of interconnection, may serve as an example of a technology that has been reappropriated in a global context. Originally developed by the US Department of Defense in the 1960s, the Internet has become a global network that has been popularized for individual and business users from (theoretically) all over the world. According to Janet Abbate, the Internet's global expansion was not a process of 'translating' an American model to other cultural contexts but rather operated on the inherent decentralized logic of the network itself:

Though the Internet originated in the United States, it did not simply spread from the United States to the rest of the world. Rather, its global reach resulted from the convergence of many streams of network development. Starting in the 1970s, many other nations built large data networks, which were shaped by their local cultures and which often served as agents and symbols of economic development and national sovereignty. The question was not whether these countries would adopt an 'American' technology; it was whether and how they would connect their existing national or private networks to the Internet. (Abbate, 1999: 208-209)

Yet, there have always been international concerns over the United States' dominance of the Internet, relating principally to the top-level domains which were originally exclusively under American control or to the linguistic supremacy of English as the 'native language' of the Internet (211-212). 'The Internet, as a medium of instantaneous communication', Abbate thus holds, 'might overcome geographic distance, but it cannot simply erase political or social differences' (212). As Martin Dodge and Rob Kitchin argue in their study on cultural mappings of cyberspace, the Internet has fostered conflicting narratives:

6 See Reichardt, 2010: 103-104.

Cyberspace, for some, disrupts these geometries of power by changing the socio-spatial basis on which they are formed and sustained. In these cases, cyberspace creates either utopian spaces of individual freedom or dystopian futures of 'big brother' with cyberspace operating as a giant panopticon (sic!). For others, cyberspace merely reinforces and deepens current geometries, providing a medium through which hegemony is further reproduced. (Dodge and Kitchin, 2001: 37)

Based on Barabási's theory of power laws in scale-free networks, one could even argue that existing power structures are reinforced and enhanced on the Internet. As recent revelations concerning the National Security Agency's global mass spying activities have shown, the notion of (US) power in seemingly democratic communication networks may have to be reconsidered. Not only are the main software and Internet companies such as Google, Facebook, and Twitter based in the United States, but also the technical infrastructure of global communication and information usage seems to be a lot more controlled by the American government than anyone (including the American public or large parts of the officials) would have assumed. What may hold true for culture, namely, that the local and the global are in a relatively open relationship of mutual exchange, is not necessarily the case for information which is to a much larger extent amenable to centralized control and misuse. Information, paradoxically, is both more impersonal (it needs human and cultural contextualization in order to become meaningful knowledge) and at the same time more politically charged. Especially in an age in which 'big data' are rapidly gaining (economic and political) relevance, not only the storage but also control, access, and usage of accumulating information increasingly becomes a question of power in which the United States have shown, once again, that they are keen on retaining their position as 'global player'.

In the following analysis, I aim to examine how and to what effect the Internet has been portrayed as 'an ocean of knowledge'. I thus want to investigate the heuristic potential of the ocean metaphor for cultural projections and negotiations of epistemological concerns in the digital age. In doing so, I rely on a notion of the Internet as a particularly 'American technology', representing values that have traditionally been associated with American beliefs and principles, such as a decentralized network-logic,

Regina Schober
University of Mannheim
Germany

spatial expansion, and pluralistic forms of informal association.⁷ In this regard, the ocean metaphor bears certain implications for (re)considering the Internet not only in the wider context of a culture of knowledge but also in relation to America's ongoing desire to connect, transform, and transcend boundaries of space, origin, and physicality. In the following analysis, I will examine both cultural projections of the 'Internet as ocean' as well as creative negotiations of sea imagery in which the Internet functions as medium and/or material. In considering these two levels of critical engagement with the Internet-ocean nexus, I intend to take into account their double function as both 'epistemological concept' and as 'creative space'. I thus attempt to review and connect debates on American digital culture, transnationalism, and posthumanism as complementary processes involved in America's ongoing project of navigating the boundaries of seemingly endless spaces.

In what follows, I will take a critical look at a selection of current media examples in which water/sea imagery is employed in relation to or as a metaphor for information and knowledge or the lack thereof. I will begin my analysis with visual representations and abstractions of information in the form of infographics that rely on the heuristic model of the sea metaphor for conceptualizing aspects of the Information Age. In a second step, I will turn to the experimental film project *Life in a Day*. The production principle of this participatory film collage is programmatic, since the 'crowdsourcing' of film footage reflects the metaphorical function of the numerous water references that self-reflexively comment on the centrality of an 'open access' information culture. A radically critical counterexample of the Information Age, Dan Chaon's novel *Await Your Reply*, will subsequently be discussed.

7 America has traditionally been regarded as a network at least since the nineteenth century, when Alexis de Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America*, depicts America's receptiveness for democratic structures in a coexistence of unity and diversity, a horizontal distribution of power, and a society built on flexible as well as reconfiguring informal associations. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri ascribe to the early nineteenth century the birth of what they call 'Empire', a new form of global sovereignty built on 'a democratic interaction of powers linked together in networks' (161). Such positive notions of 'America as network', however, are counteracted by more critical accounts of America as imperialist network which totalizes global culture, economy, and societies like a spreading virus.

The novel creates a dystopian view of identity loss and annihilated agency in a digitalized world that is deeply trapped in the logic of cybercrime and identity theft. Water, in this novel, only occurs in transfigured states; it has either vanished or is frozen. In its somber reflection on (the limits of) human responsibility, the novel poses central questions about the relationship between the ecological, technological, and epistemological resources of our increasingly posthuman world. I will conclude with a brief reference to Google's recent underwater mapping project *Sea View*, discussing some of its implications in view of the suggestive tangents between the two major global ecologies that will determine the future of (post-)humanity, the ocean, and the 'seas of knowledge'.

What if the Internet were an ocean? This question has motivated Athanassios Danoglidis' recent infographic depicting selected features of the Internet in terms of iconic and symbolic visual and textual data. The visualization represents a map that portrays the Internet as a spatialized map that resembles the ecosystem of the ocean. In this two-dimensional illustration, the usually 'hidden' depths of the ocean become surface. The ecosystem of the ocean contains not only 'organic' species such as fish, or coral reefs, but also technology. Vessels of various sizes and shapes inhabit the sea just as 'naturally' as sea animals and vegetation. Yet, nature and technology do not intermingle but inhabit different spheres: the deep sea is inhabited by swarms of fish, which symbolize the collective user activity of social media platforms such as Youtube and Facebook, while the more shallow waters provide official routes on which various forms of formalized internet traffic take place, both legal and illegal. The Internet is conceived of as a creative, fluid space in which innumerable different applications, institutions, and collectives intersect in what seems like a shared zone of communal experience. At the same time it is being displayed as a 'pool of sharks' in which data hackers, sex traffic, and data kraken operate underneath the more or less powerless control of data protection agencies.

This infographic does not only display certain features of the Internet but, as its name suggests, it sets out to explain it by structuring the information into a form of visual narrative. The appeal of infographics is that the visual narrative spatially

organizes and reduces the complexities of an abstract phenomenon. Infographics portion information into manageable segments and therefore help to process otherwise perplexing information loads.⁸ The elusive question of what the complex figuration of the Internet actually represents is answered through a metaphorical restructuring of information. Through iconic and spatial narrativization, the infographic turns bodiless meta-information into relevant and easily accessible knowledge. The ocean presents a suitable metaphor for this particular visualization, since it allows showing the diversity of different agents and participants that constitute the ecosystem of knowledge as well as representing hierarchies, dynamics of flow, and spatially distributed, yet connected, sites of agency. Still, the Internet is presented as a map in which flow is primarily suggested but not actually performed. In its immobile materiality, the infographic first and foremost provides a geographical map that discloses the loose coherence of a lively yet mostly opaque community. In presenting the Internet as a 'basin of information' and simultaneously offering meta-information to 'navigate the vast amounts of data presented to us' (Lankow and Ritchie, 2012: 12), the visualization thus self-reflexively constitutes the lighthouse that helps to 'travel through' the manifold layers encountered in the ocean of information. According to its implied narrative, the Internet displays an alternative territory, working in a mythical realm usually disclosed to the human eye yet developing its creative power from within the ominous depths of free floating agencies. The function of this playful visualization is to transform the invisible into the visible, to map the hitherto unknown regions of the techno-cognitive underworlds with its pluralistic currents.

Other visualizations of the Internet draw on less on concrete visual images but employ more abstract patterns to suggest connections between complex data. In Paul Butler's 'Visualizing Friendships' (2010), for example, global social interactions of Facebook are reduced to conceptual patterns drawn from statistical data. The visualization, however, generates an embodied materiality of its own sort. Against a dark blue background, a carcass of the world

8 See Liebig, 1999: 60.

map emerges through white lines that suggest social network connectivity on a global scale. When crossing the oceans, the thin white lines submerge within the corporate color of Facebook's navy blue, infusing the ocean's deep, resourceful, and ultimately creative space. The light blue connections thus evoke the material counterpart of submarine communication cables while at the same time suggesting the technological transcendence of such material connections. The visualization becomes an intricate texture of material colors, shapes, and forms, floating over the oceans of the global map like interacting flickerings of the sea. Social networking, this visualization seems to suggest, relies on and, in turn, constitutes the essential and archaic source of creativity and of life itself.

Produced by one of Facebook's own employees, the map optimistically presents virtual interconnectedness as an explicitly global project in which America, as one of the island-hubs, floats in the vast blue ocean of transnational communication and knowledge. However, not only does this map suggest a sense of universal online community, but it also reveals the gaps, edges, and power centers of the virtual world. While some parts of the globe, mainly the Western hemisphere as well as some parts of Asia and Australia, display a high density of Facebook connectivity, other parts of the world, most notably perhaps Russia and China, are excluded from this seemingly shared social realm. Internet platforms such as Facebook may be global networks, but they are not democratic in the sense of providing a universal realm of experience, nor do they necessarily transcend traditional boundaries and power relations. In contrast to Danoglidis' 'Internet as ocean' metaphor, Butler's visualization does not give any information about the organization and content of social networking. Neither does it represent the Internet as an ocean of agencies. Instead, the ocean represents the transcendent space in which global communities merge into one source of communication. Paradoxically, however, the visualization does not even emphasize human interaction, but rather suggests a vision of global interconnectedness as essential, ecological, and globally sustainable in which the self liquefies in abstract spatial flows of global communication. Yet, ironically, it overtly ignores the fact that its supposedly universal

Regina Schober
University of Mannheim
Germany

social networking relations are derived exclusively from data provided by one (yet highly powerful) software company, thus rendering its program to 'visualize friendship', a highly selective and therefore ultimately absurd endeavor.

While these two visualizations draw on sea imagery to emphasize the Internet's quality as complex organic and/or global communication system, other creative engagements with online media pick up the ocean's inherent principle of creativity itself. Oceans are the 'collecting tanks' of individual streams and rivers; they assemble diverse waters, minerals, and organisms into one seemingly coherent whole which connects and sustains the world. This unifying function of the ocean as emerging medium that sustains the world makes it a powerful metaphor for cultural production, not only on the level of semantics but also on a methodological level. The notion of the Internet as a technical configuration and 'pool' that generates knowledge and information has become increasingly prevalent in the course of growing user participation in the Web 2.0. An increasing number of art projects are based on the idea of crowd-sourcing, a way of accumulating ideas and resources from the online community rather than from traditional investors. The concept of cultural crowd-sourcing relies on what Pierre Lévy has called 'collective intelligence', or rather 'collective creativity', of the online community rather than on the authority of artists that have undergone formalized institutional training.⁹

The YouTube documentary *Life in a Day*, released in 2011, is such a collaborative film project that edited footage from 80,000 Youtube films, submitted by individuals from all over the world on July 24, 2010. The film thus attempts to portray a cross-section of global human experience. It does so by arranging the montage of numerous film clips in a seemingly coherent narrative that follows the chronology of a daily routine. The title 'Life in a Day', in its inversion of the more common, specific 'a day in life', emphasizes the seeming simultaneity of events on a global scale, thus purporting to present the unrepresentable, to narrativize the 'timeless time' of our virtual media environment.¹⁰

9 See Lévy, 1997.

10 See Castells, 2010: 491–494. I owe the idea that the documentary suggests simultaneity through its reversed/reversible title to my student Sarina Amankona.

An important structuring device in this constructed global narrative is the universal element of water. On the representational level alone, the numerous references to water, especially to the sea, are striking. Water is elemental not only for every human depicted in the film, but it also has an important structural function for the implied narrative of the documentary. Following the chronology of a global daily routine, water is present in all moments of transformation, such as when people get ready for the day, before they have lunch, and before they go to bed. In the highly diverse plurality of experience, water is displayed as one of the essential links that connects humans all over the world, just like immaterial themes such as love, family, work, or food. Water is constitutive and symbolic of universal themes such as birth, friendship, family, sustenance, and death, representing the narrative 'glue' of this global video-mosaic and thus becoming one of the film's main protagonists or non-human agencies.

The film begins in the early morning hours with a scene of an elephant's night bath, followed by a scene in which a mother is nursing her baby (0:01:10–0:02:00). This sequence of images evokes the Hindu mythology of creation and birth in a decidedly self-referential statement.¹¹ Opening with the image of water, as the central source for life on a global scale, the implied focus of the film is on creativity as an essentially human resource, as the 'joiner of human beings' (Springer, 1995: 1). Water is the elemental source of which the day, the film, and life, evolves, develops, and feeds itself. Accordingly, the individual co-authors are considered parts of a greater community, conjoining at the universal well of online creativity. The film, by its very method, addresses a huge variety of humanity's personal and global challenges, while suggesting that they can be overcome by communal effort, by transcending the particular and by connecting with others to form a bigger, universal whole. Global community does not remain an abstract

11 According to an Indian legend, Ganesha, god of literature, wisdom, and success, was born while defending his mother who was taking a bath. Beheaded by his father, Lord Shiva, who mistook him for an intruder, he was rescued by his mother transplanting an elephant's head onto his body, from then on being the god of the beginning and creation.

concept, but is rendered as materially graspable through the narrative organization of multiple authentic experiences.

Life, the film suggests, is a possible story that unfolds from the endless streams of pluralistic information. As one of the film's 'protagonists', the little Peruvian shoe cleaner says about his most valuable possession, his computer, that he loves to be on the Internet because pages like Wikipedia 'are full of stories' (0:46:00). Like the Internet with its endless depths of information and data, life takes on an infinite number of different faces and facets. Yet, just as strong as the endlessness of stories is the wish to find meaning, coherence, and narrative. In a world in which we are increasingly confronted with endless unedited media material, this documentary functions as a 'cultural web browser'. If 'YouTube is an ocean of images and sound, offering all kinds of experiences' (Iversen, 2009: 347), the documentary is a vessel that carries us through a carefully selected route on these overwhelming waters. Like Danoglidis' infographic, the film selects, organizes, and classifies information. It thus helps to navigate through the ocean of Youtube videos that stream in every day, making them 'readable', relevant, and manageable.

The film thus does not so much represent the 'millionfold narrative of the self' (Schwierin, 2013: 25) in that it is no endless, unsorted mass of local perspectives, but individual stories are merged into one global narrative that is bigger than the sum of its individual parts. The film suggests an anthropological connection between all humans that is not as concrete as Howard Rheingold's notion of 'virtual community' as concrete participation in online social groups in that it does not involve direct interaction.¹² However, it goes beyond Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' in conceiving not only the nation but also the global as 'a deep, horizontal comradeship' (Anderson, 1983: 7). According to Anderson, mass media have constituted one of the important developments in creating such a notion of a 'shared world' in that they have enabled people to simultaneously experience information and knowledge that pertains to constituting a national consciousness (37–46). In the age of digital media, however, the information

¹² See Rheingold, 1993.

we receive through mass media is less controlled by central authorities but is increasingly drawn from multiple sources, often including user-generated content such as amateur video footage and blogs. Truth therefore becomes a pluralistic, evolving concept which reflects (local) perspective rather than (total) authority. The film's extensive use of water imagery reflects the experience of watching this collection of Youtube videos, of being immersed in and letting oneself flow through the endless streams of information. Thomas Elsaesser notes in relation to the specific narrative logic and functions of Youtube that 'the structured contingency is, on the one hand, strongly informed and shaped by mathematics, via the site's programming architecture and design, based on its search and sort algorithms. On the other hand, the chaos of human creativity, eccentricity and self-importance prevails' (Elsaesser, 2009: 181). Elsaesser describes his observations based on a self-experiment of a Youtube search experience in relation to the ocean metaphor: 'My clusters around "collapse"', he says, 'were only small islands of sense carved out of a sea of boiling magma, made up of human self-presentation and self-performance, the trials and errors of the collective "me", which is YouTube' (181).

In an age in which the participatory media platform Youtube has become a major competitor to traditional TV networks as well as other online television platforms¹³, the idea of 'imagined communities' has to be reconsidered in terms of a more global sense of imagined online community. The Youtube community is a highly heterogeneous one, not only in terms of nationality but also in terms of age, gender, social status etc. A paramount media platform of a Web 2.0 culture, Youtube purports to grant power to the individual to create and disseminate content. Henry Jenkins, in an optimistic statement on what he calls the participatory nature of a rising 'convergence culture', claims that 'the emergence of new media technologies supports a democratic urge to allow more people to create and circulate media' (Jenkins, 2006: 269). Seen in this light, allusions to water in the documentary express a wish for reclaiming the material, the concrete, the human in the virtual floods of data. *Life in a Day* creates

13 See Uricchio, 2009: 26-27.

a material product out of manifold and more or less shapeless voices and turns the creative, yet elusive, depths of information floods into a tangible and purportedly universal human experience. In this vein, the film's soundtrack expresses this wish for material experience: 'I want to drink from the clearest water', Ellie Goulding opens against the background of drop-like accompaniment. Presented as the nautical ship on the wide oceans of information that amalgamates diverse 'sources of life', the film brings virtual and disembodied flows of information back to the level of the human, rendering structured knowledge rather than shapeless information essential for human existence.

Yet, Youtube is of course not immune to similar mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion as is Facebook. Although 'YouTube is localized in 56 countries and across 61 languages' (youtube.com), its user base is not distributed equally, but it can be assumed that it includes a more technologically inclined generation of the Western hemisphere.¹⁴ Such a supposition would somehow tint the notion of *Life in a Day* representing seemingly 'authentic global experience', not least since a large number of selected video material has been submitted by (semi-)professional film directors. What is more, the process of selecting and framing the film material also reflects a decidedly Western perspective. Although the film is global in scope, method, and authorship, it is directed, produced, and edited by a European film team and produced in collaboration with the American Youtube/Google corporation. Youtube first facilitated not only the marketing but also the technical prerequisites for individuals to contribute their footage. The film can be viewed on Youtube, in addition to the huge number of video entries that were not used as well as interviews and follow-up videos. The Internet may have the appeal of being open to participation,

14 As a study on the geographic popularity of Youtube videos has shown, Youtube access and interaction is highly local. According to this study, 'about 50% of the videos have more than 70% of their views in a single region' (Brodersen, Scellato and Wattenhofer, 2012: 1). Another study demonstrates that 'the links to related videos generated by uploaders' choices have clear small-world characteristics' (Cheng, Dale and Liu, 2008: 229). Thus, it can be inferred that Youtube exhibits typical power laws of scale-free networks, such as local clustering and preferential attachment, reinforcing and reproducing existing power structures.

allowing for multiple perspectives and ideas, but it is still largely controlled by Western and, particularly, by American business organizations. As the ultimately 'global' technology, the Internet crosses national, legal, and cultural boundaries, but its dynamics and the way we navigate through it remain largely dominated by America, thus granting the United States a privileged position in the representation and dispersion of seemingly global experience and information. As this collaborative documentary shows, information and knowledge may be a local resource. However, the narrative authority of the Western/American world remains powerful in regulating the dispersion, direction, and managing of this increasingly valuable good.

That both water and knowledge have become increasingly valuable in a globalized information culture, is also the central concern of Dan Chaon's dystopian cybercrime thriller *Await Your Reply* (2009). The novel emphasizes the precariousness of knowledge, reflecting the dehumanizing aspects of the Information Age rather than the notion of boundless creativity and self-expression. At the same time, it directs attention to an increased, yet often futile, quest for self-knowledge in times of increased virtualization. Self-knowledge has often been considered an 'epistemic privilege', distinct from knowledge of the world in that it implies a sense of a 'direct', unmediated, and self-constituting form of knowledge.¹⁵ In this novel, remarkably set in the dry Midwest of the United States, the prevailing absence of water figures as one of the central metaphors for an increasing sense of distrust in identity-formation.

Chaon weaves three assumedly separate threads together in one complex narrative that predominantly centers around the protagonist Hayden, a computer hacker largely involved in identity theft. Hayden constantly tries to reinvent himself, following a deep-seated yet mostly unfulfilled aspiration for self-renewal and transformation. He thus represents the virtual avatar, constantly adapting, shifting names and locations. However, not only does he feel increasingly self-estranged and fragmented in his constant quest for reinventing himself, but also the people clos-

15 See Gertler, 2011.

est to him grow insecure in their search for 'the truth', for getting to know the 'real' Hayden.

The state of not-knowing, not-recognizing, of lacking orientation, is symbolized by two distinct water images. Under the pseudonym of George Olson, Hayden takes his girlfriend Lucy to a deserted motel in the middle of Nebraska adjacent to a dried-up water reservoir. 'Nebraska's own Atlantis' (Chaon, 2009: 122), as Hayden calls this drowned and desiccated town, is indicative of a civilization regress, of an ecocatastrophe that embodies the 'ruin lifestyle' (230) of unfettered capitalism, overpopulation, and natural disasters. The disappearance of water represents both the drowning of civilization and, in turn, the total loss of meaning, purpose, self-integrity, and cohesive knowledge. Meanwhile, Hayden's twin brother Miles drives up north to the Canadian Arctic Sea, desperately following a trail of his missing brother. His journey for the ocean also becomes a painful search for his own identity and purpose in life. Miles' obsessive quest for 'the truth', however, turns out to be fruitless, the only answer to his expansive list of questions remaining 'unknown' (130).

The obscurity of Hayden's whereabouts is mirrored by the state of the Arctic Ocean as permanent ice: information regarding his brother seems to be locked in, at least to Miles, who still believes in a way to 'decode' the puzzle. But, as his fellow 'detective' Lydia observes, water is able to constantly change shapes, since 'the limit of permanent ice is not as stable as it used to be [...]. Global warming and so forth' (250). The sea as a sensitive marker for global developments such as climate change is related to the elusiveness of information, identity, and self-knowledge. The only person who seems to still believe in a form of 'secure knowledge' is Hayden himself, who articulates his dystopian theory of overpopulation:

Most people just can't accept the truth. You know what I mean. Do they think we can just continue on like this, all this babble and bullshit, as if we're not on the edge of ruin? Do they not see it? The Arctic ice cap is melting. We've got dead zones in the oceans that are expanding astronomically. (229)

The image of an overflowing ocean alludes to civilization's general surplus of capital, population, and information. Through

human greed and accumulation of goods, humanity will eventually inundate itself, both literally and metaphorically.

The sea-knowledge metaphor is extended when the faked drowning of Hayden's supposed son Ryan in the Pacific Ocean is followed by his subsequent physical disintegration through information excess in the virtual network of stolen identities. Ryan paradigmatically represents a posthumanist figure who becomes literally 'disembodied' by losing his right hand while being held hostage by a group of dupes. His amputated limb is indicative of his dissolving agency in the logic of 'the body as information': 'But imagine yourself in pieces. [...] It's not that easy, after all, to know what you're made up of' (89).

The novel suggests that the coherent self drowns in view of increasing processes of virtualization in which everything becomes disembodied information. The ocean as a metaphor for a democratic and fertile ecosystem of knowledge is challenged by its dystopian counterpart. This regards the mysteriousness of the ocean as threatening, the abundance of 'information' as overwhelming, and the potentially destructive power of the ocean as a dominating force, generating apocalyptic images of ecocatastrophes and self-destructive experiences. Conversely, the novel also demonstrates that, in the twenty-first century, water as an 'organic source of life' has become a scarce and valuable resource, as has relevant and reliable information. Increasing virtualization turns the essential foundation of our existence, the knowledge about ourselves, into a precarious good, allowing for continuous evasion, transformation, and delusion. The concrete, materially embodied self appears to Hayden as a mere shell, its recovery in terms of true self-possession an impossible challenge.

In the end, the novel leaves its characters either dead or disconnected from their homes, removed to Africa, Mexico, and Europe. America itself has become a disembodied, virtual space; its citizens can find meaning and self-knowledge only abroad. Globalization, with its increasing logic of virtualization, has given preference to decentered, transnational experiences in view of the impossibility of self-discovery at home. In view of receding flows of water, the ultimate symbol of self-renewal has become obsolete

in its symbolic function for epistemological journeys of personal and national self-recognition and self-assertion.

But, apparently, all is not lost. For Google, the next frontier is always just around the corner. Google's latest mapping mission, after completing its grand epistemological project *Street View*, is its maritime twin *Sea View*, a project geared towards scanning a space no less impenetrable as the global depths of the ocean. 'Today we're adding the very first underwater panoramic images to Google Maps', Google's official blog announced September 2012, 'the next step in our quest to provide people with the most comprehensive, accurate and usable map of the world' (McClendon, 2011). Google's next 'frontier' is the rich underwater world of the ocean. The global venture to capture the earth's topographic information and to make it available in an accessible format is taken just one step further. Which practical and economical applications this 'submarine street view' might have remains to be seen. Yet, Google's 'dip into the ocean' shows that metaphors of knowledge may shift from notions of 'civilized infrastructure' to organic ecosystems. America's digital expansion has now officially included the oceans, the 'natural' resource still largely undiscovered, but yet full of unclaimed data, information, and knowledge.

It is perhaps no coincidence that at a time in which America is increasingly regarded in terms of transnational flows and global dynamics, the oceans become a prevalent metaphorical realm to conceptualize and organize epistemological concerns with digital information technology. The contrasting implications of the ocean as both utopian and dystopian space have rendered it an intriguing imaginary realm for negotiating America's position in the Information Age. The ocean suggests both promises and failures of mobility, self-renewal, and liberation. While for America the idea of navigating through space has traditionally been connected with the idea of more or less linear self-development¹⁶, it may be time to reconsider America in terms of transoceanic exchanges and dynamics. As Kate Flint notes, we need to 'replace the language of the frontier with that of the oceanic; to substitute for notions of nationhood that depend on ideas of pushing

16 See Manovich, 2001: 272.

forwards and outwards, of expansion and conquering, a concern with fluidity, transmission, and exchange' (Flint, 2009: 325), using the ocean metaphor to reiterate Shelley Fisher Fishkin's claim for a 'transnational turn' in American Studies (Fishkin, 2004). The decentralizing and pluralist dynamics of the Information Age, in which knowledge has become the most valuable currency, require new ways of thinking about and of consolidating notions of territory, national identity, and information structures. Capturing the power of information, which still resides largely within American hands, within a fundamentally global and 'organic' metaphor, water brings together transnational, ecological, and posthumanist discourses involved in negotiating the position of America in the Information Age. America's double status as both part of the 'world wide sea' of information and as a site of strong hegemonial attempts to control the transnational networks of knowledge makes it a fruitful and often contradictory space in which concepts of transformation, transcendence, and self-renewal are presented in a continuous struggle to navigate through ever-growing complexities of transnational entanglements and global challenges.

To quote Lévy, for whom a new and highly powerful anthropological space has emerged that he calls '*knowledge space*', both 'the existence of economic networks and territorial power will depend on mankind's capacity for the rapid acquisition of knowledge and the development of a collective imagination, as will the survival of the great nomadic earth' (Lévy, 1997: 257). Networks of knowledge and information, so run the cultural narratives of our times, have not only entered a metaphorical relationship with the material flows of water that have secured and motivated human existence since its inception, but the two realms have increasingly become mutually dependent on one another. In the Information Age, what it means to be human and what it means to belong to a certain culture seem to depend more than ever on concrete, territorial realities as well as on questions of knowledge and informational systems. To understand and negotiate the complex boundaries and interlaces between these different territorial domains is a cultural and academic cruise that has only just begun. The waters of relocating American agency within the storms of the global Information Age are still wide.

WORKS CITED

- Abbate, J. (1999) *Inventing the Internet*. Cambridge, London: The MIT Press.
- Anderson, B. (2006 [1983]) *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. Edition. London, New York: Verso.
- Barabási, A.-L. (2002) *Linked. The New Science of Networks*. Cambridge: Perseus.
- Benesch, K. (2004) 'The Sea and the American Imagination: An Introduction', in K. Benesch, J.-K. Adams and K. Schmidt (eds) *The Sea and the American Imagination*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 9-14.
- Bishop, E. (1983) 'At the Fishhouses', *Complete Poems 1927-1979*. London: Chatto Windus.
- Brodersen, A., Scellato, S. and Wattenhofer, M. (2012) 'Youtube Around the World. Geographic Popularity of Videos' WWW, Lyon, France.
- Butler P. (2010) 'Visualizing Friendships'. *Facebook*. https://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=469716398919
- Castells, M. (2010 [1996]) *The Rise of the Network Society*. 2nd ed. vol. 1. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Chaon, D. (2009) *Await Your Reply*. New York: Random House.
- Cheng, X, Dale, C. and Liu, J. (2008) 'Statistics and Social Network of YouTube Videos', Simon Fraser University. Tech Report.
- Danoglidis, A. (2013) 'If the Internet Were an Ocean'. *Webmagazin.de*. Software & Support Media GmbH. <http://webmagazin.de/web/If-the-Internet-were-an-Ocean-Infographic>
- Dodge, M. and Kitchin, R. (2001) *Mapping Cyberspace*. London: Routledge.
- Doreski, C. K. (1993) *Elizabeth Bishop: The Restraints of Language*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Elsaesser, T. (2009) 'Tales of Epiphany and Entropy: Around the Worlds in Eighty Clicks', in P. Snickars and P. Vonderau (eds) *The YouTube Reader*. Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 166-186.
- Fishkin, S. F. (2004) 'Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies—Presidential Address to the American

- Studies Association', *American Quarterly* 57.1 (Nov 12, 2004): 17–57.
- Flint, K. (2009) 'Transatlantic Currents', *American Literary History* 21 (2): 324–334.
- Floridi, L. (2010) *Information. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gehring, E. (2004) *Medienmetaphorik. Das Internet im Fokus seiner räumlichen Metaphern*. Berlin, Mannheim: Diss.
- Gertler, B. (2011) 'Self-Knowledge', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/self-knowledge/>
- Haraway, D. 'A Cyborg Manifesto. Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century', *Socialist Review* 80: 65–108.
- Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2000) *Empire*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press.
- Hayles, K. N. (1999) *How We Became Posthuman. Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Iversen, G. (2009) 'An Ocean of Sound and Image: Youtube in the Context of Supermodernity', in P. Snickars and P. Vonderau (eds) *The Youtube Reader*. Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 347–357.
- Jenkins, H. (2006) *Convergence Culture. Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York, London: New York University Press.
- Lankow, J, Ritchie, J. and Crooks, R. (2012) *Infographics. The Power of Visual Storytelling*. Hoboken: Wiley.
- Lévy, P. (2001 [1997]) 'Collective Intelligence', excerpt from *Collective Intelligence*. Repr. in D. Trend (ed.) *Reading Digital Culture*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell.
- Liebig, M. (1999) *Die Infografik*. Konstanz: UVK Medien.
- Life in a Day* (2011) Dir. Kevin MacDonald. National Graphic Entertainment, YouTube, Scott Film Prod.
- Manovich, L. (2001) *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- McClendon, B. (2011) 'Dive into the Great Barrier Reef with the first underwater panoramas in Google Maps'. Google Official Blog.

Regina Schober
University of Mannheim
Germany

http://googleblog.blogspot.de/2012/09/dive-into-great-barrier-reef-with-first_25.html

- Melville, H. (1999 [1851]) *Moby Dick*. Norton Critical Edition. H. Parker and H. Hayford (eds). New York: Norton.
- Pease, D. E. (2011) 'Introduction: Re-mapping the Transnational Turn', in W. Fluck, D. E. Pease, and J. C. Rowe (eds) *Reframing the Transnational Turn in American Studies*. Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press, 1–46.
- Reichardt, U. (2010) *Globalisierung: Literaturen und Kulturen des Globalen*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- Rheingold, H. (1993) *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publications.
- Schultz, E. (2001) 'Ishmael', in J. B. Gidmark (ed) *Encyclopedia of American Literature of the Sea and Great Lakes*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 206–207.
- Schwierin, M. (2013) 'The New Narratives', in B. Kracke and M. Ries (eds) *Expanded Narration. Das neue Erzählte*. Bielefeld: Transcript, 22–27.
- Springer, Haskell. *America and the Sea. A Literary History*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.
- Thoreau, H. D. (1962 [1854]) *Walden and Other Writings*. New York: Bantam Classics.
- Tokar, A. (2009) *Metaphors of the Web 2.0*. Frankfurt: Lang.
- Uricchio, W. (2009) 'The Future of a Medium Once Known as Television', in P. Snickars and P. Vonderau (eds) *The Youtube Reader*. Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 24–39.
- Woiskunski, A. (2005 [2001]) 'Internetmetaphern', in U. Schmid (ed) *Russische Medientheorien*, transl. F. Stöcklin, Bern et al.: Haupt.

HISTORY AS AN OCEAN

But there is a huge difference between writing a historical novel and writing history. If I may put it like this: history is like a river, and the historian is writing about the ways the river flows and the currents and crosscurrents in the river. But, within this river, there are also fish, and [...] I am interested in the fish. The novelist's approach to the past, through the eyes of characters, is substantially different from the approach of the historian. (Kooria, 2012: 718)

Alicja Bemben
University of Silesia
in Katowice
Poland

Dipesh Chakrabarty notices that to craft their own visions of history—and it might be added that of literature as well—South Asian intellectuals borrow European concepts and categories. Unavoidable and indispensable as such borrowings are for him, they entail both global and regional effect; the effect is global in the sense that the exchange of ideas makes them spread worldwide and regional in the sense that their constant interactions caused one central and universal notion of history to collapse in favor of a multitude of dispersed historical perspectives (Chakrabarty, 2000: 3–6).

An attention-grabbing case of history view that might be juxtaposed with Chakrabarty's claims is Amitav Ghosh's idea of river-like history according to which literary and historical writings are unlike. Although theoretically viable when viewed from Chakrabarty's global perspective—it appears to be a contemporary version of Hegel's idea of river-like history (Hegel, 1892: 2)—the concept does not seem to acknowledge the achievements of post-positivist historiography and promotes the notion of universal history. The purpose of this study, however, is neither to explore the incompatibility of Chakrabarty and Ghosh's

ideas, nor to deplore the latter's thought, but rather to offer an alternative to it. In my understanding, history is like an ocean of events, people, concepts, and objects that interact in their incessant flow. Embedded in it, both the writer and the historian write from the perspective of the fish and about the fish world. As an all-embracing framework, the ocean enables us to treat their writing alike. I intend to justify the thesis by means of an examination of the changes in relations of literature and history, interwoven with arguments pointing to similarities between literary and historical writings.

Whether one ascribes likeness or dissimilarity to literature and history writing depends on the context in which they are located and the definitions of both elements. From its very beginning up to the eighteenth century, the relation between literature and history was that of the all-encompassing 'practice of writing' and a mode of writing about the past. This dependency was the aftermath of the Antique-elaborated¹ perspective on the relation between reality and art. The organizing principle of the world, as outlined in Hesiod's *Theogony*, were the five ages of man. Orchestrated by divine forces, the fate of humanity was put into the frame of the fall of man from the Golden to the Iron Age (Breisach, 1994: 8). If the reality was conceived as such a frame and, as Aristotle suggests, the imitative arts drew from it, then their understanding was bound to fit in the concept. In *Poetics*, the 'Arts of Poetry' are defined as verbal imitations of this reality (Aristotle, 1922: 1) and understood as an umbrella term for all antique oral and writerly products, history included. When Aristotle introduces the distinction between the poet who is to write about what can happen, to devise serious philosophical compositions about universals, and the historian who aims at what has happened in particular situations, this difference does not locate literature and history on two different sides of the barricade. Firstly, if the 'Arts of Poetry' is an umbrella term, then the highlighted differences are classificatory ones

1 Neither this epoch nor any other in this study is understood as giving on, uniform concept. To admit the complexity of such phenomena I treat each epoch, to use J. Roger's phrase, as 'a constellation of ideas and mental attitudes'.

within poetry rather than by and large antithetical. Secondly, the abovementioned set of distinctions—can happen—has happened, general-particular, single action-single period—is questioned by Aristotle himself. It turns out that the poet can write about ‘a historical subject’ and that many writers mixed in their works what could and what has happened (Marincola, 2007: 130), general and particular, actions and periods. Moreover, the argument that poetry is ‘more’ philosophical and serious than history does not make the latter non-philosophical or non-serious (Aristotle, 1922: 1, 35–39, 89). Thus, what we might perceive as either poetic or historical products of the era seem to be informed and unified by the same overarching principle, i.e. being masterpieces of poetry imitating the real.

Hesiod’s and Aristotle’s observations constitute the milestones in the studies on the relation between literature and historiography. Hesiod’s fall-of-man frame reverberated in the European historiography up to the end of the eighteenth century. A consequence of adopting such frame was that history became a preordained series with events, people and objects to be slotted into ready constructs; ‘years to come would bring merely new variations of the old human drama’, notices Ernst Breisach (1994: 22). If the purpose of writing was first of all to imitate the grand ‘fall-of-man’ or progress of humanity story, the need to differentiate between true or false accounts, history and literature might have seemed secondary (Burrow, 2008: 284). That is why the father of history avers that his first and foremost ‘task in the whole *logos* is to write down what everybody says, as [...] [he hears] it’ (Herodotus, 2006: 85). Obviously, his progeny declares that although ‘the first law of historiography is not daring to say anything false, and the second is not refraining from saying anything true: there should be no suggestion of prejudice for, or bias against, when you write [...] the actual superstructure consists of content and style’ (Cicero, 2009: 15–16). At the same time, history is to narrate and memorialize and therefore considered ‘a kind of prose poem’ (Gossman, 1990: 227).²

² The role of demonstrating, arguing and persuading is ascribed to forensic rhetoric.

Just as throngs of Greco-Roman historians followed these rules, so did the Christian authors who, however, reworked them after their own fashion. Inasmuch as the latter ones also considered history a branch of grammar or rhetoric (Deliyannis, 2003: 1–3) and borrowed models for their writings from the Greco-Roman works (Breisach, 1994: 82, 85),³ the world-view framing their narrations was somewhat different and their rhetorical style more modest (Ainsworth, 2003: 265). On the basis of the concept of the ages of man, Christian theoreticians of history—Eusebius, Jerome, St. Augustine, Isidore of Seville, Bede, Thomas Aquinas—formulated their own version of the (hi)story of the fall of the man. For example, in St. Augustine's *The City of God*, the most fundamental historical periodization of the epoch⁴, we read that there are six ages of the world corresponding to six days of creation; that humanity moves from the period of blissful happiness to the Second Coming which is to bring the seventh age—the Kingdom of Heaven (Grabski, 2003: 60).

A consequence of adopting such frame is that early Christian and medieval history, just like its Greco-Roman equivalent, was a preordained series with events, people and objects to be slotted into typological constructs. Thus, the Christians did not bring about the fall of the Roman Empire (Augustine), the ten plagues of Egypt did not differ much from the ten Roman persecutions (Orosius), saints were heroes, heroic men grand, the prudent wise, the just upright (Henry of Huntingdon), the noble pious (Richard of Devizes).⁵

*Oceans Apart:
In Search of New Wor(l)ds*

RIAS VOL. 7, SPRING-SUMMER Nº 1/2014

3 Eusebius and Jerome modeled on Castor of Rhodes, Augustine on Cicero, Livy and Seneca.

4 Grabski quotes Böhner and Gilson who aver that: 'In the Middle Ages historiography was shaped mostly by ideas of St. Augustine. History was conceived as a great drama designed by God and with the human as the actor. The frame was given in the Holy Bible. Three great events divide the history: the Creation, the Redemption and the Apocalypse' (Grabski, 2003: 60).

5 Apart from these remarks of Breisach, see also: '[...] the stories of saints acquired some standard features. The saint's youth was either precociously pious or flawed until a conversion experience changed everything; miracles were performed and hardships endured; and after death the body might remain incorrupt. The similarities did not matter, since these biographies wished to present not innovative stories but the typical manifestations of the holy in this world' (Breisach, 1994: 86, 98); and 'They reflected the Christian image

Another corollary, regardless of whether we are talking about Greco-Roman or Christian historiography, is that the question of truth⁶ seemed secondary to the aesthetic and didactic purposes of what then was considered historical writing. On the one hand, pre-modern historians lied blatantly; instead of providing a fair account of the past, they aimed at gaining reputation and fame by means of rhetorical shows or succumbed to political or religious pressures and needs. On the other hand, in establishing their own trade, the historians made truth their main banner. By emphasizing the truthfulness of their accounts, not only did they try to ensure the place of history among the-world-functioning explanatory measures—history was to pass the divine truths—but also pressed historiography's separation from literature.

of the cosmos with its spiritual unity and hierarchy of all things and events. God's decree governed all and it was for the most part mysterious. In such a world the records of events, besides telling of what happened, contained divine messages for human beings. An earthquake or a swarm of locusts warned people, a vision evoked hope, and the fate of an individual provided a lesson' (Breisach, 1994: 102); as well as 'In these *chansons* less was said about the piety of nobles than about their deeds, characters, motives, and loves, and truth was not what actually happened but a mixture of the actual, the ideal, and the imagined. Typically, a real figure of history was transformed into a heroic figure by the addition of fictitious elements, for example, El Cid or Roland. [...] Henry II's successor, Richard I, the Lionheart, provided an ideal subject for a heroic history and not only because of his adventures during the Third Crusade. In his *Chronicle of the Time of Richard I*, Richard of Devizes turned all of Richard's rule into a sort of *chanson de geste*. The king was a shining hero, while his opponents, especially Philip Augustus, were villains with souls darker than a moonless night. When the forces of darkness and of light confronted each other, dramatic battles were fought with lances and arrows traversing the sky, shields clashing, and swords whistling through the air' (Breisach, 1994: 119, 131).

6 For the Aristotelian perspective (Aristotle, 2005: unpaginated page), the products of the imitative arts are not eternal things, ergo they are not *most* true. The purpose of art is not to be true, but to give happiness (the writer excels in creating to make himself happy) or aesthetic pleasure (the reader is to feel touched). According to Grabski, in the Middle Ages something is true when an authority declares it as such, even though it may be obviously false (Grabski, 2003: 72–75). The idea of truth in those times also has a peculiar character. If some truth inspired by God was offered and authorities accepted it, then only the question of technique was left for discussion.

Alicja Bemben
University of Silesia
in Katowice
Poland

Isidore of Seville, although still in a rhetoric manual, distanced history from fables in that '[h]istories are true deeds that have happened, plausible narrations are things that, even if they have not happened, nevertheless could happen, and fables are things that have not happened and cannot happen, because they are contrary to nature' (Isidore of Seville, 2006: 67). This insistence on truthfulness differentiated history from fable but still left the separation of history from literature for future generations.

On the one hand, the Renaissance conception of reality did not differ radically from its predecessors. Based on the antique and medieval traditions (Kelley, 1991: 312), St. Augustine's claim that God's law was the *modus operandi* of the world was widely shared by the Renaissance luminaries of history. On the other hand, the changes that were introduced to a providential understanding of the world affected late fifteenth-, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century historiography deeply. According to the Augustinian conception mentioned above, humans were passive enactors, puppets in God's hands. Defying such a view, Machiavelli initiated, and Jean Bodin developed, a theory of three histories. The assumption was that there existed divine and natural histories governed by the principles outside of human relations. There was, however, also a human history that, as much as was entangled in the latter two, was considered to be largely a product of the human will (Grabski, 2003: 167–168; Breisach, 1994: 158).

Acknowledging the human potential of creating history implicated a number of changes in historiography. Without rigorous divine determination, the human past called for a new conceptualization. The ensuing 'classificatory anxiety' led Renaissance historiographers to the conclusion that

there were a variety of literary forms through which that past could be represented; that not all of these were actually 'histories' according to the strict classical definition of the scope and language that were to be found in works so called; that among that subset of works about the past deemed to be histories there was an implied hierarchy of genres (and within that a ranking of authors according to both stylistic and non-stylistic considerations) at the bottom of which one found the now disparaged chronicle; and, most important, that the quality that connected all works purporting to make true statements about the past was that of being historical. (Woolf, 2005: 28–30)

Thus, what the historiographers of the era did to delineate the boundaries of their trade was to upgrade the argument of an all-encompassing literature.⁷ Since Aristotle, literature covered all verbal imitations of reality and therefore history was considered a literary form. Following Aristotle, the Renaissance acknowledged the overarching character of literature and distinguished between non-historical and historical works using their own concept of truth. The difference lay in the fact that for Aristotle truth was, first of all, a question of 'recognizing' a correspondence between words and their referents (Aristotle, 2005: unpaginated), whereas for Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury and his contemporaries, it was also a question of 'proving' this correspondence (Woolf, 2005: 36).

Although literature maintained its all-embracing position throughout the Renaissance, historical writing about the past included in it was more and more visibly marked. History's radical separation from literature came only after a new global vision of the real had been introduced in the seventeenth century Europe. In the aftermath of adopting the concept of material and spiritual progress of humanity, the Enlightenment historians found themselves in need of designing a new method of studying the past. To do so, firstly, they distanced themselves from their predecessors' ideas and, thus, from what they considered historically biased, unprofessional and most importantly false; that is the fable. 'History is the recital of facts given as true, in contra-distinction to the fable, which is the recital of facts given as false', argued Voltaire. Secondly, to establish historiography as an autonomous branch of knowledge (Kelley, 1991: 440; Breisach, 1994: 209), they borrowed from Newtonian mechanics to lay the foundation for their own science. Thus, the concept of mechanistic laws of nature was transplanted to the social world, the disclosure of the universal laws governing the world was made the objective of historical inquiries, and impeccable logic was declared the basis to find truth.

All this was supposed to turn history into a science of reason and to separate it from literature. Nevertheless, were the specific 'truth-finding methods' of the era to be investigated, it might be

7 Truth seemed to be a possible property of literature, with kinds of literature differing with respect to the 'degree' of provable truthfulness.

observed that, inasmuch as they depart from the stance that reason alone grants truth (Bates, 2001: 4–5, 12), they end up acknowledging: the role of intuition, as in Vico’s and Herder’s intuitive grasping of insights (Breisach, 1994: 205) or Möser and Locke’s intuitive knowledge (Bates, 2001: 14); subjective judgment, as in Kantian subjective understanding; and most importantly, the literary, as the cases of Coyer, Voltaire and Hume, Gibbon, Schlözer, Bodmer, Condorcet, Fresnoy (Grabski, 2003: 300, 317–18, 344–45; Breisach, 1994: 216, 221–222; Bates, 2001: 16; Fresnoy, 1730: 319). Although the historians of the age hailed their trade a science different from fabulating literature, it took the Romantics and their concept of sacred versus historical writing to instigate a definite break between historiography and literature.

The French Revolution put paid to the social order of the late eighteenth-century Europe and made the intellectuals of the time get stuck between a rock of the no longer meaningful past and a hard place of the unstable present. To overcome this impasse, the Romantics embarked on redefining the prevailing basic conventions and categories of their world. Narrowing the term literature to ‘a corpus of privileged texts, a treasury in which value, truth, and beauty had been piously stored’, and giving history the meaning of ‘the faithful record of [empirical] reality’ turned, according to Lionel Gossman, these two modes of writing into opposites (Gossman, 1990: 229). However, even a cursory glance at the definitions—both kinds of texts are to render truth—might cast doubts on the viability of the Romantic literature-history dichotomy. A closer look at how the Romantics perceived both trades, what the role of their practitioners was and what their practice was like, might demonstrate more clearly that, despite alleged differences, Romantic historiography shared many similarities with its alleged literary counterpart.

In ‘What Is, and to What End Do We Study, Universal History?’, Friedrich Schiller declares that there exists the course of the world—‘the real succession of events [that] descends from the origin of objects down to their most recent ordering’—and the course of history, a selective record of events which are put into a coherent whole by the historian (Schiller, 2006: unpaginated). By doing so, Schiller establishes the relation of a historical text to reality

in an Aristotelian, and thus literary, fashion. As the point of departure, he takes the real and makes the (historical) text its mimetic record. Although the division concerns the field of historical studies, it finds its correspondence in the-real-and-the-text pair as it exists in the field of literary studies. Acknowledging this parallel seems to justify the argument that, what links history and literature at the most basic level is that in their Romantic versions, they are understood as narratives drawing from reality. Furthermore, they are both designed to recognize and try to overcome the gap between the (past) reality and its (re)construction for, as Lionel Gossman notices, the fractions of the real were perceived as symbols that could be understood only when located in a narrative order. The concept underlying a literary as well as a historical product of this process was that they both were meant to be realizations of a prophetic, truth-giving and revolutionary act of restoring the old world at which the writer and the historian aimed.

This seemed possible for the nineteenth-century sages as they, on the one hand, were convinced they had the best possible perspective on the ever-unveiling scroll of the past and, on the other, thought of themselves as equipped with the divine powers to build the bridge between the past and the present. Ascribing to oneself the role of the decipherer and interpreter of the past as well as crediting oneself with divine traits put the Romantic historian abreast the Romantic poet. In the end, it was also the Romantic poet who experienced the collapse of the eighteenth-century concepts and ideals, who wanted to find appeasement in describing the real and considered himself the interpreter, the god-like prophet and the priest of truth.

Similarities in the performed function also led to convergences in the historian's and poet's practice of writing. Firstly, the reliance on a metaphysical understanding of the world entailed for both of them comprehending reality by means of imagination. It was imagination that provided 'a true insight into the nature of [reality] where both individual phenomena and the vital relations among them could be grasped in their immediacy and presence'. Secondly, as Lionel Gossman notices, both modes of writing relied upon the organicist model of explanation. Whether in literature or historiography, '[i]ndividual facts were revealed as rational and intelligible

[...] by discovering their *meaningfulness* as parts of a larger whole'. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, at the level of description historical texts borrowed the techniques of the nineteenth-century novel. Not only can we observe tendencies to design the historical text according to the fashion of fiction, i.e. not 'as a model to be discussed [...] but as the inmost form of the real' or introducing 'the narrator as a privileged reporter recounting what happened'; there are also attempts at evoking in the reader a sense that there was no boundary between him or her and the described object (Gossman, 1990: 244, 260, 297, 305).

Were we to treat Romantic history, historians and historiography as elements of a cobweb of notions and categories, and to do the same with the Romantic literature, writer and literary practice, it seems that the historical cobweb evinces rather parallels to the literary one than contrasts. They both departed from the same world-view, used the same concepts and featured the same techniques. What they share weaves such a thick thread that it is hardly possible to tell which thread belongs to which cobweb or to draw a demarcation line between the two. However, the Romantics saw the divide, and so did modern historians.

The crystallization of the paradigm of the natural sciences that took part in the eighteenth century entailed hierarchic perceptions of particular branches of knowledge. When the humanities formed their separate model of science in the nineteenth century, their methodology owed much to that of the already widely acknowledged natural sciences. In consequence, history—engaged with finding and ordering facts whose truth could be authenticated, measured, assessed according to some material value—moved towards the natural sciences. The idea that the historian could access and offer knowledge, whereas the writer could present only fictional, intangible and impressionistic views on the real, created a wall between the two discourses. This state of affairs lasted until a series of twentieth-century intellectual turns questioned the validity of natural-sciences-based, historiographic reflection:

After about 1960 history did seriously and irrevocably begin to decompose into a plethora of smaller histories (social, economic, religious, intellectual, cultural, women's and so forth), narrative history of events (meaning typically large-scale public events of politics, diplomacy

and war) did cede pole position to analytical accounts of deep structures and spatio-temporal conjunctures, and new -isms (especially feminism, comparativism and constructionism) have joined the older empiricist and Marxist tendencies. [...] Worse still, from the point of view of conservatives, self-styled 'progressive' historiography, most noticeably in its postmodernist or New Historicist forms, not only has abandoned even the weakest versions of the nineteenth-century positivist claim that history was a science, no more and no less, but has even questioned the sacred notion of historical truth, in the name either of a rhetoric of discourse or of an ethical and/or cultural relativism. (Gossman, 1990: 4–5)

Only then was it recognized that a human sciences paradigm demands a redefinition, that is, an adoption of a different perspective on the objects it scrutinizes, and consequently a reformulation of the questions it asks. Out of the turns' googol of corollaries, the ones that concern the contemporary understanding of the relationship of literature and history are crucial for this study. Literary reflection of the twentieth century, on the one hand, continued to employ the perspectives that adhere to the fact-fiction as well as history-literature divides.⁸ On the other, it also created theories which question such divisions. Hans-Georg Gadamer writes that '[l]iterature in the broadest sense is bounded only by what can be said, for everything that can be said can be written [...] the concept of literature embraces not only works of literary art but everything passed down in writing' (Gadamer, 2004: 155–156).⁹ Although this

8 The Russian Formalism is the only methodology that still recognizes literary vs. non-literary texts division.

9 See Gadamer's *Truth and Method*: 'There are works of scholarship whose literary merit has caused them to be considered works of art and part of world literature. This is clear from the point of view of aesthetic consciousness, inasmuch as the latter does not consider the significance of such works' contents but only the quality of their form as important. But since our criticism of aesthetic consciousness has shown the limited validity of that point of view, this principle dividing literary art from other written texts becomes dubious for us. We have seen that aesthetic consciousness is unable to grasp the essential truth even of literary art. For literary art has in common with all other texts the fact that it speaks to us in terms of the significance of its contents. Our understanding is not specifically concerned with its formal achievement as a work of art but with what it says to us.

'The difference between a literary work of art and any other text is not so fundamental. It is true that there is a difference between the language poetry and the language of prose, and again between the language of poetic prose and that of "scientific" or "scholarly" prose. These differ-

definition seems to be an umbrella term in the Aristotelian fashion, Gadamer does not see imitation as the unifying principle of all texts; instead, he opts for a concept of understanding as the common base. According to him, regardless of whether we talk about reading a literary or a historical piece, their production is subject to the same process of understanding/interpreting.

Understanding any text starts with a projection of a sense that might be encountered in it. The project is determined by *hidden prejudices* which shape our fore-meanings. These, in turn, are either incessantly spurred or revised by what continually emerges in the text (Gadamer, 2004: 269).¹⁰ The understanding we achieve in the process of reading is thus a realization of our projections, our interpretation of the text, not 'a simple reflection of what is given to the senses' (Gadamer, 2004: 155, 269–272). Thus, reading a historical text or source does not guarantee access to 'wie es eigentlich gewesen' (how things have really been), but rather creating an interpretation of it. Consequently, writing professional history and historical novels that follow such an interpretation turns out to be creating one's vision of the past formed on the basis of yet another vision.

However, inasmuch as Gadamer's theory of understanding locates historical texts within an all-encompassing concept of literature and thus justifies literary analyses of historical texts, it is also crucial to ask whether a reverse maneuver is methodologically viable. To demonstrate that a literary text, in this case the historical novel, might be a subject of historical inquiry, I would

ences can certainly also be considered from the point of view of literary form. But the essential difference between these various "languages" obviously lies elsewhere: namely in the distinction between the claims to truth that each makes. All written works have a profound community in that language is what makes the contents meaningful. In this light, when texts are understood by, say, a historian, that is not so very different from their being experienced as art. And it is not mere chance that the concept of literature embraces not only works of literary art but everything passed down in writing' (Gadamer, 2004: 155–156).

¹⁰ Gadamer defines things themselves as 'which, in the case of the literary critic, are meaningful texts, which themselves are again concerned with objects' (Gadamer, 2004: 269).

like to refer to Hayden White's concepts of the historical text as literary artefact and product of historical imagination.

The entire concept of metahistory might be said to have been developed from Hayden White's understanding of historical work as 'a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of that past structure and processes in the interest of *explaining what they were by representing them*' (White, 1975: 2). A historical text, then, instead of offering access to the past itself, offers the writer's vision of this past, and his or her interpretation of the past events is given to us in a narrative form (Munslow, 2006: 36; White, 1978: 128). Should we think of literary works in these terms, it seems that this definition might be applied as well to the historical novel. In the end, it is also a text written in prose intended to represent past events, people, objects and processes.

Nevertheless, for White, historical and literary texts are similar not only at this most overt, narrative level. Similarly to Gadamer's view that understanding is the process that underlies all modes of writing about the past, White talks about the deep structure of historical imagination as preconceptual and poetic. Even without getting into the details of his theory, it might be deduced that White's claims parallel those of Gadamer: both thinkers point out in their theories that both literary and historical texts are the result of an interpretation of past events. If this is so, then White's theory provides a reason for treating historical novels as products of the author's historical consciousness and makes it possible to apply tools of metahistorical analysis to them.

To conclude and simultaneously to come back to the thesis from the beginning of my presentation, I would like to sum up my findings first and then refer to Ghosh's perspective on history. Through ages, history has been conceptualized as either a story of the fall or progress of man, as the repository of meanings, as interpretation, and in numerous other ways. Similarly, the search for literariness continues assiduously, and incessantly provides us with ever new definitions of what literature might be. Realizing the amount of changes that these two notions have undergone, as well as their internal complexity and the problematic relations they have enjoyed, may make one think about Amitav Ghosh's

historical perspective as a peculiar one for a twenty-first century thinker. Should we look at the past from his river-like perspective, a variety of concepts that have been devised could not be explained in its terms. Treating events as happening in a unidirectional, chronological sequence through which humans go from point A to Z—or as Ghosh might probably say, flow from the source of the river to its end—is of course possible, and such concepts have already been offered previously (Heraclitus, Hegel). However, the idea doesn't seem to take into consideration the fact that such concepts have also been already discarded due to their simplistic propensities. History and literature and their possible relationships to each other are complex enough to take into account their intricacies. Should we consider history an ocean of events that interact in their incessant flow, then such thinking allows one to understand that various concepts of what history is are possible. An ocean seems the frame sufficiently broad to encompass all the varieties of historical perspectives that we can encounter in the post-human age. What is more, such a perspective might also enable us to understand that labelling a piece of writing as history or literature depends on the assumptions of both author and reader.

WORKS CITED

- Ainsworth, P. (2003) 'Contemporary and "Eyewitness" History', in D. M. Deliyannis (ed), *Historiography in the Middle Ages*. Leiden, London: Brill, 249-276.
- Aristotle (2005) *Metaphysics*. W. D. Ross (trans). Adelaide: University of Adelaide. <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/metaphysics/book4.html>
- (1992) *The Poetics of Aristotle*. H. Butcher (trans). London: Macmillan.
- Bates, D. (2001) 'Idols and Insight: An Enlightenment Topography of Knowledge. Enlightenment Pathologies', in Duncan and D. Henkin (eds), *Representations*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1-23.
- Breisach, E. (1994) *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Burrow, J. (2008) *A History of Histories*. New York: Random House.
- Chakrabarty, D. (2000) *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Cicero, (2009) *De Oratore*. A. J. Woodman (trans). In L. Pitcher (ed) *Writing Ancient History: An Introduction to Classical Historiography*. London: I. B. Tauris, 15-16.
- Deliyannis, D. M. (2003) 'Introduction', in D. M. Deliyannis (ed), *Historiography in the Middle Ages*. Leiden, London: Brill, 1-16.
- Fresnoy, N. L. du (1730) *A new method of studying history, geography, & chronology. With a catalogue of the chief historians of all nations, the best edition of their works, & characters of them. Written originally in French by M. Languet du Fresnoy, Librarian to Prince Eugene. And now made English, with variety of improvements & corrections. To which is added, a dissertation by Count Scipio Maffei of Verona, concerning the use of inscriptions & medals, by way of parallel. In two volumes. By Richard Rawlinson, L. L. D. and F. R. S.* London: Printed for Cha. Davis in Pater-noster-Row. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015073728019;view=1up;seq=327>
- Gadamer, H. G. (2004) *Truth and Method*. J. Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall (trans). London, New York: Continuum.

- Gossman, L. (1990) *Between History and Literature*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.
- Grabski, A. F. (2003) *Dzieje historiografii*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1892) *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. E. S. Haldane, K. Paul, Trench (trans). London: Trübner & Co.
- Herodotus (2006) *The Histories*. N. Luraghi (trans). In 'Meta-historiē: Method and genre in the *Histories*', in C. Dewald and J. Marincola (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 76–92.
- Isidore of Seville (2006) *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*. Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, O. Berghof and M. Hall (trans). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kelley, D. R. (1991) *Versions of History: From Antiquity to the Enlightenment*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Kooria, M. (2012) 'Between the Walls of Archives and Horizons of Imagination: An Interview with Amitav Ghosh', *Itinerario* 36. <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8845430&fulltextType=CR&fileId=S0165115313000028>
- Marincola, J. (2007) 'Speeches in Classical Historiography', in J. Marincola (ed), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, Volume I, series of *Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World*. Malden, Oxford and Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 118–132.
- Munslow, A. (2006) *Deconstructing History*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Schiller, F. (2006) 'What Is, and to What End Do We Study, Universal History?', in C. Stephan and R. Trout (eds and trans), *Friedrich Schiller Poet of Freedom Volume II*. Washington, DC: Schiller Institute. http://www.schillerinstitute.org/transl/Schiller_essays/universal_history.html
- White, H. (1975) *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- (1978) 'Fictions of Factual Representation', H. White (ed), *Tropics of Discourse. Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 121–135.
- Woolf, D. R. (2005) 'From Hystories to the Historical: Five Transitions in Thinking about the Past, 1500–1700', in *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68 (1–2): 33–70.

FROM THE AMERICAN WILD WEST TO BOJSZOWY:

Józef Kłyk's Westerns as Social Rituals

Today I can say that in making these films I was quite often exposing myself to ridicule. People thought I was crazy, they didn't believe that my work would amount to anything. But at the screenings the room was always full and this gave me strength.

Jozef Kłyk

*Jolanta Szymkowska-Bartyzel
Jagiellonian University
Cracow, Poland*

INTRODUCTION

Mutual transoceanic projections between the Americas and the rest of the world always indicate a variety of perceptions, understandings and interpretations of American culture (or cultures). They also indicate new dynamic approaches and perspectives on American cultural texts and the ways these texts are experienced, used or abused by various social, national, or ethnic groups, even those that are oceans apart, since the ocean, although it separates people with its monstrous proportions, can also connect.

When the proliferation of American popular culture is discussed, the most sensible approach explaining the interactions between cultures is Wolfgang Welsch's concept of transculturality, which assumes that cultures today do not have distinct or homogeneous forms (Welsch, 1999). Thanks to mass communication and well-developed means of transport, people function not in separate, homogeneous cultures but in peculiar cultural connection networks in which different cultures mix and intermingle. These networks also affect the lives of individuals who do not exist exclusively within their national cultures. Today it is more and more diffi-

cult to decide what belongs to a national culture and what has been annexed by it from other cultural systems. Furthermore, the criterion of cultural identity seems to be purely declarative: 'For most of us, multiple cultural connections are decisive in terms of our cultural formation. We are cultural hybrids. Today's writers, for example, emphasize that they're shaped not by a single homeland, but by differing reference countries, by Russian, German, South and North American or Japanese literature' (Welsch, 1999: 198). The flow of heterogeneous, international cultural texts meets various and very different culture users, who use texts according to their own needs, tastes, or preferences. This is especially true about standardized American pop-culture texts, which are appropriated, translated, and used in a specific and very individual way all over the world. However, it is not just a matter of meaning and senses or different interpretations of the same cultural messages, but it is a matter of the inspiration American popular culture can provide, giving new life to cultural texts or activities. As Richard Hebdige indicates,

American popular culture [...] offers a rich iconography, a set of symbols, objects and artefacts which can be assembled and re-assembled by different groups in a literally limitless number of combinations. And the meaning of each selection is transformed as individual objects [...] are taken out of their original historical and cultural contexts and juxtaposed against signs from other sources. (Hebdige, 1988: 74)

This always happens when a standardized text with a global reach meets local cultures and individuals transform it, with the use of local culture and its values, into a new hybrid form. The post-modern territory provides many opportunities for these kinds of intertextual games in which either a global, mainly American, formula—genre, structure, type of character, etc.—is filled in with local content, or in which American content is adjusted and adapted to specific local forms. Both of these uses become controversial and are very often accused of killing national culture, character, and identity. However, American culture's potential for inspiring other culture representatives in a valuable and creative way can be remarkable.

This paper discusses a very special case of a unique and ennobling use of American popular culture for promoting native traditions

and strengthening cultural identity. The figure of Polish-Silesian amateur filmmaker Józef Kłyk and his works have long been noticed and appreciated, mostly locally and almost exclusively within the context of niche amateur film work. Kłyk is a creator of so-called Silesian Westerns. When discussed within a broader context of cultural studies, his films become an example of how reception, appropriation and transformation of global cultural products in a local cultural and social environment are shaped by hybridity and then used for fulfilling the local community's needs.

WESTERNS AS GLOBAL STORIES¹

Westerns are originally American stories which, despite their apparent geographical and historical location, have spread to various cultures around the world. They have served as inspiration for screenwriters, film directors and actors in, just to mention a few examples, the Italian 'spaghetti Westerns', the so-called 'Easterns' (made in Eastern Europe, mainly in East Germany), and movies based on the narrative patterns, motifs, or characters of Westerns and derived from distant and exotic countries such as Japan, Thailand, and China. John Cawelti explains the popularity of Westerns:

Of all the major popular genres, the Western most seemed to express some sense of uniqueness of the American experience and of the imagined exceptionalism of America, and a Western, even when made in Italy or Spain, or enacted in theme parks in Germany or quick-draw clubs in France, retains its deep connection with the American West—the West that has always been one of the central defining factors of American national identity. (Cawelti, 1999: 5)

Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper, in the introduction to their recently published book *International Westerns: Re-Locating the Frontier*, justify the popularity of Westerns with the universal nature of the heroes who fill the functions needed in any society, not only in nineteenth-century America:

¹ This paragraph and some parts of the following paragraphs were used in a modified form and in Polish in an article, 'Między Śląskiem a Teksasem – Śląskie westerny Józefa Kłyka jako przykład pamięci protetycznej', which was accepted for publication in Vol.1/2015 of 'Przegląd Polonijny'.

The icons and themes of the classic American Western belong to a particular moment in U.S. history, and it addresses the issue and processes that were, in that moment, defining the nation and its culture. Those issues [...] are not, however, unique to the United States.

Heroes of the traditional West have long been recognized as guardians of civilization positioned with one foot in the wild and one foot in the civilized world—bearing the responsibility of maintaining the boundaries between order and chaos, civilization and barbarism. [...] They were champions of the moral order and icons of national identity, playing a leading role not only in the taming of the West, but in expanding and extending American values and lifeways across borders, boundaries and ideologies. [...] This vision of the American west, immortalized, promoted and expanded in countless cinematic narratives, hinged on notions of progress, ideas and ingenuity in the service of the project of nation-making. (Miller and Van Riper, 2014: xii)

The universal character of the heroes and problems they had to face made Westerns comprehensible for people of different, often very remote, cultures.

SILESIA HISTORY AND PROBLEMS WITH IDENTITY

In order to understand how the social and cultural importance of Kłyk's artistic activity results from the history and special experience of Silesian people, a short introduction of the region and its tangled history has to be given. Silesia is a region located mostly in Poland, with smaller parts located in the Czech Republic and Germany. The region is rich in mineral and natural resources, especially coal, and includes several important industrial areas. Throughout its history, Silesia has always been under someone's reign, has belonged to other countries, and has never been autonomous. Silesians have often been under the repressive influence of foreigners who imposed their religion, language, and culture on them: in the 10th century the Czechs controlled Silesia, then Poland took the region over for four centuries, then, for two centuries, again the Czechs, and then the Austrians for another two. In 1742, most of the Silesian region was conquered by Prussia. At that point, what had previously been merely an insignificant Austrian province became an important economic part of Prussia. The Prussians brought colonists to these lands and sought to Germanize all areas of life. Things became worse after 1871, when Silesia, along with Prussia, became part of the unified Ger-

man Empire and German authorities introduced a very strict policy of Germanization called *Kulturkampf*. At the end of the nineteenth century, Silesia developed economically, with new coal mines, steel mills, and railways. However, the economic development did not solve the national problems of the Silesian people.

After World War I, the easternmost part of the Silesia region was awarded to Poland by the victorious Allies, but not for long, since in 1938 it was annexed by the Third Reich. After World War II, according to the Potsdam Agreement, most of the Silesian territory was transferred to Poland. As a result, the majority of the native German population was expelled and replaced by Polish settlers who had themselves been expelled from the Eastern Polish borderlands taken over by the Soviet Union. Since 1989, nothing has changed in the Silesian geopolitical situation. What has changed, however, is the attitude of Silesians toward their Silesian origins. Due to their complicated and turbulent history, Silesian people have problems defining their identity. They consider themselves neither German, Polish, nor Czech but rather form a separate, polyglot society of Silesians (also called Szlonzoks or Slunzaks) whose citizens declare themselves to be members of two or more national groups (Kamusella, 2007).

During the Communist era, being Silesian carried a risk of ostracism, and people were afraid to admit to their Silesian roots or speak Silesian dialect. After 1989, more people started to declare their Silesian origin and, what is more important, this tendency is currently experiencing an upward trend. In the 2002 census, only 173,000² citizens declared Silesian roots, whereas in the 2011 census 817,000 Polish citizens declared themselves Silesian.³

Silesian culture reflects the historical experience of Silesian people. It is characterized by diversity resulting from the intermingling of different cultural traditions: German, Polish, Czech, and Jewish. Silesian dialect reflects the impact of many cultures

2 Report of National Population and Housing Census, http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/PUBL_ludnosc_stan_i_struktura_demograficzno_spoleczna.pdf, p.44. Accessed 14 November, 2013.

3 Report of National Population and Housing Census, http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/lud_raport_z_wynikow_NSP2011.pdf:p.106. Accessed 14 November, 2013.

in the region. On the one hand, it is considered to be the best-preserved example of traditional Polish speech, while on the other it contains a large number of words of Germanic and Czech origin—which is why it is considered, in fact, an independent Silesian language. For Silesians, their language is one of the most important elements consolidating their sense of ethnic bonds. At various stages of Silesian history, the use of Silesian language was suppressed either by the Germans or Poles. Recently, researchers have observed an increased interest in knowledge of the Silesian language, especially among young people (Tambor, 2010), which also confirms that there has been an increase in a Silesian sense of ethnic pride. This has happened thanks to the many enthusiasts and activists for whom the cultivation of a Silesian identity has become a passion and an important purpose in life.

The presentation of Silesian history seems to be justified in the context of the discussed phenomenon: when an alien, in this case American, cultural text is taken over and used in order to support the building of a Silesian cultural identity. Centuries of Silesian experience with the imposition of foreign cultures led Silesians to acquire the ability to tame what is alien and hostile and transform it into something familiar and friendly. The main purpose of Kłyk's film activities is the promotion and preservation of a Silesian identity: the telling of Silesian history, and the description of customs, food, costumes, and landscapes is done entirely in Silesian language.

Józef Kłyk comes from Bojszowy, a small village located in Upper Silesia, near Auschwitz, with a population of slightly over three thousand. He was born in 1950 and from an early age was fascinated with cinema. He pursued his passion not only by working in a traveling cinema and watching movies; when he turned 17, he bought an amateur Soviet camera and started making films. From the very beginning he was fascinated with American movies. Kłyk is an amateur driven by passion. He has not attended any film schools or professional film trainings. The only filmmaking education that he received was from watching Hollywood movies. By watching the same film several times and carefully

observing camera settings, the use of light, film-editing, and narrative solutions, he learned the craft of film. His first films were inspired by the silent slapstick comedies of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd. As Kłyk recalls, his first artistic choices were not due to conscious or creative decisions but resulted from the technological limitations of his camera: 'My Soviet camera did not record the soundtrack and worked at the speed of 16 frames per second, producing accelerated motion and, in a natural manner, a comic effect'.⁴ At the same time, at the very beginning of his film activities, Kłyk became fascinated by American Westerns. The Polish communist authorities, which were very critical and wary of everything that was of US origin, did not object to Westerns, probably recognizing the format as safe and not affecting the ideological loyalty of Polish citizens: 'It was regarded as "ideologically correct" because it examined the relationship between individuals and society and the tension between individual and community priorities' (Gadomska, 1998: 18). Hence, Poles were familiar with Hollywood classics such as *High Noon* (1954), *3:10 to Yuma* (1957), *Rio Bravo* (1959), and many others. The Polish national TV station presented a series about the American Wild West; *Bonanza*, with the Cartwright family, was known to almost every Pole. Westerns were very often the only alternative to Soviet film productions, which were hated by most people, thus they became cult films watched by Poles over and over again. Literature about cowboys and Native Americans was also very popular in Poland, such as James Fenimore Cooper and his idealistic vision of the Wild West and Karl May's adventure novels set in the American Old West, such as *Winnetou* and *Old Shatterhand*. Within this context, it is easy to understand Kłyk's fascination with this genre and his familiarity with its formal solutions and narrative structures.

At first, Kłyk based his stories on original American Western plots. His first Western, *The Stagecoach Robbery* (1968), was a short film based on Edwin Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), but unexpectedly, even for Kłyk himself, the movie turned into a comedy. The same surprising effect was achieved in the next, much longer production, *The Stagecoach to Kansas* (1969), inspired

4 Józef Kłyk in an interview conducted by the author on July 10, 2013.

by John Ford's Hollywood classic, *The Stagecoach* (1939). The comic effects emerged on the one hand because of an unskillful use of the means of cinematic expression, and, on the other, because of deficiencies and imperfections of settings, costumes, and props. Kłyk recalls from the movie set that 'The stagecoaches were riding along the dirt road, because horses were used to it and refused to move anywhere else. Cowboys and Indians were running through a potato field and we had an Indian infantry, because there were not enough horses in the village'. He learned from his own mistakes, still experimenting and trying to use simple measures and procedures in order to obtain the effects that he observed in Hollywood films with budgets of several million dollars.

Soon repeating and imitating American models was not enough for Kłyk, and his Westerns became more than just ludicrous playing around and blind imitation. He admittedly retained the classic Western formula but used it for different content, aesthetics, and values. He created his own unique way of telling stories about cowboys, settlers, and Native Americans by developing a new subgenre—the Silesian Western, also sarcastically called the 'kielbasa Western' in reference to the spaghetti Westerns. Kłyk went beyond making amateur films, becoming a strong director with an individual, characteristic style and with a constant message addressed to his viewers: 'Remember about Silesia; its people, history and culture'. His next Westerns, *The Man from Nowhere* (1980/83), *Full Death* (1984/86) and *The Free Man* (1988/91), form a Silesian trilogy titled *On the Trail of Lawlessness* and belong to the most famous part of Kłyk's film achievements.

The inspiration for the change appeared after Kłyk had read a book by Professor Andrzej Brożek on the history of Silesian immigrants to America, called *Ślązacy w Teksasie. Relacje o najstarszych osadach polskich w Ameryce (Silesians in Texas. Accounts of the First Polish Settlements in the United States)*. It was a history of human despair and determination, of dreams for a better future, and of a severe reality that left no place for illusions.

ACROSS LANDS AND OCEANS—SILESIA IN TEXAS

In the autumn of 1854, a group of 150 Silesians, poor farmers from villages near Opole, left from Wrocław for Brema, and after

about 60 days on the sea they reached Galveston. After two weeks of a difficult hike along the San Antonio River through a wild and unknown prairie, they reached the mouth of the river, where they decided to establish a settlement called Panna Maria (Brożek, 1972: 14). In American documents, Panna Maria is registered as the first Polish settlement in the United States. During the Civil War, Polish immigrants were conscripted and forced to fight. After the war, when Texan troops left the forts that had been used to defend the settlers against Native Americans, the Native American attacks intensified. The situation worsened when hundreds of ex-slaves who had fled from plantations and farms were looking for new settlement possibilities in towns. In addition, Ku Klux Klan actions were becoming increasingly frequent and aggressive and were directed against not only Afro-Americans but all 'strangers'.

The *lawlessness*, guns, constant Indian attacks, and many fascinating stories fit perfectly into the Western format. Kłyk directed his camera at the Silesians, among whom there were gunmen, sheriffs, clergymen, and beautiful women. Both the internal relations of the Silesian immigrants and how they interacted with the other inhabitants of Texas became the subject of the Silesian trilogy.

The first part, *The Man from Nowhere*, was inspired by the movie *Shane* (1953) by George Stevens, in which a young gunfighter helps the local community of farmers against a rich cattleman who wants to take over their land. Stevens' Western is a typical example of a classic Western. This is one reason why it became interesting for Kłyk, while another reason was the story of the solitary, righteous man fighting against evil.

In Kłyk's movie, the main protagonist is Wawrzyn Złotko, a Silesian who was compelled by the German oppressors to leave his homeland, which was not even on any map, since Poland had been partitioned and Silesia was under German rule. Wawrzyn was a real man from nowhere. He arrived in Texas and became an outlaw, a cowboy with a bad past who, as it happens in classic Westerns, after completing a moral obligation (to avenge the death of Silesian immigrants killed by bandits), begins a new life in a new place—the Silesian settlement, Panna Maria, in Texas.

Jolanta Szymkowska-Bartyzel
Jagiellonian University
Cracow, Poland

Other parts of Kłyk's trilogy continue the story of Wawrzyn's life and his fight against all of the manifestations of evil and injustice that he faces in the name of the community of Silesian immigrants in Texas. Wawrzyn is a typical hero of American Westerns: very manly and brave with life experience that allows him to build a very unambiguous code of values which he follows. He is uncompromising and knows that he can rely only on himself. On the other hand, he is a typical Silesian, for whom the community he comes from and its values (religiosity, solidarity and tradition) are very important. The Silesians in Kłyk's Westerns represent the highest moral principles to which other social groups in Texas should aspire. In *The Free Man*, the last part of the trilogy, Wawrzyn returns to his homeland because he misses his country and feels Texas would never become his home. Wawrzyn represents the mental dilemmas of many Silesian immigrants, their longings, pains, and nostalgia for their lost homeland. Wawrzyn returns also because he feels his cowboy effectiveness is needed—it is 1939, and the Germans have just invaded Poland. Wawrzyn, as a Texan cowboy, fights against the Nazis on his horse—he kills many, but finally he also gets killed.

In 1999, Kłyk returned to Texan themes and directed another Silesian Western, *Two from Texas*, telling the story of the Silesian historical figure Marcin Mróz (M'Rose), a famous cattle thief in Texas, and one of his friends, a folk hero, gunfighter, and lawyer named John Wesley Hardin, whom he met in El Paso. When Martin was imprisoned, Hardin seduced Martin's wife, a beautiful former prostitute named Helena. At first friends and then rivals, both were shot dead by Texas rangers and lie side by side in the Concordia cemetery in El Paso. Kłyk tries to stick closely to historical facts in his movie, but the overall story is slightly dramatized and embellished.

Two from Texas, even more clearly than the trilogy, shows where Kłyk places his interest. The stories, spectacular adventures of the heroes in the Texan environment, are only an excuse to present traditional Silesian customs, rituals, costumes, and language. This goal determines that Kłyk's Westerns are set in a very classic formula, built upon typical, regular narrative solutions, conventional plots and themes. Will Wright, in his classic work on Westerns,

Six Guns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western, describes the classic Western as

the prototype of all Westerns, 'the one people think of when they say, "All Westerns are alike." It is the story of the lone stranger who rides into a troubled town and cleans it up, winning the respect of the town folk and the love of the schoolmarm [...]. The classical plot defines the genre [...] and the other plots—vengeance, transition, professional—are all built upon its symbolic foundation and depend upon this foundation for their meaning. (Wright, 1975: 32)

Kłyk's Westerns contain all of the required structural elements of the classical model—the hero, society, and villains—and the narrative structures developed in the classical plot order. Kłyk uses this very classic Western formula intentionally and rigorously. By using the commonly known, predictable, and transparent Western format, Kłyk draws the audience's attention to other aspects of the screen reality, namely the presentation and promotion of Silesian culture and tradition. The Silesian identity is the most important protagonist of his Westerns, and it dominates all other aspects of the picture. This does not mean that Kłyk ignores the Texan reality: he studies American Old West culture very carefully and is very meticulous about details. However, when something of particular importance for Silesians is to be shown or said, the whole dynamic Western action is slowed down and the Wild West either becomes a mere backdrop or completely disappears to give place to Bojszowy and its people, history, and tradition. Kłyk presents, for example, the ceremony of a traditional Silesian wedding. His camera slowly shows the details of a traditional Silesian wedding dress, wedding table decorations, and even a wedding meal. While watching these scenes, it becomes clear why Silesian Westerns have been nicknamed 'kielbasa Westerns'—the characters celebrating Silesian holidays and customs eat traditional Silesian delicacies, among which sausage is of particular importance.

WESTERNS AS RITUALS

A discussion of the ritualization processes present in Kłyk's films should begin with the genre itself. For film art, the forming of a genre depends primarily on the stability of the conventions. Conventions are elements which are known to both the creator

Jolanta Szymkowska-Bartyzel
Jagiellonian University
Cracow, Poland

and his audience beforehand, consisting of things such as favorite plots, stereotyped characters, accepted ideas, commonly known metaphors, and other linguistic devices (Cawelti, 2001: 204). Conventions grow from repetition and familiarity; they 'represent familiar shared images and meanings and they assert an ongoing continuity of values' (204). Ritual, also based on repetition, is 'a sequence of actions performed in a strict, pre-established pattern whose purpose is to reinforce certain beliefs, practices and values, as well as to produce some real benefit for the participant(s)' (Clark and Clanton, 2012: 10).

Rick Altman, in his 1977 text 'Towards a Theory of Genre Film' (republished later as a chapter in his 1987 book *The American Film Musical*), distinguishes seven characteristics which 'identify and define the genre film' (Altman, 1977: 38). According to Altman, all genre films are dualistic, because they build their meanings on oppositions, juxtaposing

[...] cultural values with countercultural ones, for example through constant doubling of protagonists representing opposing values, aesthetics or morality: good and bad characters, beautiful and ugly, rich and poor. Genre films are also repetitive, because they constantly use the same stories, motives, characters and settings, which are not only repeated but also accumulated. The fact that genre film are both repetitive and cumulative in their effect naturally makes them extremely predictable. (Altman, 1977: 39).

Watching genre films, we can always predict what will happen with the characters. 'People go to genre films to renew contact with old friends, to hear old stories, to participate in events with which they somehow already seem familiar' (39). Furthermore, genre films are nostalgic—they are set in times and places important for the nation's history. With all of these features, genre films have become open to many interpretations and always have other meanings hidden under the story they tell or the picture they present. The symbolic qualities of genre films make them designed to play a fully functional role 'by contenting the audience with the status quo by reestablishing social equilibrium and balancing sexual, financial, or national insecurity' (40). With these seven attributes, genre film corresponds to one general form:

That form is *ritual*. Ritual is dualistic; like the myths to which it is related. Ritual is repetitive, both within the individual occurrence and over a period of time [...].

Ritual is cumulative; no single ritual phenomenon expresses the totality of a cultural myth, but taken together the sum of ritual activities determines the myth. Ritual is predictable; it always follows a regular pattern [...] Ritual is nostalgic; it seeks to establish continuity between past and present. (Altman, 1977: 41)

The key aspects common to genre film and ritual make the watching and reception of the films a ritualized form of activity. For the Western, as a typical representative of genre cinema, social ritual is an important dimension.

The Western, through its narrative conventions, carries out a variety of cultural functions in a unified way. It can be defined in terms of paradigm for the selection of certain plots, characters and settings of such a sort that these narrative elements not only create effective stories, but become endowed with certain aspects of collective ritual, game and dream. (Cawelti, 1999: 19)

In a classic Western, as in a ritual, 'some pairs of opposing social and cultural forces come together: belief and behavior, tradition and change, order and chaos, nature and culture' (Bell, 1992: 16). Classic Westerns are also modern American morality plays—they always present a strong moral story. Like every genre film, Westerns perform an important social function: in symbolic and non-invasive ways, they answer viewers' problematic questions and relieve social tensions within a community. American Westerns, as well as other genre films produced on a mass scale by Hollywood film studios and distributed globally, fulfill the ritual function superficially. They function as ad hoc dosed pills which discharge emotions to a multicultural and multinational audience.

Kłtyk's Westerns, classic in form and filled with local content of sacred importance for Silesians, became a kind of *gesta deorum* telling the stories of Silesian heroes, a record of Silesian history and of the traditions which are being slowly displaced by global trends and cultural phenomena. Watching Kłtyk's movies is a social activity, experienced in groups, in the company of friends and neighbors. The films are important not only for people from Bojszowry but also for Texans of Silesian origin, descendants of the nineteenth-

century immigrants who see Kłtyk's movies as a record of their own history and as an opportunity to return to their roots.

WESTERN-MAKING AS PLAY AND SOCIAL RITUAL

Kłtyk's Westerns are ritualized not only at the level of perception during the act of viewing; the process of ritualization takes place also during the film-production process. The presence of ritualistic aspects can be observed in the director's actions as well as the activities of the film crew: members of the Bojszowy community participate in the film production as actors, extras, technical assistants, etc.

For the director, the process is a kind of mystery in which Kłtyk organizes the whole narrative world. Being simultaneously a film director and a cameraman, he is a demiurge. The entire creative process, from the idea of the story he wants to tell through the whole organization of a movie set, costumes, and actors until the premiere of the movie, is a sequence of repetitive operations that must be completed, a sort of rite he celebrates, creating his narrative world and turning it into a mythical story. In his Westerns, Kłtyk also plays the main characters around whom the narrative world is organized. *Wawrzyn Złotko* in the trilogy and Sheriff John Rzeppa in *Two from Texas* let Kłtyk retain the position of creator and participant at the same time. The independence of an amateur filmmaker puts Kłtyk in the position of an artisan who creates his work according to his own vision, and, although the film is an art form based on mechanical reproduction, Kłtyk's works are not totally emancipated from ritualistic aspects. His creative and financial independence, total devotion to every project, and the involvement of the local community of Bojszowy in the production cycle make his films very special and unique. Considering that many of Kłtyk's films are preserved only on master tapes and have never been reproduced, we can talk about the special 'aura' they possess.

Another form of ritual takes place within the Bojszowy community, for which Kłtyk's film production became something more than just the occasional actions of a crazy filmmaker. Kłtyk has been making his films since the 1960s and has become an important cultural institution in Bojszowy and Upper Silesia. His film activities have become ritualized in many ways. Ritualized activities

*Oceans Apart:
In Search of New Wor(l)ds*

RIAS VOL. 7, SPRING-SUMMER N^o 1/2014

constitute interaction between the collective representation of social life and individual experience and behavior. Bojszowy residents are actively involved in Kłyk's film-making. They feel responsible and contribute to every film project. They either act or provide various things needed on location: costumes, furniture, food. They lend their houses, gardens and outbuildings, domestic animals, and children. One of the farmers converted a britzka into a stagecoach; another changed his workhorses into wild horses. Kłyk himself made many elements for reconstruction of the Old West, such as guns and horse saddles, and he even reconstructed a typical Western saloon in the basement of his house. He is very resourceful—within two hours and with no budget he is able to organize an entire movie set including technical equipment, cattle and horses. The Bojszowy community, led by Kłyk's passion and determination, have built a kind of classic Western town with all of the necessary landmarks—a farmer's store, general store, and saloon.

*Jolanta Szymkowska-Bartyzel
Jagiellonian University
Cracow, Poland*

According to Victor Turner, 'Rite affords a creative anti-structure that is distinguished from the rigid maintenance of social orders, hierarchies and traditional forms' (Bell, 1992: 20–21). In this sense, the fictional worlds of genre films create for the participants a platform of ritualized entertainment. Just as in traditional religious performances such as Nativity or Passion plays the same actors every year become Jesus Christ or Pontius Pilate, in Kłyk's Westerns the same fellow countryman plays a sheriff or an Indian chief. The film roles often reflect the social position of the actor—for example, one eminent and charismatic lady from Bojszowy always plays the Silesian mother in Texas.

Kłyk [...] does not seek any professional actors. His actors are Bojszowy residents, where almost everyone is an actor. At Kłyk's request the local owners of cows, horses, carts and carriages arrive at the film set. Also a local quartet and actors, each with his own set of costumes. If it is necessary, Kłyk himself sews the right costume. Everything happens spontaneously and for free. (Szwiec, 2012: 141)⁵

5 'Kłyk [...] nie zabiega o zawodowego aktora. W jego filmach grają mieszkańcy Bojszów i okolic. Tam chyba każdy jest aktorem. Na wezwanie Kłyka na planie stawiają się właściciele krów, koni, wozów i powozów. Stawia się lokalny kwartet muzyczny i odtwórcy ról—większość ma już własne stroje.

For the people of Bojszowy, the production activities for Kłyk's Westerns have become a pastime of sorts. The only time when the films can be made is Sunday, when, after compulsory participation in church service, people dress up, bring necessary objects, and gather on the film set to become cowboys, sheriffs, or bandits.

Normally in such communities leisure time is spent on entertainment such as dances or sport events, but in Bojszowy they make films about the Silesian past. For these people, making Westerns is a ritual of play and entertainment. Johan Huizinga, who has claimed that 'play existed before any culture', defined it as

[...] a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary life' as being 'not serious', but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. (Huizinga, 1955: 17)

In this definition, Huizinga suggests that play is a denial of an ordinary life; it is non-serious because it is separated from reality. However, 'this does not mean that play is unreal or unimportant. As a force activity, play expresses some sense of what a self is; play attests to some aspects of one's "real" or "true" self. In this sense, it is very real activity' (Freezell, 2006: 28). Playing in Kłyk's film is acted out through social relationships. During the filmmaking process, people who take part in Kłyk's films build new liaisons and relationships and strengthen the ones already existing. Playing fictional characters from the American Wild West allows them to express their true personalities without the fear of speaking out or expressing disagreement. According to Sally Bailey,

Play provides emotional and intellectual distance so that difficult issues can be experimented with. Much of play is done within a distancing structure of some kind. Rules of behaviours that are followed within a game apply to everyone and create a level playing field in which skills can be tested without risking actual loss of status, money or life. Fictional characters that are played out within dramatized scenes under the guise of 'just pretend' allow players to put themselves into the shoes of people very similar or very unlike themselves (Bailey, 2011: 147).

Jeśli jest potrzeba, Kłyk osobiście szyje odpowiedni kostium. Oczywiście, wszystko to dzieje się dość spontanicznie i za darmo' (author's translation).

Bojszowy residents are not, and never will be, real cowboys or Native Americans, but they can perform them in Kłyk's movies. They can 'temporarily experience the taboo, the excessive and the risky' (Schechner, 2013: 52): bank robbing, killing a bandit, or being killed themselves. Play and ritual have much in common, since they both lead people into

[a] second reality, separate from ordinary life. This reality is one when people can become selves other than their daily selves. When they temporarily become or enact another, people perform actions different from what they do ordinarily. Thus, ritual and play transform people either permanently or temporarily. (Schechner, 2013: 52)

Kłyk's actors, who are hard-working farmers in daily life, full of worries, can become someone else for the period of filming, someone whom they could only watch on the screen. As in the ritual activity of watching a genre film, making the films has also become a ritual for the Bojszowy community.

However, Silesian Westerns are not made exclusively for the pure joy of the filmmaker and the Bojszowy residents. They are all involved in the outcome of this joyful activity: namely, describing and thereby preserving Silesian history and culture.

Kłyk uses two basic functions of cinema as a medium—a chronicler's function and an educational one. The camera becomes a chronicler that records events, people, and customs. Stories reconstructed from Silesian history are preserved by contemporary Silesians who, thanks to Kłyk's films, are preserving themselves for future generations of Silesians. From Kłyk's movies, descendants will learn not only about the fate of Silesians in Texas but also about Kłyk, his actors, and their rituals performed in front of the camera. Kłyk not only reconstructs the past but also saves the present, since through his works he provides knowledge of past generations as well as of himself and his contemporaries.

Kłyk's Westerns, although sometimes using a comic convention, tell stories of sacred importance for Silesian people, both those from Bojszowy and those from Panna Maria in Texas, with the help of the Western movie formula. Despite the oceans dividing them, the history of two nations has been told and mythologized.

CONCLUSION

The American Wild West transformed into mythology by American popular culture has made its mark on cultures around the world. Likewise, the Western genre has also been transformed through its encounter with different cultures. 'The Western's capacity to accommodate many different kinds of meaning, the archetypal pattern of heroic myth, the need for social ritual and for the disguised expression of latent motives and tension made the genre successful, as popular art and entertainment' (Cawelti, 1999: 56).

A significant part of Kłyk's work was inspired by texts of popular American culture: genre movies that were often accused, especially after revolutionary changes in the approach to cinema art initiated by the French New Wave, of thematic uniformity, lack of creativity, and closing of film stories within rigid narrative and aesthetic frames. The activities of the Silesian amateur filmmaker show how American culture can teach and inspire. Kłyk learned his film craft from Hollywood productions, first imitating the film expression and storylines, and then, as he was developing his artistic skills, more and more often going beyond the classic Hollywood solutions, consequently creating his own unique, original, *auteur* style. The most interesting and important aspect is the purpose of Kłyk's creative activities, which is protecting Silesian cultural identity and preserving Silesian history and tradition. Kłyk's activities show what possibilities the standardized texts of popular culture give when they meet a creative and talented recipient. For Kłyk, American culture is only a starting point; his Westerns, though undoubtedly grown out of American culture, have become regional, typically Silesian cultural texts. 'With popular culture, as much as with the fine arts, a genre needs the interest of original and imaginative artists who are capable of revitalizing its conventions and stereotypes to express contemporaneous concerns' (Cawelti, 1999: 56). Using the rigid formula of the classic Western, Kłyk transplanted the mythic American West to Bojszowy and proved how flexible the formula can be when it is used by an ingenious artist. Though viewers of Kłyk's Westerns might be distracted by the awkwardness and clumsiness of some solutions, these films still have to be looked at as texts made not for financial profit but because of a clear social need, as evidenced by the involve-

*Oceans Apart:
In Search of New Wor(l)ds*

RIAS VOL. 7, SPRING-SUMMER N^o 1/2014

ment of Bojszowy residents, as well as for the director's artistic need of expression. 'Adopting the Western film to settings, audiences, and cinematic traditions beyond the United States enriched the genre with new geographic realities, new histories, and new collisions between once-separate peoples' (Miller and Van Riper, 2014: xv). In the Silesian cultural context, Kłyk discovered the new potential of Westerns and used it in a very creative way to connect the once-separate past and present, as well as people from Silesia with those from Texas, despite time and distance.

*Jolanta Szymkowska-Bartyzel
Jagiellonian University
Cracow, Poland*

WORKS CITED

- Altman, C. F. (1977) 'Towards a Theory of Genre Film', in B. Lawton and J. Staiger (eds),
Film: Historical, Theoretical Speculations. The 1977 Film Studies Annual. Part 2. Pleasantville, New York: Redgrave, 31–43.
- Bailey, S. (2011) 'Play as a Staging Ground for Performance and Life', in C. Lobman and B. O'Neill (eds) *Play and Performance: Play and Culture Studies*. Volume 11. Lanham: University Press of America, 137–154.
- Bell, M. C. (1992) *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. Oxford, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Brozek, A. (1972) *Ślęzacy w Teksasie. Relacje o najstarszych osadach polskich w Ameryce*. Warszawa and Wrocław: PWN.
- Cawelti, J. G. (1999) *The Six-Gun Mystique Sequel*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State Popular Press.
- Clark, T. R. and Clanton, D. W. (eds) (2012) *Understanding Religion and Popular Culture: Theories, Themes, Products and Practices*. New York: Routledge.
- Freezell, M. R. (2006) *Sport, Play and Ethical Reflection*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- Gadomska, A. (1998) 'The Theatrical Distribution of American Films in Poland after 1989', in C. Dominik (ed) *Is Poland Being Americanized? Proceedings from the conference organized by The American Studies Center of Warsaw University and the Polish–U.S. Fulbright Commission* 3: 16–26.
- Hebdige, R. (1988) *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things*. London: Routledge.
- Huizinga, J. (1955) *Homo Ludens; A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Kamusella, T. (2007) *Silesia and Central European Nationalisms: The Emergence of National and Ethnic Groups in Prussian Silesia and Austrian Silesia (1848–1918)*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press.
- Kellner, D. (1995) *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics between the Modern and the Postmodern*. London: Routledge.

- Miller, C. J. and Van Riper, B. A. (2014) 'Introduction', in C. J. Miller and B. A. Van Riper (eds) *International Westerns: Re-Locating the Frontier*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press.
- Schechner, R. (2013) *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Szwiec, W. (2012) *Filmowe Południe: Kino amatorskie na Górnym Śląsku*. Mikołów: Wydawnictwo Miejskiej Biblioteki Publicznej.
- Tambor, J. (2010) *Kulturowe wyznaczniki tożsamości. Tożsamość mieszkańców województwa śląskiego. (Cultural Determinants of Identity. The Identity of Silesia Region Inhabitants)*. Paper presented on The Congress of Silesian Culture, September 23, 2010, http://www.regionalneobserwatoriumkultury.pl/kon2.html?file=tl_files/fotki%20kk/Kulturowe%20wyznaczniki%20tozsamosci%20-%20Jolanta%20Tambor.pdf
- Tomlinson, J. (1991) *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Turner, V. (1975) *Revelation and Divination in Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Welsch, W. (1999) *Transculturality—the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today*, in M. Featherstone and S. Lash (eds.) *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*. London: Sage, 194–213.
- Winter, R. (2003) 'Global Media, Cultural Change and the Transformation of the Local: The Contribution of Cultural Studies to a Sociology of Hybrid Formations', in U. Beck, N.
- Sznaider and R. Winter (eds) *Global America? The Cultural consequences of Globalization*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 206–221.
- Wright, W. (1975) *Six Guns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Jolanta Szymkowska-Bartyzel
Jagiellonian University
Cracow, Poland

THE YOUNG MEN AND THE SEA:

Sea/Ocean as a Space of Maturation?

The sea (or ocean) in American literature and culture is marked by a distinctive ambiguity. On the one hand, and quite expectedly, the sea voyage can be a maturation experience: such is the case of Humphrey Van Weyden, the protagonist of Jack London's *The Sea-Wolf*. However, the sea is also a space of the opposite experience: one that accommodates remarkably immature characters. Be it in the person of Captain Delano in Melville's 'Benito Cereno' or the eponymous Billy Budd, it is a site welcoming naïve and escapist heroes who do not want to or cannot adapt to the demands of land society.

London's Humphrey Van Weyden is an effeminate scholar who, because of a shipwreck, finds himself on board the ship *Ghost*, headed by the ruthless captain Wolf Larsen. During the first half of the book, Van Weyden is confronted with a world radically different from the one he was used to: one in which no pity (or self-pity) is shown, in which hard physical work applies equally to everyone, and a value is given to 'standing on one's own legs' (London, 2000: 127). Thus, in order to survive, Humphrey must change physically, which he does, acquiring more stamina and losing his scholarly sensitivity. However, the process of physical adaptation is only part of the change that takes place in the protagonist. Besides working as a cook's help and a cabin boy, Humphrey takes part in long theoretical discussions with Wolf Larsen. Captain Larsen, being self-schooled and interested in philosophy, enjoys in Humphrey a partner for disputes about possible immortality of the soul. He claims that

Justyna Fruzińska
University of Łódź
Poland

[...] life is like yeast, a ferment, a thing that moves and may move for a minute, an hour, a year, or a hundred years, but that in the end will cease to move. The big eat the little that they may continue to move, the strong eat the weak that they may retain their strength. The lucky eat the most and move the longest, that is all. (33)

Expressing these views, Larsen challenges Van Weyden's metaphysical and idealistic approach. Van Weyden never fully gives in to Larsen's materialism, but he does seem to have a shadow of a doubt. Van Weyden undergoes a slow change, and the first stage of his transformation is connected to becoming more self-reliant, to finally being able to stand up to the bullying cook Mugridge, but also to a partial loss of his humanity. Humphrey starts to forget who he used to be, for better and for worse, developing muscles but also finding it increasingly difficult to argue against Larsen's philosophical views.

The second half of the novel, and of Humphrey's development, is marked by the appearance of another shipwrecked passenger, Miss Maud Brewster. Being a writer, she quickly finds common language with Van Weyden while resisting Larsen's advances. She shares Humphrey's idealism, thus reminding him of who he used to be and pushing his change of character in another direction. Van Weyden retains Larsen's lessons of physical self-reliance but without renouncing his former views on the nature of human beings. Moreover, he finds the courage to escape the *Ghost* in order to save his own and Maud's lives. The two find themselves on Endeavor Island—a desert place where they can rely only on their own ingenuity to survive. Finally, the *Ghost*, occupied only by the dying Larsen, moors at the island. The captain has been defeated by his own brother Death Larsen and suffers from what looks like a brain tumor, experiencing horrible headaches, then going blind and finally losing control of his limbs. Humphrey and Maud witness the captain's death, feeling free and safe only after the brute is gone.

Van Weyden's maturation is a mixture of self-reliance gained through physical work in adverse conditions, opposing the violence of Larsen who threatens and at the same time fascinates him, and getting the woman both protagonists desire. The two components necessary for Humphrey's development are confrontations

with the sea and with his own sexuality. Until Maud Brewster appears on the ship, Humphrey eroticizes Larsen, describing the captain's body with fascination and in detail, and 'enact[ing] a scene of sheer submissiveness in which manly beauty reduces him to a passive, feminized, utterly dependent status' (Mitchell, 1998: 332). The coming of Maud not only makes Humphrey transfer his desire onto a heterosexual object but also contributes to his victory over Larsen through escaping the *Ghost*. For Eric Carl Link, the novel's ending 'defies reader expectations', because there is no physical fight between Humphrey and Wolf resulting in winning the woman's heart. Instead, 'Larsen undergo[es] a protracted deterioration that eventually leads to sensory deprivation, the severing of human consciousness from the body, and a death which becomes little more than a blinking out of some interior spark of life rooted in mental awareness' (Link, 2010: 152). However, the fact that Humphrey does not defeat Larsen in a physical fight is not as surprising as it may first seem; after all, the main conflict between the two heroes is a philosophical one. Larsen's death, or rather the way he dies, is what constitutes Humphrey's victory. It is true that 'the plot [of *The Sea Wolf* - J.F.] traces the pallid idealist Humphrey Van Weyden's acquisition of figurative "sea legs"—indeed of an entire physical body—as counterpoint to the fiercely materialist Wolf Larsen's gradual loss of bodily functions' (Mitchell, 1998: 318). Yet, the more important development that takes place in Humphrey is the internal one. There is no need of Humphrey's physically challenging Larsen, since this is not the core of their difference.

It is interesting that Humphrey's change is mirrored by an opposite process in Wolf Larsen; the two seem to be trading places. In the words of Mitchell, 'It is not simply that hard knocks at sea transform an effete idealist into a tough-minded materialist, but that a man who essentially lacks a body gains one, while a consummately physical figure is stripped of his' (Mitchell, 1998: 323). Mitchell goes as far as to claim that 'Van Weyden and Wolf gradually exchange both bodies and selves' (325). While it is easy to prove this statement in its first part, with Humphrey becoming stronger and Larsen being debilitated by his illness, the idea of the exchange of selves seems to be rather far-fetched.

In what is most important to the constitution of both characters, their moral and philosophical views, they never alter. Humphrey till the end believes in the immortal soul, while Larsen even when dying utters the last word 'bosh', testifying to how little he thinks of the meaning of human life. The only difference is that the turn of events seems to confirm Humphrey's views: while for Mitchell Larsen's death reveals that 'the construction of the self depends on a physical body' (325) and 'selfhood exists only as a principle of action, not of contemplation' (324), the opposite view can be defended as well. Of course, Wolf's self is indeed limited by his inability to use his body, but it is not annihilated. Rather, when he is no longer able to see, move, or speak, he still replies positively to Humphrey's question, 'Are you all there?' (London, 2000: 238). It seems that, contrary to Mitchell's point, the key issue in Wolf's death is precisely the fact that, much as his body is damaged, his spirit remains unchanged, trapped in the immobility of his body. It is both a torture to Larsen, who remains fully conscious of his deteriorating condition until the very end, and a confirmation of Van Weyden's belief that human soul is not simply a function of the physical organism.

Not surprisingly, the confrontation with the adverse conditions at sea and the necessity of fight for survival make Humphrey more self-reliant. Combined with Maud Brewster's love that keeps reminding him of the 'civilized' world he comes from, it results in his becoming a full man. From an unpractical intellectual who was happy that on board the *Martinez* (the ferry that sank in the beginning of the novel) all work was delegated to specialized seamen and that he did not need to worry about anything, Van Weyden becomes a man who does not depend on others to provide for him. However, he gains more than physical strength—if it were strength that mattered, Wolf Larsen would be the one to win the sexual competition for Maud's interest. In the words of Link, 'Hump may start as an effeminate aesthete, but his ability to reshape himself in order to meet the challenges of a new environment gives him "mastery" over his situation' (Link, 2010: 155). Van Weyden's strength is an advantage in the Darwinian fight for survival, and it lies in his ability to adapt, his newly gained flexibility. Mitchell believes the novel makes a full circle, ending with the same Hum-

phrey it started with: 'perhaps less effete now but little different from his earlier self, writing a novel of escape that only reaffirms his stake in his culture and its deep self-divisions' (Mitchell 1998: 333). However, it seems that Humphrey has changed considerably on the psychological level: he becomes not only braver, more self-reliant, and independent but also completes his life through love, which is a clear sign of reaching maturity. His journey is a classic example of the transforming power of the sea, still Romantically understood as the wilderness developing one's true self.

What makes London grow out of Romanticism, however, is the fact that Humphrey needs to marry both self-reliance and the values of the culture he comes from, impersonated by Maud. Moreover, Humphrey's 'self-reliance' can no longer be the Emersonian self-reliance of an individualist seeking spiritual self-fulfillment. Rather, it pertains only to the physical skill of survival, psychological independence, and will to fight. Given London's naturalist background, *The Sea-Wolf* may be read as a novel about a man being shaped by his conditions and adapting in order to survive, that is, more deterministically than this paper has so far proposed. If naturalism is interested in depicting the human being 'manipulated as in an experiment in the scientific laboratory' (Furst and Skrine, 1971: 47), London's novel as well takes a weak intellectual, places him in adverse conditions, and reports on the outcome of the experiment. However, the extent to which *The Sea-Wolf* presents a purely naturalistic vision of the world is debatable. After all, it is Wolf Larsen who professes the 'survival of the fittest' version of Darwinian philosophy, while Humphrey sticks to his idealist belief in the immortal soul. Since Larsen dies and Van Weyden survives, the novel seems to prove the latter right. Perhaps, as Lilian R. Furst and Peter N. Skrine phrase it, 'Naturalism succeeded best where it seemed to fail, i.e. where it departed from, or rather outstripped its own intentions' (71). One may believe that Humphrey Van Weyden not only 'survives' but also matures, which is a far more psychological angle than pure naturalism would allow.

If the sea can be a space within which maturation happens, it can also, more surprisingly, be one which welcomes markedly immature characters. Melville's 'Benito Cereno' is a story

of Captain Amasa Delano, who encounters a Spanish slave ship, apparently led by Captain Benito Cereno. Delano visits the vessel and intuitively feels that there is something strange about it, but, until the very last moment, he fails to understand that the ship's crew fell victim to a slave revolt, that Don Benito is only a puppet in the hands of his servant Babo and that the blacks are putting on an almost theatrical show in order to mislead Delano into believing that the few white men on board are still in control of the situation. The whole story is about human perception, or how Delano's character and presuppositions make him blind to the horrific truth on board *San Dominick*.

From the very outset of the story, when the strange ship shows itself to Amasa Delano, the captain is described in a telling way. His 'surprise might have deepened into some uneasiness had he not been a person of a singularly undistrustful good nature, not liable, except on extraordinary and repeated incentives, and hardly then, to indulge in personal alarms, and way involving the imputation of malign evil in man' (Melville, 1964: 3). This kind of innocence is what will tint Delano's vision throughout his stay on *San Dominick* among the mutinous slaves—the innocence called by Jason Richards simply 'stupidity' (Richards, 2007: 74). Whenever he starts to suspect something peculiar about the behavior of *San Dominick's* crew, he dismisses the thought quickly: 'At last he began to laugh at his former forebodings; and laugh at the strange ship for, in its aspect, someway siding with them, as it were; and laugh, too, at the odd-looking blacks' (Melville, 1964: 31). Delano even feels remorseful when he realizes that he has doubted Divine Providence: 'Once again he smiled at the phantoms which had mocked him, and felt something like a tinge of remorse, that, by harboring them even for a moment, he should, by implication, have betrayed an atheist doubt of the ever-watchful Providence' (Melville, 1964: 65). His belief in Providence is 'his notion of order, which allows him to dismiss his initial misreading' (Barrett, 2011: 412). In other words, Delano feels exempt from thinking independently as he delegates all power to God's plan.

A large part of Delano's problem with perceiving what is really happening on *San Dominick* are his convictions about blacks: his 'romantic racialism'—'the largely northern, sentimental belief

that blacks were childlike and good-natured' (Richards, 2007: 73)—a conviction used by the rebellion's leader Babo, who is 'playing to the Yankee's racial fantasies' (74). When Delano sees black mothers with children, he watches them with fascination, picturing them as noble savages: 'There's naked nature, now; pure tenderness and love, thought Captian Delano, well pleased' (Melville, 1964: 36). He sees blacks as harmless, because to him they are almost part of the fauna; after all, Delano 'took to Negroes, not philanthropically, but genially, just as other men to Newfoundland dogs' (50). He also thinks of them as 'natural valets and hair-dressers; taking to the comb and brush congenially as to the castanets, and flourishing them apparently with almost equal satisfaction' (49). At the same time, when he deliberates whether Cereno is not plotting against his life together with his black slaves, his phrasing is blunter: 'could then Don Benito be any way in complicity with the blacks? But they were too stupid. Besides, who ever heard of a white so far a renegade as to apostatize from his very species almost, by leaguin in against it with negroes?' (39). Delano is unable to suspect a mutiny, since he refuses humanity to blacks; within his fantasy, they would be unable to organize and manage such an event, not to mention that their dog-like faithfulness would keep them from wishing to do so.

Thus, Delano's faults amount to his 'ignorance of blacks, a superiority complex, and optimism' (Justman, 1978: 301). He is too good-natured to suspect man of being capable of such deception, and, at the same time, too racist to suspect blacks of such a degree of intelligence. For Laura Barrett, the captain's problem is logocentrism: 'perceiving a literal correspondence between words and things', whereas many signs he misreads 'arrive via symbols' (Barrett, 2011: 412). In this way, Delano's character would reflect a larger cultural formation that relies upon a distinct understanding of language. In Barrett's words, Melville 'creates in Delano the worst kind of reader, one who fancies himself a detective, someone who prides his ability to discern clues and subtle signs, which ultimately do nothing but bolster his entrenched world view' (421). Amasa Delano believes he knows what he sees, whereas in fact he could not be further from the truth. 'Whatever Delano attributes to blacks boomerangs back on him, so that he quickly

resembles the stereotypes that inform his racist ideology' (Richards, 2007: 81): he believes blacks to be good-natured, whereas this very word is used to describe also him; he fancies them similar to faithful Newfoundland dogs, while it is he who resembles one in his simple-minded insistence on the truthfulness of what he sees.

Being unable to understand the real situation on *San Dominick*, Delano is 'dragged into the play, removed from his strictly spectatorial position' and becomes Babo's puppet just like Cereno (80). If Benito Cereno is 'played' by Babo thanks to physical threat, it is truly Delano who integrates with the theatre of the revolting slaves, as he believes the reality of their enactment. Justman sees Delano's position in more pragmatic terms, as an 'agreement to be deceived' (Justman, 1978: 302). He believes that Delano 'shows not innocence but willed ignorance' because believing in the blacks' performance is what guarantees his safety on the ship. However, although the captain's ignorance does indeed work in his favor, it is hard to claim that he is aware of this state of affairs. Rather, the story's poignancy depends on his portrayal as genuinely naïve; a man unaware of evil and thus not allowing for it in the situation he finds himself in. The fact that he is an American, as opposed to the Spaniard Benito Cereno, according to the Romantic belief in America being 'purer' than Europe, only highlights his purity and innocence.

Delano's naivety is shown in the story as synonymous with immaturity. Barrett stresses the fact that the Captain has an extraordinary inclination to fantasy, imagining himself in different surroundings while at sea, which 'mak[es] him a suitable victim for a masquerade' (Barrett, 2011: 422). It also reveals his childlike quality, his being seduced by the playful or fanciful aspect of what he witnesses. The strongest evidence of the Captain's infantilism is his musing when he starts to suspect that Cereno and his slaves might be willing to take his life:

What, I, Amasa Delano—Jack of the Beach, as they called me when a lad—I, Amasa; the same that, duck-satchel in hand, used to paddle along the water-side to the schoolhouse made from the old hulk—I, little Jack of the Beach, that used to go berrying with cousin Nat and the rest; I to be murdered here at the ends of the earth, on board a haunted pirate-ship by a horrible Spaniard? Too nonsensical to think of! Who would murder

Amasa Delano? His conscience is clean. There is some one above. Fie, fie, Jack of the Beach! You are a child indeed. (Melville, 1964: 41)

In this short passage Delano betrays not one but several proofs that show him as a grown-up child. He is indeed still the 'little Jack of the Beach' with whom he identifies; he believes that nothing bad can happen to him, as he is an innocent boy. Moreover, 'His conscience is clean', says Delano revealing his magical thinking typical of children; as he is a good man no harm may come to him. The soliloquy sounds as if the captain was rebuking himself for even admitting an adult thought of possible danger.

Delano does not change even at the end of the story; he is a character for whom there is no maturation taking place. After Benito Cereno is saved, for the rest of his days the Spanish captain is unable to regain his peace of spirit, having witnessed the rebellion, discovered what humans are capable of, and, most importantly, what blacks are capable of when desperate. His view of order and natural hierarchy has been shaken, which makes it impossible for him to continue with his life normally. This, however, does not apply to Delano, who seems not to have understood anything from the Spaniard's ordeal. Delano thinks that the rebellion should remain in the past and that Cereno should enjoy the fact that he is alive. In his naivety he cannot grasp the core of Don Benito's experience.

Delano shares a lot of characteristics with Melville's another famous childlike sailor, Billy Budd. Called by the crew of his ship 'Baby Budd', Billy is presented as an innocent boy requiring protection against the corrupt world: the other sailors 'do his washing, darn old trousers for him; the carpenter is at odd times making a pretty little chest of drawers for him. Anybody will do anything for Billy Budd; and it's the happy family here' (Melville, 1962: 47). He evokes natural feelings of compassion and care. Even by the end of the story, when he awaits to be executed, he resembles 'a slumbering child in the cradle' (119). It is an innocence of the first man before the Fall, lacking self-consciousness, failing to understand irony, which poses him in one line with faithful Saint Bernard's dogs (Goldman, 2005: 434). Interestingly, in 'Benito Cereno' Captain Delano compares blacks to Newfoundland dogs while it is clear that this comparison applies rather to him; here, Billy's

naivety is described by similar means. For Richard Chase, Billy lacks the tragic dimension of existence, never becoming a 'fully knowing man' (Chase, 1949: 266). The same can be said of Delano and his inability to understand Benito Cereno's horror of 'the negro' even after he is saved from *San Dominick*.

Both Delano's and Billy Budd's innocence seems to border on ignorance; they are not Romantically related characters, unspoiled by society and reaching at some transcendental truth. Rather, Melville seems to differ from the mainstream Romantic tendencies, while at the same time being fascinated by those childlike figures. The sea provides escape for those who are not tainted by the understanding of humans' darker side. Also in *Moby Dick* the sea sets one free from the demands of the land; it frees Ishmael from depression, even though at the same time it conveys a death-like element: a threat of drowning (Hamilton, 1979: 420). In its naturalness and ahistoricity it is a metonymic America (420–421), a space of permanent immaturity, outside social norms and forces. While the optimistic interpretation would be to see the sea as another frontier, allowing men for pursuing self-reliance and undergoing maturation (a version of which is Humphrey Van Weyden's story), it accommodates also individualism gone mad, like in the case of Ahab, or childlike simplicity, as it is with Captain Amasa Delano or Billy Budd. Like the American wilderness, it can be a sphere where maladjusted individuals can escape from the demands of society and refuse to grow up.

WORKS CITED

- Barrett, L. (2011) 'Light and Baffling: Uncanny Punning in Melville's *Benito Cereno*', in *Papers on Language and Literature* 47 (4): 404-29.
- Chase, R. (1949) *Herman Melville: A Critical Study*. New York: Macmillan.
- Furst, L. R. and Skrine, P. N. (1971) *Naturalism*. London: Methuen & Co.
- Goldman, E. (2005) 'Bringing Out the Beast in Melville's *Billy Budd*: The Dialogue of Darwinian and "Holy" Lexicons on Board the *Bellipotent*', in *Studies in the Novel* 37 (4): 430-42.
- Hamilton, W. (1979) 'Melville and the Sea', in *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 62 (4): 417-29.
- Justman, S. (1978) 'Repression and Self in *Benito Cereno*', in *Studies in Short Fiction* 15 (3): 301-6.
- Link, E. C. (2010) 'The Five Deaths of Wolf Larsen', in *Studies in American Naturalism* 5 (2): 151-63.
- London, J. (2000) *The Sea-Wolf*. Mineola and New York: Dover Publications.
- Melville, H. (1964) 'Benito Cereno', in R. Chase (ed.) *Selected Tales and Poems by Herman Melville*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston: 3-91.
- (1962) *Billy Budd, Sailor*. H. Hayford and M. M. Sealts, Jr. (eds). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mitchell, L. C. (1998) "'and Rescue Us from Ourselves': Becoming Someone in Jack London's *the Sea-Wolf*", in *American Literature* 70 (2): 317-33.
- Richards, J. (2007) 'Melville's (Inter)National Burlesque: Whiteface, Blackface, and "Benito Cereno"', in *The American Transcendental Quarterly* 21 (2): 73-92.

REVOLVING THE VORTEX; or, Working through Trauma at Sea

The famous epilogue of Melville's *Moby-Dick* provides the necessary justification for the novel's very existence—a first-person account of the *Pequod's* sinking is possible, needless to say, because 'one did survive the wreck' (Melville, 2002a: 526). Ishmael thus emerges from the catastrophe visibly as a witness—and recall that he explicitly declares that he 'only escaped alone to tell thee' (526). But I propose to pay closer attention to Ishmael's exact physical position at the time of the wreck as he describes it (with remarkable detail for such a short passage) in the epilogue:

So, floating on the margin of the ensuing scene, and in full sight of it, when the half-spent suction of the sunk ship reached me, I was then, but slowly, drawn *towards the closing vortex*. When I reached it, it had subsided to a creamy pool. *Round and round*, then, and ever contracting towards the button-like black bubble at the axis of that *slowly wheeling circle*, like another Ixion I did *revolve*. (526) [emphasis mine].

His status as a (reliable) witness would seem guaranteed since Ishmael claims to have been 'floating on the margin' and 'in full sight' of the *Pequod's* disaster, but Ishmael also claims to have been drawn towards a 'closing vortex'. It is on this 'revolving' of Ishmael's that I now wish to focus so as to propose a broader reflection on the narrative strategies adopted by Melville in his 'wicked book'.

Despite the fact that Ishmael is a paradigmatic survivor (the only survivor of a disaster at sea *and* the only survivor of a tyrannical captain), his tale has not often been taken seriously

Pilar Martínez Benedí
University of Rome
'La Sapienza'
Italy

as a survivor's narrative.¹ In this paper I intend to treat Ishmael in this way, using the image of the vortex as my guiding metaphor. Deploying contemporary trauma theory, I propose to look at this final whirlpool as an image that fortuitously captures two fundamental aspects of seafaring and of sea writing—elusiveness and circuitousness—and to show how this image aptly connects sea narratives and trauma narratives. With a focus on *Moby-Dick*, I aim to show how some of the ontological features of seafaring both reflect and are reflected by the epistemology of sea writing in ways that are strikingly resonant with the contemporary understanding of trauma. In what ways may our reading of *Moby-Dick* be affected by the final image of 'orphaned' Ishmael floating and revolving around a closing vortex? What are the implications of being caught in a vortex for recovery from trauma—and what are its implications for the transmission of traumatic memory?

THE VORTEX AS THE EMBODIMENT OF SEAFARING

A sea vortex, Paul Brodtkorb noted in *Ishmael's White World*, is 'a circular movement of water with a vacuum at the center' (Brodtkorb, 1965: 38). I will return later to the traumatic resonances of this definition, but let me first linger a little longer on how the emptiness or elusiveness that Brodtkorb's wording evokes accords well with the experience of seafaring. Not only is the ocean, as Hester Blum has noted, 'a landscape that cannot be tangibly possessed' (Blum, 2008: 215), but this elusive quality is also consistent with a second recurring feature of seafaring: adventurous seamen had to put up with 'the emptiness of an environment they had presumed to be full of interest' (117). This is in fact something that Ishmael

1 While Ishmael's status as a survivor has often been acknowledged in criticism, relatively little attention has been paid to the implications of this status in the novel's narrative strategies. In my MA thesis, titled 'The Witness of the Whale: Trauma, Witnessing and the Enigma of Survival' (2012), I proposed a reading of *Moby-Dick* as a survivor's narrative, deploying trauma theory to show how Ishmael's tale tells and performs trauma. Previous readings of *Moby-Dick* as a survivor's narrative include Janet Reno's *Ishmael Alone Survived*, which sees *Moby-Dick* as Ishmael's recovery process from trauma. For an enlightening exploration of the role of *Moby-Dick* in the transmission of cultural trauma, see Eyal Peretz, *Literature, Disaster and the Enigma of Power*.

the sailor discovers quickly. Recall how his initial desire to 'see the world' (Melville, 2002a: 71) is brutally, though good-naturedly, dismissed by Peleg, who shows him that in the open ocean there is 'not much' to see: 'nothing but water' (72). The passage is jocular, but Ishmael does not fail to note that the view from the weather-bow is 'exceedingly monotonous and forbidding' (72). Indeed, the experience of the surrounding emptiness is for most sailors unsettling, as Blum shows in her study of sea narratives in ante-bellum America, *The View from the Masthead*. In many fictional and non-fictional accounts, Blum observes, seamen reveal a strong sense of dislocation and desolation deriving from their encounter with the 'expanse of water' or 'trackless ocean' (Blum, 2008: 117). Moreover, this desolation is felt as a unique, 'sailor-specific' feeling. Consider, for example, the words of the keeper of a journal of the whaler *Doctor Franklin*:

Night watch, the first night at sea in a strange ship. *No one can tell!* Except those who have experienced it; the lonesome, desolate, forsaken sort of feeling that some poor sailors suffer from, on leaving [the] land for an uncertain period.²

Despite the promise of an all-encompassing perspective, the view from the masthead, then, offered nothing to see—only watery emptiness.

But this emptiness was not the only thing that drove a nervous sailor to distraction. Like Ishmael, another of Melville's narrator's, Wellingborough Redburn, learns early in 'his first voyage' that 'nothing was to be seen but water—water—water' (Melville, 2002a: 74), and even a peep at a foreign country in sight makes him mutter that he 'might as well have stayed at home' (146). However, with all his apparent naïveté, young Redburn seems to have grasped something else about the sailor's predicament:

2 Log 1033, held at the Whaling Museum Research Library in New Bedford, Massachusetts. I had access to this and other logbooks and sailors' journals during my stay in New Bedford as the 2012 recipient of the Walter Bezanson-Melville Archive Fellowship, granted by the Melville Society. I am grateful to the members of the Melville Society Cultural Project (Jennifer Baker, Mary K. Bercaw Edwards, Wyn Kelley, Tim Marr, Christopher Sten and Robert K. Wallace) as well as to the staff of the Whaling Museum Research Library for their invaluable assistance.

'It was then, I began to see, that my prospects of seeing the world as a sailor were, after all, but very doubtful; for sailors only go *round* the world, without going *into* it' (155) [emphasis original]. Hence, if the sailors' prospects of seeing the world are deluded, it is so not only because of the barrenness and emptiness that surround them but also because in their journeys they are doomed to an inexorable circularity. Indeed, sea voyages were inherently circular—they ended where they had started. Whaling voyages, in particular, were non-linear and non-teleological. Or, rather, their telos—the whale—was in perpetual motion and the whale ship circumnavigated the oceanic landscape in chase.

As in the vortex, then, in seafaring and in sea writing elusiveness and circularity are not merely juxtaposed but inextricably blended to the extent that any aspiration of discovery (or of knowledge) seems unattainable. It is as if the empty and slippery immensity of the sea could be only indirectly and obliquely approached, as if only circumvention and circumnavigation could provide some degree of mastery over the sea's essential ungraspability.

THE VORTEX AND THE AFTERMATH OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

The vortex offers a powerful image of the drifting circularity peculiar to life at sea. But now I wish to continue exploring this vortical image in order to map its connections with the structure and aftermath of psychological trauma. The vortex in fact provides a powerful image of the spiral-like, ceaseless revolving around an event that cannot be fully known, since it was not fully grasped as it occurred, according to Cathy Caruth's formulation of trauma (Caruth, 1996: 91).

Building on Caruth's influential work on trauma as 'unclaimed experience', literary trauma theory, in the last twenty to twenty-five years has leaned on a model of trauma based upon the intrinsic unknowability of the traumatic event. Since the event is 'not assimilated or experienced fully at the time [of its occurrence], but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it' (Caruth, 1995a: 4) [emphasis original], trauma itself is conceived of as an epistemological challenge or '*affront to understanding*' (Caruth, 1995a: 153 [emphasis original]). In recent years postcolonial and cultural theory has taken issue with this psychoanalytical,

event-based model of trauma for its failure to account for certain phenomena, especially when we move from individual to collective trauma—and from Western to non-Western contexts.³ While I submit to the necessity of rethinking Caruth's formulations, I believe that retaining her theoretical model proves useful.⁴ For my purpose in this paper, the psychoanalytical model nicely elucidates how the very structure of trauma is replicated in the content and form of both fictional and non-fictional trauma narratives. In this sense, it is a fitting starting point to tease out the implications of my governing metaphor: the vortex.

With its insistence on the event's structural incomprehensibility and on the belatedness of the traumatic experience, psychological trauma has come to be understood in terms of absence: as in the vortex, there is a vacuum, a void (of knowledge) at the center of trauma. However, this absence at the heart of the traumatic experience would seem to be at odds with the 'repeated possession' to which Caruth alludes (Caruth, 1995a: 4). There would seem to be simultaneously too little and too much memory in trauma, since

3 The critique of the psychoanalytical model of trauma comes from different tendencies within cultural studies—from postcolonial to queer theory. An event-centered and dissociative model of trauma as that proposed by Caruth and others, such as Shoshanna Felman, inevitably leads, according to some, to the pathologization of trauma, which, in turn, undermines the force of the denunciation that the violence or discrimination at the root of the traumatizing event would deserve (see: for example Cvetokovic 2003). On the other hand, the pathologization proposed by trauma theory allegedly places excessive emphasis on narrative closure as the only way out of trauma, thereby dismissing non-narrative and even non-linguistic responses to trauma, especially from a non-Western context (see: Kabir 2014). This line of criticism seems somewhat unjustified to me, given that Caruth (1996) and others, for example Anna Whitehead (2004), emphasize precisely the tendency to resist unproblematic closure at work in many literary and artistic forms of expression that aim at the transmission of trauma. The psychoanalytical and neurobiological model of trauma is also believed to lead to an excessive homogenization of the traumatic experience (especially when we consider that trauma theory has traditionally focused on the representation of Euro-American traumas, namely the Holocaust), thereby dismissing the responses to and representations of trauma in non-European contexts (See Rothberg 2008).

4 See Rothberg 2008 for a compelling argument against the wholesome dismissal of Caruth's model in the effort to 'decolonize' trauma studies.

the survivor is haunted by the paradoxical intrusion of an event that she does not fully own, but this possession is misleading. Drawing mainly on the work of Pierre Janet at the turn of the twentieth century, trauma theory relies heavily on the notion of *dissociation*⁵ to account for the alternating or coexisting amnesia and hypermnesia in trauma. The dissociated state of consciousness *during* the occurrence of the traumatic event prevents the proper integration of the traumatic memory into narrative memory. The traumatic event, then, is ‘itself constituted, in part, by its lack of integration into consciousness’ (Caruth, 1995a: 152). Accordingly, the intrusion of traumatic memories in the form of re-enactments, flashbacks and nightmares remains unavailable to conscious control. The survivor is unable to consciously retrieve her traumatic past but, at the same time, intrusive, unwanted images haunt her present. The intrusive image points to an event—a vacuum—that was not initially experienced but that, paradoxically, feels all too real. It conveys ‘both the *truth of an event*, and the *truth of its incomprehensibility*’ (153) [emphasis original].

This inherent paradox of trauma—this all-too-present absence at its core—results in the spiral-like quality of any attempt at mastery of the traumatic past. The life of the traumatized survivor is disrupted by the uncontrolled intrusion of deceptively vivid traumatic reenactments and recollections which, their apparent vividness notwithstanding, cannot provide direct knowledge of an event that is not available for conscious recall. How is this elusiveness and contrasting immediacy to be reconciled? If the experience is not available for direct retrieval, how is the survivor to master her unclaimed experience? As in seafaring and sea writing it seems that trauma’s essential ungraspability could only be indirectly and obliquely approached. As in the vortex, there is a non-linear,

5 See Caruth 1995a, 151 ff. For an overview of Janet’s concept of dissociation, see van der Kolk and van der Hart (1995). Although I would not want to conflate psychological trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, the latter is being increasingly considered a dissociative (rather than anxiety) disorder, also according to neurobiological research. On trauma and dissociation see, among others, Judith Herman (1992); van der Kolk, McFarlane and Weisaeth (eds) (1996); and Rothschild (2000).

non-teleological but circumvented trajectory in the aftermath of trauma.

But this inherent paradox of trauma also explains the very form of many survivors' narratives. 'If trauma fiction is effective', Anne Whitehead claims, 'it cannot avoid registering the shocking and unassimilable nature of its subject matter in formal terms' (Whitehead, 2004: 83). Precisely because the traumatic experience is not wholly grasped while it occurs, being instead defined by its belatedness, the survivor's narrative (which is, precisely, a belated response to it) can be seen as 'the process and the place wherein the cognizance, the 'knowing' of the event is given birth to' (Laub, 1992: 57). But this is not a straightforward process, because the event the survivor strives to come to know was not fully assimilated in the first place. Trauma narratives involve—and often dramatize—the processes of 'acting-out' and 'working-through' trauma. Acting-out is a repetitive process 'whereby the past... is repeated as if it were fully enacted, fully literalized' (LaCapra, 2001: 148). Working-through, in turn, 'involves repetition with significant difference' (148); it 'means coming to terms with the trauma, including its details, and critically engaging the tendency to act out the past and even to recognize why it may be necessary and even in certain respects desirable or at least compelling' (44). While acting-out might be described as the unconscious, uncontrollable return or reenactment of the traumatic memory or experience, working-through entails the (attempt at) narrativization of the traumatic experience by the survivor. However, 'acting-out' and 'working-through' are best understood not as opposites, but as the 'intimately related parts of a process' (143):

Acting out and working through... constitute a distinction in that one may never totally be separate from the other, and the two may always mark or be implicated in each other. But it's very important to see them as countervailing forces and to recognize that there *are* possibilities of working through that do not simply loop endlessly back into repetition compulsion or go to the (illusory) extreme of total transcendence of acting out, or total transcendence (or annihilation) of the past. (150, original emphasis)

Working through trauma involves the integration of traumatic memories into narrative memory and it may or may not lead to recovery—but inasmuch as it *may* actually lead to recovery, it is desirable. However, working-through ‘is not a linear, teleological or straightforwardly developmental [...] process’ (148). Working through trauma doesn’t preclude the survivor acting out her trauma again, reliving her traumatic experience, or going back to seemingly integrated memories to find new ways to work them over. Working-through, that is, does not imply the total and definitive transcendence of acting-out—both phenomena may continue to be implicated in each other, in an ascending or descending vortical movement, in the aftermath of trauma.

MOBY-DICK AS A ‘TEXTUAL VORTEX’

The image of the vortex has allowed me to explore connections between two shared features of maritime life and writing on the one hand and of psychological trauma on the other: elusiveness and circuitousness. In what follows, I will tease out my metaphor a bit further, to propose *Moby-Dick* as a ‘textual vortex’, as the narrative of a survivor of trauma—the only survivor of a disaster at sea and the only survivor of a tyrannical monomaniacal captain. Trauma theory offers a fascinating key to decode one of the most perplexing features of the novel from the time of its publication—its unconventional form.⁶ A reading of *Moby-Dick*

6 Let me recall that *Moby-Dick* was defined by its contemporary reviewers as ‘an ill-compounded mixture of romance and matter-of-fact’ (anonymous review in London *Athenaeum* 1252, October 25, 1851: 112–13. Parker and Hayford, 2002: 597), an ‘extravaganza’, (anonymous review in London *Spectator* 24, October 25, 1851: 1026–27. Parker and Hayford, 2002: 599), a ‘singular medley of naval observation, magazine article writing, satiric reflection upon the conventionalisms of civilized life and rhapsody run mad’, a ‘strange mixture of smart observations, quaint philosophy, American vulgarisms, and grandiose writing’ (anonymous review in New York *Parker’s Journal* 1, November 22, 1851: 586. Parker and Hayford, 2002: 613). It is precisely the difficulty of setting *Moby-Dick* into a definite genre that accounts for the uneasiness of coeval reviewers and readers alike when confronted with the text. *Moby-Dick* was considered as a ‘wild book... such as we do not remember to have met with before in marine literature;’ ‘neither a novel nor a romance... not a romance, nor a treatise on Cetology. It is something of both’ (review in London *Britannia*, November 8, 1851. Parker and Hayford,

as a survivor's narrative may overturn traditional critical questions about Ishmael's survival: the urgent question being not why does Ishmael survive but, rather, *what does it mean for Ishmael—and for his narrative—to be a survivor*. But this kind of reading might prompt also fascinating questions as to the kind of discourse Herman Melville is enacting when choosing the voice of a traumatized survivor as the narrator of his 'mighty' book.

So why and how should trauma theory affect our reading of *Moby-Dick*? Significantly enough, as early as 1953, Walter Bezanson observed that '[Ishmael the narrator] recounts the coming adventures of young Ishmael as a story already fully experienced. *Experienced, but not fully understood*' (Bezanson, 1953: 654) [emphasis mine]. This formulation strikingly echoes Caruth's understanding of trauma. As though acknowledging his trauma in an 'unformulated' way, Bezanson sensed that Ishmael's need to explain himself 'in some dim, random way' (Melville, 2002: 115) revealed his urge to understand an experience not fully owned, and 'a confession of his inadequacy to find form' (Bezanson, 1953: 648). In what follows I will try to elucidate in what sense this 'inadequacy to find form' becomes the most telling sign of Ishmael's 'unclaimed experience'.

Moby-Dick's on-shore chapters unfold smoothly, with Ishmael the sailor as their protagonist. The reader seemingly sets out on a whaling adventure. However, just as the Pequod leaves the port and the real adventure should begin, Ishmael the sailor all but disappears and the promised adventure seems to find trouble starting. Ishmael the narrator takes over the scene, and his struggle to find form becomes 'one of the major themes of the book' (Bezanson, 1986: 185). Interestingly, Bezanson comments, '[i]t is as if finding a temporary form would in itself constitute one of those 'meanings' which Ishmael is so portentously in search of' (185). Form is yet another way of searching for meaning, for understanding an experience that was not fully grasped as it occurred. Ishmael's struggles to find an apt form to tell his tale mimic his attempts to work through his trauma.

2002: 601). Even amongst the positive reviewers, the questions of form and of narrative structure were a constant concern at the time.

While most of the on-shore chapters follow a conventional novelistic structure, fairly early in the *Pequod's* voyage the reader is confronted with a conspicuously non-novelistic form: the dramatic chapters. This unexpected shift to the dramatic mode has puzzled readers and critics alike: why should Ishmael suddenly turn into a playwright? This thorny question, I contend, might find a valid explanation when seen through the lenses of trauma theory. Drama is indeed an apt form to convey the sense of non-mastery typical of trauma: the (traumatic) past is performatively relieved, or acted out, as if it were fully present. In drama the director-narrator manipulates the elements of the story for 'the "actor", who is bound to enact a drama that, although at some point in the past it happened to her, is not hers to master' (Bal, 1999: ix). In this way, the dramatic mode mimics the reenactment of the traumatic experience, the powerful and uncontrollable intrusion of traumatic memories in all their non-narrative quality, rather than their integration by the survivor into her narrative memory. In the dramatic center of *Moby-Dick* we see Ishmael the sailor in the hands of Ishmael the narrator, who acts as the stage manager, the director of a staged experience that is not sailor-Ishmael's to master. By thus staging the scene in a dramatic form, rather than in narrative discourse, Ishmael seems to be *acting out*, rather than *working through*, his traumatic experience.

Significantly, these behavioral reenactments seem to be triggered by what we might consider reminders of the stressor—the main two dramatic sequences are clustered around two pivotal scenes in *Moby-Dick*, and in particular, around the 'twin centers of gravity in ordering the structure of the Ahab theme' (Bezanson, 1953: 652): 'The Quarter Deck' (Chapter 36) and 'The Candles' (Chapter 119). Even as the dramatic chapters are instrumental to the characterization of Ahab as a tragic hero, both 'The Quarter-Deck' and 'The Candles' represent key moments in Ahab's authoritarian relationship with his crew as well as in the course of the very chase of Moby Dick—two crucial junctures, that is, in Ishmael's traumatic experience. Recall that 'The Quarter-Deck' represents the announcement of Ahab's—and the *Pequod's*—vengeful hunt. It is after all in this chapter where the name 'Moby Dick' (Melville, 2002: 138) is mentioned for the first time. And Ahab's

rhetoric, his rant to an awed crew, is so compelling that, as Ishmael tells us in a following chapter, '[Ahab's] hate [for the White Whale] seemed almost theirs' (158). In 'The Candles' a typhoon is coming 'from the very course Ahab is to run for Moby Dick' (380). The typhoon and the corpusants are taken by Starbuck as ominous omens—but Ahab won't heed the mate's warnings. Ahab, though, will need to impose his authority over the crew once again since on this occasion it is Starbuck's thoughts that 'seemed theirs', and Ahab has to confront a 'half mutinous cry' (383). While 'The Quarter-Deck' signals the start of the catastrophic 'fiery hunt' of Moby Dick, 'The Candles' represents a missed opportunity to abandon it. Since these chapters mark two fundamental turning points in the overarching plot (both in terms of Ahab's authority and of the hunt for Moby Dick), they might easily act as reminders of the stressor and hence trigger Ishmael's reenactment.

However, if the dramatic chapters perform the compulsive phenomenon of acting-out, I will next show how they also replicate the convoluted process of working-through trauma. Unlike other, strictly dramatic chapters in *Moby-Dick*, 'The Quarter Deck' and 'The Candles'—which, by the way, introduce the main dramatic sequences—are themselves a mixture of narrative discourse and dramatic devices. 'The Quarter-Deck' begins with a stage direction, which is nonetheless followed by narrative discourse: the narrator follows Ahab while he walks the deck. As he is about to disclose the true purpose of the *Pequod's* enterprise, the narrator seems to leave the floor to the characters. Their reactions are then unmediatedly registered: the narrator only indicates who is speaking and it is the characters who comment, via explicit or implicit asides, on what is happening on deck. The following four chapters are purely dramatic—soliloquies in which the narrator is completely absent.

In this way, the dramatic chapters and sequences mimic how behavioral reenactments—acting-out—can also happen once the integration of traumatic memories into narrative—working-through—has begun. If, singularly taken, these chapters dramatize Ishmael's acting-out (the literal intrusion of traumatic memories), then the narrative-dramatic chapters illustrate how compulsive reenactments may counteract complete mastery. Moreover,

when viewed jointly and within the economy of the text, the dramatic chapters aptly replicate the meandering, looping, coiling process of working through trauma. Just as 'The Quarter-Deck' and 'The Candles' intersperse narrative discourse with dramatic devices and just as the dramatic chapters and sequences represent 'behavioral parentheses' in the narrative flow, *Moby-Dick's* narrator seems to fall back into acting-out precisely when he seemed to be already well into working-through. The dramatic chapters are preceded by some attempt to narrativize, and likewise followed by narrative discourse, but this does not entail a straightforward, teleological process. Like a *mise en abyme* of the entire narrative, then, both the narrative-dramatic chapters and the dramatic sequences reproduce in miniature the novel's overarching structure, inasmuch as they show that acting-out and working-through may never be completely separated and may always be implicated in each other in the aftermath of trauma. While attempting to integrate, that is, his traumatic memories into narrative memory, Ishmael recurrently relapses into traumatic reenactments and repetitions.

In the narratives of the traumatized, repetition mimics the aftermath of trauma, inasmuch as it, as Anne Whitehead has put it, 'suggests the insistent return of the event, and the disruption of narrative chronology or progression' (Whitehead, 2004: 86). On the one hand, then, repetition relates to acting-out in the sense that it evokes the literal recurring and uncontrollable return of the traumatic memory. On the other hand, working-through also involves repetition, but with significant difference, in a looping movement aspiring to mastery, that implies (or requires) a continuous going back-and-forth one's own unclaimed experience.

In this sense, like the dramatic chapters, the cetological center performs the traumatic compulsive repetition as well. Even if disseminated throughout the narrative, the intrusive, haunting image of the whale becomes ubiquitous in the long, central section in which Ishmael digresses on virtually every aspect and issue connected to whaling. Ishmael's incursions into cetology and whalecraft reproduce the intrusion of an image or idea, something akin to a traumatic flashback—and let me just recall here that for Cathy Caruth, 'to be traumatized is precisely to be *possessed* by an image or event' (Caruth, 1995a: 4–5). But at the same time

the cetological chapters also mirror the survivor's need of going back to the past repeatedly in order to make sense of her traumatic, unassimilated experience. Psychiatrist Judith Herman has argued that 'reconstructing the trauma story also includes a *systematic review* of the meaning of the event' (Herman, 1992: 178) [emphasis mine]. Through the intrusive (and fragmented) image of the whale, then, Ishmael seems to be systematically reviewing his traumatic experience—using the trial-and-error method, as it were—to grasp the meaning that escaped him at the time.

The expository, digressive chapters on the whale's anatomy, activity and on whaling history and technicalities, might then be seen as Ishmael's struggle to understand himself—and to make himself understood. After all, this is what Ishmael seems to anticipate in Chapter 32, 'Cetology':

Already we are boldly launched upon the deep; but soon we shall be lost in its unshored, harborless immensities. Ere that comes to pass; ere the Pequod's weedy hull rolls side by side with the barnacled hulls of the leviathan; at the outset it is but well to attend to a matter almost indispensable to a *thorough appreciative understanding* of the more special leviathanic revelations and allusions of all sorts which are to follow. (Melville, 2002: 115) [emphasis mine] The *Pequod* has just set sail, and her crew has been introduced. But just before the *Pequod* takes on her vengeful errand, Ishmael feels the need to interrupt his narrative to explain (to) himself. He seems to be aware that his systematizing effort is 'no easy task' (115) but it is an ambitious one: nothing less than '[t]he classification of the constituents of a chaos' (115). Even though Ishmael 'promise[s] nothing complete' (116), he arrives quite straightforwardly at a definition of his subject matter: 'a whale is a *spouting fish with a horizontal tail*' (117). However, the matter is far from settled. By the end of the chapter, Ishmael warns that 'this system [will] not be here, and at once, perfected' (117). 'Cetology', then, announces Ishmael's repeated, systematic reviews of his object of analysis.

In his interruptions of the narrative flow by expository or speculative digressions, Ishmael enacts the 'repetition with significant difference' to which I alluded earlier. Ishmael is 'going back to problems, working them over [...] transforming the understanding of them' (LaCapra, 2001: 178). He seems to have entered an endless loop in which he is compelled to rework, reconsider his assumptions, see the seemingly settled issues from different angles—with shifting tone and formal experimentation. Interestingly, Judith Herman has argued that '[t]he traumatic event challenges an ordinary

Pilar Martínez Benedi
University of Rome
'La Sapienza'
Italy

person to become a theologian, a philosopher, and a jurist' (Herman, 1992: 178). In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael acts as a theologian, a philosopher, and a jurist indeed—as well as a historian, a cetologist, and a playwright—returning to his traumatic theme from several contradictory perspectives, circumventing that 'ungraspable something' at the center of his quest.

Ishmael's reviews are systematic but also fragmentary. In his incursions into cetology, whalecraft, and whaling history, Ishmael dissects his object of analysis with a surgeon's precision. In each cetological chapter, Ishmael specializes in a particular section of his broad subject matter and offers a different perspective—a new (re)view of his subject matter. The fragmentation is most evident when it comes to the body of the whale, where Ishmael seems to be accomplishing his captain's desire to 'dismember [his] dismemberer' (Melville, 2002: 143). Ishmael devotes separate chapters or sequences of chapters to the whale's head, his brain, his skin, his penis, his tail and his spout, thereby suggesting the intrusion of fragmentary yet vivid images (traumatic memories) that lack narrative context and, accordingly, the impossibility of knowing the traumatic event in its wholeness—the struggle, that is, to integrate those vivid, frozen images into a coherent narrative.

This fragmentation suggests that the actuality of the traumatic event cannot be grasped in its wholeness, but only through its interrelated fragments, its details. Interestingly enough, in this fragmented or partial vision Ishmael very much resembles his own object of analysis. Recall what Ishmael has to say about how the whale experiences his surrounding environment:

the peculiar position of the whale's eyes, effectually divided as they are by many cubic feet of solid head, which towers between them like a great mountain separating two lakes in valleys: this, of course, *must wholly separate the impressions* which each independent organ imparts. The whale, therefore, must see *one distinct picture* on this side, and *another distinct picture* on that side; while *all between must be profound darkness and nothingness* to him. (Melville, 2002: 262) [emphasis mine] Ishmael seems to share the whale's perceptual proclivities, favoring the juxtaposition of fragmentary and distinct details. The vividness and accuracy of such details might suggest that traumatized Ishmael understands too much, but this is a misleading impression. Conversely, their very uncontrollable intrusiveness and their decontextualized nature prevent him from having a thorough, straightforward knowledge of his experience—he shows a deep and vivid knowledge of every component

of the whale and of whaling but he finds trouble having a coherent, all-encompassing understanding.

With his shifting tone, with his formal experimentation, with his fragmented analyses, Ishmael, like Redburn, seems doomed to go *round* his subject matter, without going *into* it. Indeed, Ishmael himself has to admit that all his approaches seem to be revolving around an ungraspable something—a sort of vacuum—at the center of his (dis)course: ‘Dissect him how I may, then’, he says, ‘but I go skin deep; I know him not, and never will’ (Melville, 2002: 296). In addition to mimicking the disruptive effects of the traumatic memories in the survivor’s everyday life, Ishmael’s repetitions and narrative fragmentation also mimic the disruption of (narrative) chronology and the intermittency of traumatic recall and narrativization, of acting-out and working-through, of his traumatic past. Like many traumatized survivors, Ishmael seems ‘reduced to living an endless present’ (Herman, 1992: 89) in which chronology cannot be linear, but only circular.

Even if the structure of *Moby-Dick* is not strictly circular, it is quite clear that, in various ways, Ishmael enacts a circular discourse. And, as John Bryant observed, ‘circles more than whiteness are the novel’s dominant symbol’ (Bryant, 1993: 190). Paradoxically, while the hunt for Moby Dick is teleological and straightforward, the account of it is not. In ‘The Quarter-Deck’, Ahab’s design is made very clear:

Aye, aye! And I’ll chase him round Good Hope, and round the Horn, and round the Norway maelstrom, and round perdition’s flames before I give him up. And this is what ye have shipped for, men! To chase that white whale on both sides of land, and over all sides of earth, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out. What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now? I think ye do look brave. (Melville, 2002: 139) And yet in the subsequent chapters Ishmael’s account seems to deviate from his captain’s route. He seems to be circumnavigating, avoiding the unspeakable and dreaded experience he is precisely struggling to master. Ishmael circuitous tale performs the very paradox of trauma narratives: the struggle between the impossibility of telling an unassimilated experience and the imperative to tell and thus understand it.

In his tale Ishmael invites the reader to accompany him in ‘the devious zig-zag world circle of the Pequod’s circumnavigat-

Pilar Martínez Benedi
University of Rome
‘La Sapienza’
Italy

ing wake' (Melville, 2002: 169). And, indeed we actually follow her devious cruise. Ishmael the narrator is not telling his story while comfortably sitting at his desk. Conversely, he wittingly leads us across different cruising grounds: we follow her route 'north-east towards the island of Java' (225), and then 'from the China waters into the Pacific' (361) into 'the heart of the Japanese cruising ground' (372) and then south-eastward, 'towards the Equator' (392), where the *Pequod* is finally 'on the White Whale's own peculiar ground' (393). Each cruising ground will see a different approach to Ishmael's experience—he will, in turns, reenact his past, review it, diving into cetology or whalecraft or history. But, as a whole, the *Pequod*'s circumnavigation offers the ultimate trope for Ishmael's sea narrative and of his oblique, circumvented, vortical approach to his traumatic experience.

ENDLESSLY REVOLVING THE VORTEX?

Ishmael is the only survivor of a disaster at sea—and the only survivor of a tyrannical captain who 'enslaved [the crew] to the race' (Melville, 2002: 414). In the preceding pages I have deployed trauma theory along with the image of the whirlpool to show how Ishmael effectually registers, and replicates for the reader, the shocking nature of his ungraspable survival in formal terms. I have proposed a reading of *Moby-Dick* as a 'textual vortex', since throughout his 'mighty book' we see Ishmael repeatedly looping back to his 'mighty theme'. If, in the epilogue to *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael technically escapes the 'closing vortex', he apparently remains a prisoner—and makes us prisoners—of that ever-revolving wheel.

But, what does it mean for a survivor of trauma to be the prisoner of an ever-looping vortex? Is there a way out of the vortex? And if so, is that way out desirable? Although I have been using a psychoanalytical model of trauma, my reading of *Moby-Dick* does not necessarily lead to pathologization or to an obsession with healing. On the contrary, Ishmael's narrative, like other trauma narratives, shows precisely a possibility of working-through that recognizes why acting-out might be necessary, desirable, and even compelling, as LaCapra would have it, displaying a sort of 'fidelity to trauma'. When integrating his traumatic memories into narrative Ishmael seems to refuse to consent to complete

mastery—he does not want to ‘understand too much’ (Caruth, 1995a: 154). On the contrary, his convoluted tale avoids the loss ‘of the event’s essential incomprehensibility’ and maintains ‘the force of its *affront to understanding*’ (154) [emphasis original].

By presenting *Moby-Dick* as a ‘textual vortex’ I want to highlight how Ishmael’s is a ‘non murderous response’ (Peretz, 2003: 77) to trauma. At the same time, my reading gestures to the ways in which Herman Melville rejected dominant discourses and languages of mastery and proposed, anticipating the contemporary understanding of trauma, ‘a speech that is not simply the vehicle of understanding, but also the locus of what cannot yet be understood’ (Caruth, 1995a: 155) through Ishmael’s voice.

Pilar Martínez Benedi
University of Rome
‘La Sapienza’
Italy

WORKS CITED

- Bal, M. (1999) 'Introduction', in M. Bal (ed), *Acts of Memory. Cultural Recall in the Present*. Hanover: Dartmouth College, University Press of New England, vii-xvii.
- Bezanson, W. E. (1986) 'Moby-Dick: Document, Drama, Dream', in J. Bryant (ed), *A Companion to Melville's Studies*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 169-186.
- (1953) 'Moby-Dick: Work of Art', in Hillway and Mansfield (eds), *Moby-Dick: Centennial Essays*. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 30-58. Reprinted in H. Parker and H. Hayford (eds) *Moby-Dick*. New York: Norton Critical Edition, 641-657.
- Blum, H. (2008) *The View From the Masthead: Maritime Imagination and Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Brodtkorb, P. (1965) *Ishmael's White World. A Phenomenological Reading of Moby-Dick*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Bryant, J. (1993) *Melville and Repose. The Rhetoric of Humor in the American Renaissance*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- (1995) 'Trauma and Experience: Introduction' in C. Caruth (ed), *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 3-12.
- (1995a) 'Recapturing the Past: Introduction' in C. Caruth (ed), *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 151-157.
- Cvetokovic, A. (2003) *An Archive of Feelings. Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Herman, J. L. (1992) *Trauma and Recovery. The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: BasicsBooks.
- Kabir, A. J. (2014) 'Affect, Body, Place. Trauma Theory in the World' in G. Buelens, S. Durrant, and R. Eaglestone (eds), *The Future of Trauma Theory. Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*. New York: Routledge, 63-77.

- Laub D. (1992) 'Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening' in S. Felman, and D. Laub (eds), *Testimony. Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York: Routledge, 57-73.
- Melville, H. (2002) *Moby-Dick*. H. Parker and H. Hayford (eds),. Norton Critical Edition. New York: Norton.
- (2002a) *Redburn, His First Voyage*. New York: The Modern Library.
- LaCapra, D. (2001) *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Peretz, E. (2003) *Literature, Disaster and the Enigma of Power. A Reading of Moby-Dick*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Reno, J. (1990) *Ishmael Alone Survived*. London: Associated University Press.
- Rothberg, M. (2008) 'Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response', in *Studies in the Novel* 40 (1-2): 224-234.
- Rothschild, B. (2000) *The Body Remembers. The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment*. New York: Norton.
- van der Kolk, B., McFarlane, A. and Weisaeth, L. (eds) (1996) *Traumatic Stress. The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body and Society*. New York: The New Guildford Press.
- van der Kolk, B. and van der Hart, O. (1995) 'The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma', in C. Caruth (ed), *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 158-182.
- Whitehead, A. (2004) *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Pilar Martínez Benedi
University of Rome
'La Sapienza'
Italy

PEARL S. BUCK

and the Forgotten Holocaust of the Two-Ocean War

When the United States entered World War II, Pearl S. Buck was at the peak of her success. During the previous decade she had been awarded the Pulitzer Prize (1932), the Howells Medal for the best novel (1930–1935), and the Nobel Prize for Literature (1938). Most of her books published in the 1930s had become international bestsellers, selling millions of copies and proving that critics were not alone in their appreciation of ‘the daughter of pious missionaries on a journey from obscurity and poverty to world fame’ (Conn, 1996: 381). In 1939 Buck had published to widespread acclaim one of the first American novels to describe the Communists’ Long March and the Japanese invasion of China; its title was *The Patriot*, yet it contained an indictment of the conflation of patriotism and imperialism that Buck detected both in Japan *and* in the United States. Pearl S. Buck—who was born in West Virginia in 1892 but had been raised in China by her missionary parents—was keenly aware from the beginning that World War II was ‘a two-ocean war’ that could only be grasped in the light of the legacy of European colonialism. During the summer of 1941, she wrote *Dragon Seed*, a novel which depicted the Japanese sack of Nanking in 1937 and engaged issues of nationalism and male violence from a gendered perspective. Buck hoped to promote American awareness of the Chinese fight for freedom with this novel, knowing that the tragic events that took place in Nanking after the fall of the city were virtually unknown in the United States. Despite its original propagandistic intent, I would argue that

Valeria Gennero
Università di Bergamo
Italy

Dragon Seed succeeds—as Buck’s novels often do—in problematizing the notion of national identity, foregrounding the sexual politics of war.

With timely foresight, *Dragon Seed* was published one month after the Pearl Harbor attack, in January 1942, and was met with the same critical success Buck had enjoyed when she had published *The Good Earth* ten years earlier. The story told in *Dragon Seed* starts in 1937 and follows the inexorable advance of the Japanese army into Chinese territory, until the capture of the former capital of the Chinese Republic, the city of Nanking, scene of one of the most vicious massacres of the World War II. The novel centers upon a family of farmers in a small town a few miles from Nanking. Ling Tan, a man of almost sixty, is the family’s patriarch. He has survived unscathed through the revolts that shook China in the first decades of the twentieth century. Ling Tan’s world is a timeless agricultural utopia, where customs and values are passed on seamlessly across generations. A large family surrounds him: his wife Ling Sao, his children, two daughters-in-law, and a son-in-law, as well as a much wider community comprising uncles, cousins, and neighbors. Ling Tan’s world comes to an end on December 13, 1937, when the Japanese army occupies Nanking.

The central section of the novel chronicles the six weeks of massacres that annihilated the civilian population. Instead, the final part describes the gradual setup of a Chinese Resistance, hindered by internal conflict between the Communists and the Kuomintang led by Chiang Kai-shek. The account of the Rape of Nanking allows Buck to add one more piece to her own portrayal of the devastation brought about by any form of nationalism. What comes to the surface with unmatched intensity in the pages of *Dragon Seed* is the urgent need to consider the implications of gender-related violence carefully.

What happened in Nanking in the last weeks of 1937 is still very much an object of historiographical contention between scholars who dispute the alleged extent of the death toll and those who estimate that there were between 260,000 and 350,000 civilian casualties in the massacre that Japanese soldiers inflicted on Nanking after the city had already surrendered to the invaders, following the Chinese retreat (Hu, 2000: 82). In 1937, news

of the event was barely covered by the US media, all wrapped up in assessing the possible European outcome of the World Crisis: 'the depth of Japanese barbarity seemed so extraordinary that many readers were inclined to doubt the report' (Brook, 1999: 11). Sixty years were to elapse before Iris Chang's influential study—entitled *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (1997)—would bring the atrocities of Nanking to international attention.

Pearl Buck was keenly aware of the massacre from the start. She had worked in Nanking—capital of the Chinese Republic between 1928 and 1937—as an English literature professor for more than ten years, and she was still in touch with a number of correspondents. Mounting evidence on the Nanking events, together with her own awareness of Western indifference (it was an act of war that many observers in the West blithely continued to disregard until Pearl Harbor), led Buck to write a novel with a definite agenda. She intended to attract public opinion on the events of the war in China and to call for much stronger diplomatic effort on the part of the United States. The Nanking events led her to abandon—in part, at least—her deconstructive study of national identities present throughout her production, from *East Wind: West Wind* to *The Patriot*. It was now time for her to insist on the ruthlessness of Japanese violence and on the need for prompt international intervention in support of the Chinese Resistance. This is the first occasion in which Buck seemed willing to offer a positive, or at least not wholly negative, account of Western presence in China. Yet she never allowed her readers to forget that the roots of the conflicts which agitated the world were to be found 'in the old evil of empire and colonization' (Buck, 1954: 106). She wrote about it even in *My Several Worlds*, her autobiography published in the 1950s, a challenging decade in which—after the 'loss of China' and the beginning of the most virulent phase of McCarthyism—Buck's activities were closely monitored by the FBI (Mitgang, 1996). In *My Several Worlds*, Buck frames the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor with the description of a meeting with a Japanese friend of hers, Mr. Yamamoto, who lived in the United States and supported Japanese expansion in Asia, arguing that 'every Asian country has either been seized by a Western power, as India has been, or it has been despoiled

and weakened by excessive demands and the Unequal Treaties and frightful indemnities as China has been' (Buck, 1954: 107). Buck had met Yamamoto after she relocated to New York in 1934. Her reading of Pearl Harbor is thus immediately set in the wider context of the transoceanic routes of Western imperialism:

Many years later, on a bright Sunday afternoon in December in Pennsylvania I heard that Japanese bombs had fallen upon Pearl Harbor. I remembered instantly the words of Mr. Yamamoto, spoken so long ago, and again I saw the path of history clear from the very first Portuguese vessel that sailed the seas to maraud on the coasts of Asia to the Japanese ships of the air flying to destroy as much as they could of the strongest Western power in the world. Step by step, cause always preceding result, history marches on. (Buck, 1954: 107)

Even scholars who, like Karen J. Leong, are not always persuaded by Buck's ability to deconstruct the tropes of American orientalism, admit that 'Buck's willingness to negotiate the difficult landscape of race relations, and her demand that race relations be understood within the context of Western imperialism and colonization, pushed Americans to reflect on their own national community [...]' (Leong, 2005: 56). As we shall see, in *Dragon Seed* Buck does more than this and becomes one of the first American writers to explore the intimate connection between gender and imperialism.

1. *DRAGON SEED* (1942)

In the first part of the novel, war is but faint background noise. Two generations are set on stage, one beside the other: a couple of old farmers, Ling Tang and Ling Sao, and their five children. Together, they share the family home and work in the fields. In 1937, Ling Tan and his wife are almost sixty. They have grown up during the long reign of Empress Ci-Xi, from 1861 to 1908, and have resignedly witnessed the decades of political turmoil that ensued. Yet the new war will turn out to be wholly unlike others. Its impact on civilians is disastrous. In the fall of 1937, alarmed at the advance of the Japanese, Chiang Kai-Shek's national government abandoned Nanking, together with almost all the foreigners and many Chinese residents. In a few days, the number of inhabitants dropped from one million to less than half a million. The flight of Westerners fueled fear among the villagers, since it forebode

bloody confrontations of the kind that had occurred under similar circumstances in the past: '[A]ny news he heard was not good, and the worst of all was that at last even the white foreigners were leaving the city. Now Ling Tan knew [...] that when foreigners left the city it was as though rats leave a ship' (Buck, 1943: 94). For days, a relentless flow of refugees traversed the countryside around Nanking. Many were young students resolved to join a rebel group whose description seems to match the fourth Communist army. Troubled by reports of the Japanese army's brutality, Lao Er and his wife Jade joined one of these groups.

The rest of the family decided to stay behind. Ling Tang would rather face the risk of plunder than leave behind the only land he knows and cherishes. With other farmers from the village, he decides to face the enemy on friendly terms. He is not afraid of different nationalities. He still remembers the persecution he was subjected to in the past by soldiers of his own country: 'he knew that when a man becomes a soldier he ceases to be a man and goes back to the beast he was in some other life' (Buck, 1943: 103). However, Ling Tan soon realizes that what is going on has no precedents in his own experience. The most horrific type of warfare innovation is the systematic recourse to rape and torture against tens of thousands of unarmed civilians. After Japanese soldiers have reached the village, it becomes obvious that it is the women they are after. The first rape Buck depicts is inflicted on Ling Tan's daughter's mother-in-law, who is too slow to take flight with the rest of the family. From their hiding place, Ling Tan and his wife can hear what is going on: 'It was a scream, which at first they thought was one of the two pigs, for it sounded like a pig stuck for butchering. Then they heard a word or two and a gurgle and a long moan, and they knew what it was' (Buck, 1943: 118).

Women can escape aggression in one place only: behind the walls of an American university turned into a shelter under the protection of the international community. Ling Sao and his daughters are given a warm reception by a female missionary whom Buck leaves unnamed. To the refugees, she is 'the white woman', an odd creature who speaks fluent Chinese but often refers to a mysterious Lord she professes to worship. Her attachment to this Lord remains utterly incomprehensible to Chinese

women. Here Buck does not voice her conviction, often expressed in her essays instead, that missionary presence in China was useless and counterproductive. In the pages of *Dragon Seed*, we come across a character whose evangelizing zeal turns out, for once, to be valuable to the Chinese.

As a matter of fact, Buck was thinking of a real person: Minnie Vautrin, a missionary born in Illinois in 1886 who had lived in Nanking between 1919 and 1940. After most of the university population had left the city, Vautrin had turned the buildings of the *Ginling Women's Arts and Science College*, which she managed, into the main shelter area within the Safety Zone. She had negotiated with the Japanese command to ensure the protection of the more than 10,000 women who had taken refuge there. During the weeks in which the Safety Zone remained in operation, Buck kept a diary, large extracts of which she used to send to her American correspondents. Undoubtedly, Buck's reconstruction of occupied Nanking is indebted to Vautrin's chronicles. In one of the episodes described both in Vautrin's letters and in Buck's novel, the Japanese threaten to break into the college unless one hundred 'prostitutes' chosen among the Ginling women are handed over to them. Vautrin agreed to their request, in the vain hope that this would protect the women who remained. In the novel, the number of women involved is in fact cut down: in the fictional retelling of the event, some real prostitutes, who had survived the first mass rape where most of their companions had been murdered, offer themselves to martyrdom. As they leave, to the missionary who salutes them saying 'God take you into Heaven for this!', they reply 'Your God does not know us' (Buck, 1943: 113), a comment very much in line with Buck's own thinking. Buck's novel is thus intended partly as a tribute to Minnie Vautrin, who was in China for the wrong reason (a missionary ideal Buck had by then publicly rejected), and yet succeeded in protecting thousands of women while helplessly watching the violence to which tens of thousands of other women were subjected. What Vautrin saw in those weeks devastated her. She committed suicide in the spring of 1941, while Buck was working on the draft of *Dragon Seed*. Also in Buck's novel, the nameless white foreigner who directs the shelter decides to take her own life, annihilated by a sense of failure that

the international community's indifference towards the events at Nanking greatly exacerbates.

2. MASCULINITY AND VIOLENCE

As she depicts more and more episodes of rape in the central section of her novel, Buck interestingly eschews either extreme: she does not omit information—which would weaken our perception of the massacre—and yet avoids detailed descriptions of the mutilations and the torture inflicted on civilians, even though violence of this kind had been amply recorded in many photographs Japanese soldiers had taken and sent back home as war trophies (Chang, 1997: 143–157). Buck uses a form of descriptive economy whose impact builds up episode after episode, rape after rape, so that, paradoxically, horror is amplified by virtue of the subdued tone in which it is told. The death of Ling Tan's elder daughter, who leaves the Safety Zone stealthily thinking the worse is over and is gang-raped by a group of soldiers, gives us an example of this type of writing:

When one after the other those men took their will on her, and no passer-by dared to come into that public place to save her when once they had stared in and seen five soldiers with their guns against the wall, then she was like a rabbit fallen upon by wolfish dogs, and she was helpless. She screamed and then they beat her, and one held his hand over her nose and mouth, and she struggled only a little and then her life went out as easily as a little rabbit's does, and the last man had to use her dead. (Buck, 1943: 157)

The young mother raped by thirty soldiers after her baby is killed before her very eyes; the young girls raped and dismembered; the men tortured and shot for no reason; Ling Tan's own younger son raped by soldiers while family members are forced to watch helplessly: episodes of violence against unarmed and powerless people recur. Moved by the wish to remember what has been named the 'forgotten holocaust' of World War II and to attract public opinion in the United States to support the Chinese cause, Buck is nonetheless forced to stage the very clash of national identities she had endeavored to disprove in all her previous works. The brutality of what happened to Nanking's people under Japanese rule in the first six tragic weeks cannot be played down. However,

what Buck sets out to do in the pages of *Dragon Seed* is to place such brutality within the much wider context of gendered violence, which goes far beyond national identities. Such elaborate reconfiguration of what lies deep beneath the man-woman relationship is achieved through the character of Ling Tan. To his dismay, he realizes that some of his fellow-citizens take accounts of violence against women as a source of curiosity and thrill:

... he looked about him and he found that the men he knew were of two kinds, and some were like him and his son, and there were others who were stirred to greater lust because of all the evil they heard, and so he knew that men are good or evil in their hearts, whatever others think they are, and such times show them out. (Buck, 1943: 142)

Male fascination with violence does not seem to know national or political boundaries. Buck is bold enough to highlight this fact even in a book that largely centers upon the conflict between nations and value systems. To Buck, the plunder that goes with the passage of armies led by the many war lords was a painfully familiar sight. She had witnessed this ever since she was a child and had grown sensitive to the different responses violence triggers in men and women. In a book entitled *Of Men and Women* (1941), she had already written of how, at a deeper, core level, men love war. There she had provided an analysis of gendered identity construction in the United States, combining themes from Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938)—a constant watermark in her text—with keen observations on American culture, its rites, and its contradictions. In fact, one of the chapters is dedicated to 'Women and War', on the assumption that it is necessary to build and to spread a culture of peace to contrast the prevailing male view, which is rooted in the cult of conflict and abuse.

Habituated to war, conditioned to it as an inevitability, trained to consider it an opportunity for his highest heroism, man can scarcely be expected to look cold-bloodedly at what has for so long been his best chance for excitement, freedom and glory. The Nazi belief of catharsis of war for men may be partly true. It is a human necessity to find a certain release of self in sacrifice of self. Anyone is happier who does not live for himself alone. (Buck, 1941: 152)

In this passage Buck exposes the cultural roots of male love of violence: men are *habituated* to war, they are *conditioned* and *trained* to consider aggressivity one of the attributes of proper masculine behaviour. *Of Men and Women* offers a cogent critique of traditional paradigms of masculinity (and femininity). At the same time it is undeniable that at times Buck seems to assume that the two sexes have intrinsically different psychological attitudes, and she implies that all men belong to the same category and that their maleness is shaped by universal values and desires. She discusses 'what *men* like' and writes that 'the habit of men's minds is toward war' (141). It would thus be possible to associate her with an essentialist view of identity, but it would be largely inaccurate. In 1941 Buck was developing her own feminist vocabulary in a political context in which she detected a deadly combination of racism and sexism—'the ripples of the wave of fascist thinking already to be found here' (167)—which represented in her eyes the real menace to Western democracies. One of her priorities was thus to contribute to an alternative, antiracist representation of 'American personality', a project that was deeply influenced by cultural anthropology.

Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* (1934)—with its explorations of cultures in search of the 'ideal' personality types—provided Buck with a relativistic and anti-essentialist paradigm defined by the analysis of the way in which cultures set up parameters and encourage certain personality traits, yet are never uniform nor static. While she was writing *Of Men and Women*, Buck reviewed Benedict's *Race: Science and Politics* and praised its relentless debunking of 'the fallacious belief that one race can prove itself superior to another on any scientific ground' (Buck, 1940: 613). The same demystifying approach is applied to the categories of what we would now call *gender* (but Buck would probably have defined, following Benedict and Mead, *temperament* or *character*). The unequivocal anti-essentialist stance which characterizes Buck's descriptions of racial, ethnic, or national features is less clear-cut when it comes to gender differences, but if we read her work in the context of the theories of sex developed in the 1930s (Margaret Mead's influential *Sex and Temperament* had been published

in 1935), we can appreciate her awareness of the impact of social prescriptions on individual interpretations of gender.

It is in the context of the dominant theories of masculinity of her times that Buck recognizes in the carnage of war a double function for male subjectivity: warfare endows men with a power unknown to most in a time of peace and enables them to approach their own sense of finitude by putting their lives at risk. Men are made to experience the erotic intoxication of self-destruction at the very time they are chosen to judge the life of others: 'It is as though in the dark places of his being there hides always the awareness of his end, and that awareness leads him, as moth to candle, to approach death again and again' (Buck, 1941: 153). In terms that recall *Horrorism*, Adriana Cavarero's recent study in which the Italian philosopher tackles the issue of contemporary wars from a feminist perspective, in *Dragon Seed* Buck adopts the point of view of the helpless victims and deconstructs the rhetoric of the warrior that even today informs the representation of war (Cavarero, 2011: 2). Following on the gender analysis developed in *Of Men and Women*, Buck ascribes the cruelty of collective episodes of violence of the kind experienced in Nanking to the need for self-sacrifice, a person's need to momentarily abdicate the illusion of an autonomous self. Such illusion comes from a failure to acknowledge dependency and relationship as constitutive features of identity. Like Cavarero, Buck refuses to adopt 'the warrior's point of view' and offers a gendered analysis of the embodied experience of violence and fear. In her nonfiction Buck argues that women are made to encounter the fragile materiality of existence in those 'dark places' where the self is dissolved to become 'other' through maternity:

... when she has a child she goes down into a simple and elemental experience which drives self away, which divides that self into another and brings all life into its simplest primeval terms [...] She goes down to the gates of death and she comes back triumphant over death. But man has no equivalent of this experience, and his being craves it and he devises it out of war. (Buck, 1941: 153)

We could of course read this passage simply as an essentialist statement, and point out the theoretical contradictions in Buck's argument. There are many. Yet here the writer is also striving

toward a reevaluation of the political potentiality of women's experience. Buck hesitates between her awareness of the cultural roots of gender roles and the attempt to offer a definition of womanhood that emphasizes strength and success ('she comes back triumphant over death'). At the same time, the vulnerable body of an infant forces women to question 'the philosophical postulate of an autonomous sovereign subject that, like the State to which it corresponds, thinks of itself as closed and self-sufficient' (Cavarero, 2011: 21). By doing this, Buck avoids the pitfall of ascribing violence and self-destruction to the 'natural' sphere of death drives. Instead, she ties them firmly to culture. The male gender is enjoined to acknowledge the ruthlessness of war and to endeavor to create a nonviolent model of identitarian affirmation, able to erase and supplant the delight of butchery (Buck, 1941: 153). The possibility of setting up new models of masculinity and femininity, together with a renewed relationship between genders, is the hope Buck embraces in the wake of the Nanking massacre. To her, it is the only way to break the vicious circle of violence that nationalism and the various strains of nationalist-inspired imperialism—including American imperialism—inevitably beget.

*Valeria Gennero
Università di Bergamo
Italy*

WORKS CITED

- Buck, P. S. (1931) *The Good Earth*. New York: John Day.
- (1939) *The Patriot*. New York: John Day.
- (1940) 'Asia Book-Shelf', in *Asia* November: 613–614.
- (1941) *Of Men and Women*. New York: John Day.
- (1943) *Dragon Seed*. [1942] London: Reprint Society.
- (1954) *My Several Worlds: A Personal Record*. New York: John Day.
- Brook, T. (1999) *Documents on the Rape of Nanking*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Cavarero, A. (2011) *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence*. [2007] New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chang, I. (1997) *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. New York: Basic Books.
- Conn, P. (1996) *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hu, H. (2000) *American Goddess at the Rape of Nanking: the Courage of Minnie Vautrin*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Leong, K. J. (2005) *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mitgang, H. (1996) *Dangerous Dossiers*. New York: Fine.
- Tarrant, S. (2006) *When Sex Became Gender*. New York: Routledge.

UNITED BY THE OCEAN?

The Romantic Conan Doyle
and the Transatlantic Sherlock Holmes

INTRODUCTION

In this article I will attempt an interpretation of an ‘oceanic’ Sherlock Holmes short story, ‘The Five Orange Pips’, from the 1892 collection *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. I will first place the story within two contexts: biographical and political. I will also examine its relation to some of the other Sherlock Holmes ‘adventures’ that depict the involvement of English citizens in affairs outside Great Britain. Finally, I will analyze the message that ‘The Five Orange Pips’ sent to its reading public and the role that the ocean, and more generally the element (and imagery) of water, plays in crafting this message.

Jacek Mydla
University of Silesia
in Katowice
Poland

CONAN DOYLE AND THE ROMANCE OF AMERICA

The United States of America not only played an important part in Arthur Conan Doyle’s life but seems to have had a warm place in his heart. Even before he visited the States, he was drawn to it in his imagination. Later, he viewed the country with more than a friendly eye, and the ‘romantic’ sentiments made him reflect reproachfully on the separation between the two great English speaking nations and indulge in visions of reunification. In the words of the editors’ of a valuable book that offers a reflection of Doyle’s life in his abundant correspondence, he ‘felt deeply about the relations between the two English-speaking nations’ (Doyle, 2008: 340). In his own words, the friendship between these nations was necessary and imminent; as he put it address-

ing an American audience: 'She [Britain] is an Empire, and you will soon be an Empire also, and only then will you understand each other, and you will realize that you have only one real friend in the world' (Doyle, 2008: 341).

Shortly after the success of the first collections of his Sherlock Holmes adventures, Doyle made a veritable conquest of the United States, visiting it as a celebrity author of popular fiction. His 1894 tour of the States is well documented;¹ in his *Welcome to America, Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Victorian America Meets Arthur Conan Doyle* (1987), Christopher Redmond has painstakingly detailed the itinerary.² At the same time, Doyle seems to have been emotionally conquered by the States and publically expressed his enchantment. To describe how he felt about the States, he used the word 'romance':

[...] I longed to travel in the United States. Since this was impossible, I contented myself with reading a good deal about them and building up an ideal United States in my own imagination. ...

I have heard even Americans say that life is too prosaic over here; that romance is wanting. I do not know what they mean. Romance is the very air they breathe. You are hedged in with romance on every side. [...]

If a man can look down from that point upon the noble bridge, upon the two noble rivers crowded with shipping, and upon the magnificent city [New York] with its thousand evidences of energy and prosperity, and can afterward find nothing better than a sneer to carry back with him across the ocean, he ought to consult a doctor. His heart must be too hard or his head too soft. [...]

These things are the romance of America, the romance of change, of contrast, of danger met and difficulty overcome, and let me say that we, your kinsmen, on the other side, exult in your success and in your prosperity, and it is those who know British feeling—true British feeling—best, who will best understand how true are my words. I hope you don't think I say this or that I express my admiration for your country merely because I am addressing an American audience.³ (Doyle, 2008: 342–344)

Speeches such as these testify to Doyle's enchantment with the States; its reflection in the stories—examples to be examined

1 Doyle's tours of the States and Canada in the first decades of the twentieth century were dedicated to the spreading of the doctrine of spiritualism, of which Conan Doyle became an active devotee.

2 Like other popular English authors, e.g. Wilkie Collins, Doyle was aware and complained of the lack of copyright protection in the States. There is a study by Donald Redmond of this problem: *Sherlock Holmes among the Pirates. Copyright and Conan Doyle in America 1890–1930* (1990).

3 These are excerpts from a speech given in New York on November 18, 1894.

presently—have caused some readers to speculate on the possibility of Sherlock Holmes's American descent or citizenship.⁴

In a larger context, the 'romance' of the States has to do not only with progress but also with what we may call political values, those of democracy and liberty, which apparently were dear to Doyle, and which play an important role in his thinking about the public functions of his famous detective *and* his loyal companion. The canon of the 60 Sherlock Holmes stories leaves no doubt that Holmes is an officer in the service of justice and a spokesman who popularises values which Conan Doyle felt strongly about and which, he believed, would create an emotional bond between himself, his detective, and the readers.

The publication history of the Sherlock Holmes stories confirms Doyle's words about how he built an America in his imagination, albeit the representation of the States in these fictions is not exactly utopian. Already the first Sherlock Holmes narrative, the novella *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), testifies to Doyle's emotional and political investments in detective fiction. Symptomatically, already here Doyle takes his readers on a visit to the States. The extensive inset narrative about John Ferrier, his daughter, and Jefferson Hope (the avenger) is set in the state of Utah (with grim sarcasm called 'the Land of the Saints'). Doyle uses the Utah episode as an occasion to express his political sentiments, i.e. to say how strongly he felt about values that in his opinion would supply a foundation for an Anglo-American alliance. Hope's narrative concentrates on a struggle between forces of oppression (represented by the Mormon community of Utah)⁵ and the ideals and dreams of freedom and liberation.⁶

4 See editor's note in Leslie Klinger's edition of the novels; Klinger refers to an essay by Christopher Morris, 'Was Sherlock Holmes an American', a contribution to the biography of Holmes as constructed on the basis of the stories (Doyle, 2006: 672, note 58).

5 This is how Doyle depicts the 'totalitarian' system: 'A secret word or a hasty act was followed by annihilation, and yet none knew what the nature might be of this terrible power which was suspended over them. No wonder that men went about in fear and trembling, and that even in the heart of the wilderness they dared not whisper the doubts which oppressed them' (Doyle, 2001: 89). Analogies with the system of terror and oppression operating among the mining community depicted in *The Valley of Fear* are striking and telling.

6 Doyle casts the uncompromising and free-thinking Ferrier in the role of a champion of liberty, ready to use his gun should his and his daughter's

Typically of Doyle, the treatment of women is a measure of the scope of liberty and thus of democracy. Thus, besides the motif of 'political romanticism' there is here also, woven tightly with it, a romantic motif in the pedestrian sense of the word. The way in which the protagonist, the symbolically named Jefferson Hope, is at once the culprit (though not technically a murderer, he is indirectly responsible for the deaths of two of the Mormons) and the champion of justice is worth stressing. At the end of the story, the readers are placed in a morally and emotionally awkward position, but Watson offers some assistance and guidance as to how we should feel about the crime with which the story opens: 'A higher Judge had taken the matter in hand, and Jefferson Hope had been summoned before a tribunal where strict justice would be meted out to him' (Doyle, 2001: 122). It is all very well, but the reader has at this point a fresh recollection of the unusual manner in which Hope went about the job of meting out justice to the two men guilty of the miseries and deaths of Ferrier and his daughter:

'Would you murder me?' he murmured.

'There is no murder', I answered. 'Who talks of murdering a mad dog? What mercy had you upon my poor darling, when you dragged her from her slaughtered father, and bore her away to your accursed and shameless harem?'

'It was not I who killed her father', he cried.

But it was you who broke her innocent heart', I shrieked, thrusting the box [with two pills] before him. 'Let the high God judge between us. Choose and eat. There is death in one and life in the other. I shall take what you leave. Let us see if there is justice upon earth, or if we are ruled by chance'. (Doyle, 2001: 119)

Yet this situation is not entirely unusual, and we shall see the intervention of a 'higher power' also in 'The Five Orange Pips'. In 'The Devil's Foot', to name a similar case, Holmes feels free to pass judgement, and Doyle puts the readers in the position of jurors expected to comply with his verdict. The plot line here

security be at stake: 'I'm a free-born American [...]' (Doyle, 2001: 92). The critical moment comes when his daughter is to be sacrificed to the system of polygamy; the word 'heifer', used by the community's 'Elders' in the sense of 'wife' in my opinion justifies the idea of sacrificial offering ('We Elders have many heifers [...]' (Doyle, 2001: 91).

bears a striking resemblance to *A Study in Scarlet*. There is another female victim, and there is another avenger, Leon Sterndale, a lion-hunter. Holmes and Watson find his decision to mete out justice defensible and set him free, thus allowing him to return to Africa rather than turning him into the hands of the police (once more leaving the meting out of justice in the hands of ... God?). Holmes goes so far as to identify with the culprit, thus romantically if tentatively as it were sympathising with his loss and indignation: 'I have never loved, Watson, but if I did and the woman I loved had met such an end, I might act even as our lawless lion-hunter has done'.⁷

Such resolutions of the investigative 'adventures' suggest of course that more in them is at stake than mere brainwork. Indeed, despite his 'bohemianism' and self-inflicted isolation, the detective is repeatedly placed in a position in which he has to decide another man's fate. That he seldom shirks this responsibility is evidence of how much of his own sentiment Doyle invested in this figure. It will be remembered that the knighting of Doyle was a reward for his personal involvement in the Boer War (1899–1902), both as an activist and medical doctor and as a writer.⁸

THE 'MARINE' MOTIFS IN THE 'ADVENTURES'

Before we turn to 'The Five Orange Pips', let us note in passing that oceans and voyaging feature also in a number of other stories in the Sherlock Holmes canon, all of them in different ways reflecting the international situation of Great Britain in a period marked by dynamic changes.⁹ The inset narrative

7 One can think of serious objections to this verdict of not-guilty. The response of some readers shows that there are limitations (of which Doyle was perhaps unaware) to the degree to which the implied reader was expected to accept Holmes's position of arbitrator. In his edition of the stories, Leslie Klinger quotes the following example (a comment by Rex Stout): 'what of the moral issue? Is the lyncher to be excused if the lynchee had in fact offended?' (in Doyle, 2005: 1422, note 38).

8 On the war and Conan Doyle's involvement see editor's note in Doyle, 2005: 1507–1510.

9 The last of the Sherlock Holmes stories, 'His Last Bow' (1917), is set in the context of the First World War and addresses the issue of espionage (Holmes prevents a German spy from stealing British naval signalling system).

in 'The Gloria Scott' ('The Adventure of the "Gloria Scott"', from the 1894 collection *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*) is, as the title announces, a 'marine' story and depicts the transportation of convicts, a mutiny on board the convict ship, amassing of fortunes in Australia, and the main figures' return to England under changed names. 'The Adventure of the Dancing Men' (from *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, 1905), featuring encoded messages (the dancing man-like figures mentioned in the title), is also about an attempt—in this case an American woman's—to cut oneself away from a criminal past and start a new life in England. As in 'The Orange Pips', in this case Holmes has been unable to prevent the death of his client. 'The Adventure of Black Peter' (also in *The Return*) opens with a corpse—that of a former whaler nicknamed 'Black Peter'—found harpooned to the wall of a hut. The inset narrative, however, is much less uncommon and recounts a theft and, once more, a pursuit and an act of revenge.

A passage from the last Sherlock Holmes novella, *The Valley of Fear* (1914), whose plot movement is another example of the get-rich-overseas-and-take-shelter-in-England pattern, could with little alteration be inserted in other stories, including 'The Five Orange Pips', built after the same model:

He [here, the murdered man, Douglas] had emigrated to America when he was a very young man. He had prospered well, and Barker [the victim's friend] had first met him in California, where they had become partners in a successful mining claim at a place called Benito Canyon. They had done very well; but Douglas had suddenly sold out and started for England. He was a widower at that time. Barker had afterwards realized his money and come to live in London. Thus they had renewed their friendship.

Douglas had given him the impression that some danger was hanging over his head, and he had always looked upon his sudden departure from California, and also his renting a house in so quiet a place in England, as being connected with this peril. He imagined that some secret society, some implacable organization, was on Douglas's track, which would never rest until it killed him. Some remarks of his had given him this idea; though he had never told him what the society was, nor how he had come to offend it. He could only suppose that the legend upon the placard had some reference to this secret society. (Doyle, 2006: 686)

Evidently, when working out new cases for his detective, Doyle felt compelled to make his characters cross and re-cross oceans; many of them have emigrated in pursuit of fortune but also have voyaged in order to leave trouble behind and to find shelter on the British Isles. Repeatedly, however, these 'marine' stories show that, because even the greatest waters are navigable and because Great Britain is open on all sides also to uninvited visitors, dreams of Her shores being a sanctuary may be impossible.

PAPERS, PIPS, AND THE KKK

The opening of 'The Five Orange Pips' sets the tone for the entire story, as is common with Conan Doyle. In one of the first paragraphs we read:

It was in the latter days of September, and the equinoctial gales had set in with exceptional violence. All day the wind had screamed and the rain had beaten against the windows, so that even here in the heart of great, hand-made London we were forced to raise our minds for the instant from the routine of life and to recognise the presence of those great elemental forces which shriek at mankind through the bars of his civilisation, like untamed beasts in a cage. As evening drew in, the storm grew higher and louder, and the wind cried and sobbed like a child in the chimney. Sherlock Holmes sat moodily at one side of the fireplace cross-indexing his records of crime, while I at the other was deep in one of Clark Russell's fine sea-stories until the howl of the gale from without seemed to blend with the text, and the splash of the rain to lengthen out into the long swash of the sea waves. (Doyle, 1998: 103)¹⁰

We see here the two companions huddled together, as it were, and vainly trying to keep their minds occupied in order to muffle the rather obtrusive and disconcerting presence of the elements, the wind and the rain, in the streets of London. The odd phrase used to describe the city as 'hand-made' suggests that Holmes and Watson are not at home, but on board a vessel, voyaging across stormy seas, and exposed to the untamed elements. Interpreted in political terms, the imagery underscores the open-

10 The intertexts that Doyle thus engages are marine adventure fictions of Clark Russell (1844–1911) and 'his fine sea-stories'. As we learn from Klinger's side note (Doyle, 2005, 135, note 7), Russell was 'an American novelist, the writer of many nautical tales', e.g. *The Wreck of the Grosvenor* (1877).

ness (and thus the vulnerability) of Britain and Her civilized citizens to forces beyond control, as a consequence of the great, if burdensome and potentially disastrous, colonial enterprise.

'The Five Orange Pips' foregrounds transatlantic voyaging in a manner not unlike the other stories briefly introduced above. An Englishman, Elias Openshaw, went to live in the States to make a fortune, and then returned to England to spend the rest of his life in peaceful opulence. He is the main figure of an inset narrative which his nephew and inheritor, John Openshaw, recounts as Holmes's client. This narrative reveals the political views of Elias Openshaw, a matter that determines not only his future but also that of his brother and his nephew, the ill-fated inheritors:

'My uncle Elias emigrated to America when he was a young man and became a planter in Florida, where he was reported to have done very well. At the time of the war he fought in Jackson's army, and afterwards under Hood, where he rose to be a colonel. When Lee laid down his arms my uncle returned to his plantation, where he remained for three or four years. About 1869 or 1870 he came back to Europe and took a small estate in Sussex, near Horsham. He had made a very considerable fortune in the States, and his reason for leaving them was his aversion to the negroes, and his dislike of the Republican policy in extending the franchise to them'. (Doyle, 1998: 105)

In this manner, the uncle's economic enterprise and success have become twined with his active support of the Confederate side during the Civil War, i.e. the military career and—as we find out later – his involvement with the Ku Klux Klan.¹¹ His decision to re-cross the Atlantic was caused by the resolution of the conflict and the resultant democratization (the 'extending of franchise' to the black population).

11 Klinger explains: 'Openshaw was far from the only Englishman participating in the American Civil War. Of course, the vast majority of Americans at the time of the Civil War were of British descent, and many in England had family connections in America, on both sides of the war' (Doyle, 2005: 138, note 14). 'The original Ku Klux Klan was founded in Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1866 and grew to become the most prominent of various secret terrorist organisations [...] promoting white resistance to post-Civil War Reconstruction' (Doyle, 2005: 152, note 35).

Typically of such narratives, the past, here the 'career' of the uncle in the States, turns into a curse. On receiving the first warning in the manner of a letter containing five orange pips and bearing the inscription KKK, the horrified uncle exclaims: 'My God, my God, my sins have overtaken me' (Doyle, 1998: 106). What 'sins'?—we might ask. This we are left to guess, as Doyle is not clear on this head. One possibility is that among the papers that he brought with him from the States were documents that would incriminate politicians in America whose careers would suffer should their past involvement with the Ku Klux Klan come to light.¹² His decision to burn the papers and thus 'brazen it out' does not sound very logical. In any case, as a result the inheritors are cursed and doomed; they both pay dearly for those sins. Before his death in unexplained circumstances, Elias makes a will according to which his brother—and thus also his nephew—inherits both the estate and the thirty thousand pounds deposited in the bank. He is aware that his sinful past has blighted the fortune; he says to John: 'If you can enjoy it in peace, well and good! If you find you cannot, take my advice, my boy, and leave it to your deadliest enemy. I am sorry to give you such a two-edged thing, but I can't say what turn things are going to take' (107).

These are ominous words, but again the meaning is far from clear, given the context. As we have suggested, there may be little logic in the uncle's decision to destroy the documents; the fact that the brother and then the nephew fail to produce them (to 'Put the papers on the sun-dial') is responsible for their subsequent deaths. John realises the connection: 'but the papers must be those that are destroyed', he says to his father upon receiving another orange-pips-and-KKK letter (Doyle, 1998: 109). After the death of his father, John for some time entertains

12 The papers, possibly incriminating the members of the KKK, have been kept in the attic: 'a single room, a lumber room up among the attics, which was invariably locked, and which he would never permit me or anyone to enter'. This place with its content is clearly a symbol of an attempt to cut oneself off from the past; and yet the man feels compelled to keep the 'papers'. On the plausibility of the plot see the side-notes in Klinger's edition, especially note 36 on page 153.

hopes that ‘this curse had passed away from the family, and that it had ended with the last generation’ (111), but—in a truly Gothic fashion¹³—he soon finds that he is being hounded by ancestral sins. We cannot thus be sure what it is that eventually brings about the death of the young Openshaw. To be sure, the KKK operatives ‘get him’ for not handing over the ‘papers’; yet in having destroyed them the ‘sinful’ uncle has had a hand in the murder as well. The will and the transference of the sin-tainted property that this will has effected has the symbolic meaning of perpetuating the criminality of the uncle’s involvement in the affairs of the States on what we should perceive as the politically incorrect side of the conflict.

Let us make clearer the direction of our interpretation. What Doyle seems to be after is not so much a logically tight and impeccable mystery story. Rather, we detect readiness and even determination to use the genre as vehicle for a political message. This explains the ambiguities that pervade ‘The Five Orange Pips’ as a *detective story*; political concerns override the rules of the genre, defined by Holmes himself as pure brainwork or affectless puzzle solving. To put this differently, Holmes may be a cool reasoner, a cold-blooded mathematician, but the author is far from that. Doyle is deeply concerned about the political significance of the cases and their solutions. What makes this story unusual is that, famously, upon the death of his client, Holmes loses his wonted *sangfroid*:¹⁴ ‘That [John Opneshaw’s death] hurts my pride, Watson. [...] It becomes a personal matter with me now, and, if God sends me health, I shall set my hand upon this gang’ (Doyle, 1998: 119). This reaction may be read as purely intellectual frustration; yet the reader cannot miss or ignore the fact that Holmes has been hurt here not as a thinking machine but as a human being; yes, the alter

Oceans Apart:
In Search of New Wor(l)ds

RIAS VOL. 7, SPRING-SUMMER N^o 1/2014

¹³ It is worth recalling here that, in the preface to the first edition of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Horace Walpole described the moral of his ‘Gothic’ story by borrowing from the Bible the image of ‘sins of the fathers’ ‘visited’ on the offspring.

¹⁴ In *The Sign of Four* Watson bursts out: ‘You really are an automaton—a calculating-machine. [...] There is something positively inhuman in you at times’ (Doyle, 2006: 235).

ego of Doyle. This brings us, finally, to the role that the oceans, and the element of water generally, play in the story.

WATER EVERYWHERE

In this, final section of the article I turn to the role of the oceans—and even more generally, of water—in ‘The Five Orange Pips’. As we shall see, there is a degree of ambivalence in the manner in which this element is represented. The oceans and voyaging play at last a double role in the story, and that besides the motif of emigration and return, which we have already looked at in the previous section. The story involving the two generations of the Openshaws and the three murders has to do with the bizarre manner in which the KKK operatives communicate with the men they persecute; the deaths in mysterious circumstances are all preceded by letters. As much as in their content, Holmes is interested in the dates and places of dispatch. This information allows him to conclude that the culprits are constantly on the move. In the words of Holmes:

There is at least a presumption that the vessel in which the man or men are is a sailing-ship. It looks as if they always send their singular warning or token before them when starting upon their mission. You see how quickly the deed followed the sign when it came from Dundee. If they had come from Pondicherry in a steamer they would have arrived almost as soon as their letter. But, as a matter of fact, seven weeks elapsed. I think that those seven weeks represented the difference between the mail-boat which brought the letter and the sailing vessel which brought the writer. (Doyle, 1998: 116)

Moreover, water seems to be an instrument of crime, some sort of silent accomplice in the commission of near-perfect murders. Elias Openshaw is found ‘face downwards in a little green-scummed pool, which lay at the foot of the garden. There was no sign of any violence, and the water was but two feet deep, so that the jury [...] brought in a verdict of suicide’ (Doyle, 1998: 108). In the case of John Openshaw, the Thames ‘assists’ the assassins; a newspaper report of the ‘tragedy near Waterloo Bridge’ reads as follows:

Between nine and ten last night Police Constable Cook [...] heard a cry for help and a splash in the water. The night, however, was extremely

dark and stormy, so that, in spite of the help of several passers-by, it was quite impossible to effect a rescue. The alarm, however, was given, and, by the aid of the water-police, the body was eventually recovered. [...] It is conjectured that he may have been hurrying down to catch the last train from Waterloo Station, and that in his haste and the extreme darkness he missed his path and walked over the edge of one of the small landing-places for river steamboats. The body exhibited no traces of violence, and there can be no doubt that the deceased had been the victim of an unfortunate accident, which should have the effect of calling the attention of the authorities to the condition of the riverside landing-stages. (Doyle, 1998: 119)

As we remember, the opening of the story stresses the savagery of water, which oddly corresponds to that of the narrative that John Openshaw brings to 221B Baker Street: 'This strange, wild story seemed to have come to us from amid the mad elements—blown in upon us like a sheet sea-weed in a gale and now to have been re-absorbed by them once more'. 'The Five Orange Pips' envisions a situation in which the law and the legal systems of both the US and Britain have failed to contain crime, to penalise operations of individuals who act outside the law and the established political systems. Doyle may have been a romantic and an optimist, even something of a visionary as concerns Anglo-American friendship, but the story depicts serious crisis, a situation when the ocean metes out its wild justice (to use Francis Bacon's definition of revenge) when the two countries have failed to suppress racism and prevent acts of terrorism.

Upon finding out about the death of John Openshaw, Holmes decides *to be law*. He symptomatically cries out: 'I shall be my own police' (Doyle, 1998: 120), having before the occurrence of the tragedy accused the official police of 'incredible imbecility' (111). However, before Holmes himself becomes a 'lawless' avenger, like Sterndale the lion-hunter, Doyle intervenes and leaves this task to the wild elements. And so, finally the ocean brings the assassins to justice:

There is ever a flaw, however, in the best laid of human plans, and the murderers of John Openshaw were never to receive the orange pips which would show them that another, as cunning and as resolute as themselves, was upon their track. Very long and very severe were the equinoctial gales that year. We waited long for news of the *Lone*

Star of Savannah, but none ever reached us. We did at last hear that somewhere far out in the Atlantic a shattered stern-post of a boat was seen swinging in the trough of a wave, with the letters 'L. S'. carved upon it, and that is all which we shall ever know of the fate of the *Lone Star*. (122)

EPILOGUE: A FACE OF DEMOCRACY

There is in the Sherlock Holmes canon one more transatlantic story which I have deliberately decided not to mention earlier: 'The Yellow Face' (in *The Memoirs* collection). It is too a story of the detective's failure, without however the grim consequences recounted in 'The Five Orange Pips'. More importantly, 'The Yellow Face' also addresses racial prejudice, an issue Doyle evidently regarded as one that would determine the future of the two 'great nations'. Holmes has not been able to 'solve' the case that involves an Englishwoman who, after emigrating to the States, married a black man and who after his death and her return to England has decided to conceal the black face of their child under the eponymous mask, 'the yellow face'. According to the theory constructed by Holmes, the 'yellow face' is not a mask but a real face, one that signifies disease and possibly hints at blackmail. The truth that comes out at the end of the story is for Holmes (and his readers, of course) a lesson of humility. What the mask conceals—and what Doyle reveals—is the truth about racism. In the version of the story published in England, it takes the woman's second husband 'two long minutes' to reconcile himself to the facts; in the American version 'ten long minutes'.

Unification of the English-speaking world is thus represented as a matter of time. Crossing and re-crossing the Atlantic clearly meant and perhaps still means travelling in time, moving backwards and forwards. Conan Doyle may have been incurably utopian and incorrigibly romantic, yet the crossings depicted in the canon have the virtue of mental exercise that ought not to be abandoned. This imaginary voyaging is travel in pursuit of freedom, and this makes the Great Water a unifying rather than a dividing element.

Jacek Mydla
University of Silesia
in Katowice
Poland

WORKS CITED

- Doyle, A. C. (1998) 'The Five Orange Pips', in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- (2001) *A Study in Scarlet*. London and New York: Penguin.
- (2005) *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. Volume II. L. S. Klinger (ed). New York and London: Norton.
- (2006) *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes. The Novels*. L. S. Klinger (ed). New York and London: Norton.
- (2008) *A Life in Letters*. J. Lellenberg, D. Stashower, and C. Foley (eds). London and New York: Harper Perennial.
- Redmond, C. (1987) *Welcome to America, Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Victorian America Meets Arthur Conan Doyle*. Toronto: Simon and Pierre.
- Redmond, D. (1990) *Sherlock Holmes among the Pirates Copyright and Conan Doyle in America 1890-1930*. New York and London: Greenwood Press.

CREOLIZATION

in Lafcadio Hearn's New Orleans and Martinique Writings

In 1877, Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904) left Cincinnati and steamed down the Mississippi to New Orleans. In an article he sent to the *Cincinnati Commercial*, he wrote about his fascination with the changing landscape: ‘even the loveliness of the Ohio seemed faded, and the Northern sky-blue palely cold, like the tint of iceberg pinnacles, when I beheld for the first time the splendor of the Mississippi [...] [the sun] rose with a splendor [...] and auroral flush of pale gold and pale green bloomed over the long fringe of cotton wood and cypress trees and broadened and lengthened half way round the brightening world’ (Hearn, 1925: 1, 160). The landscape expanded, the sunlight shone brighter, and Hearn felt his view broadened. No doubt, New Orleans lured him with its iridescent lights and colorful lifestyle. He was charmed by the cosmopolitan milieu and its varieties of Creole culture. Being an open port, the city welcomed wanderers like him. Hearn called it ‘the Gate of the Tropics’, a magnetic place where he found people of different skin colors, languages, and ethnicity, as well as various merchandise such as tropical fruit (1, 169). If Hearn’s Cincinnati journalism, which dealt with crimes, abortions, and the underground world, were figuratively called monochrome, his New Orleans writings would be multicolored. Here, he discovers the rich soil of Creole culture that is various, multifaceted, and fluid. The open port and the sea beyond also gave Hearn a sense of freedom to write about different aspects of cultural hybridization that was going on in reality in the course of modern history. Hearn in fact became one

Hitomi Nabae
Kobe City University
of Foreign Studies
Japan

of the first serious writers to research and record the Creole life and language in New Orleans as well as in Martinique. This paper aims to examine Hearn's portrayal of Creole culture and how it develops from his writings in New Orleans to those in Martinique. In his first fiction, *Chita: A Memory of Last Island* (1889), he envisioned a multi-lingual and -cultural Creole society as an ideal environment to nurture the next hybrid generation. In his next novella, *Youma: the Story of an West Indian Slave* (1890), which he wrote after his experience in Martinique, however, such a happy future for a Creole society is nonexistent, as he feared that creolization would propagate more conflicts over 'racial supremacy' than generate multi-racial and hybrid harmony (Hearn, 2001b: 73).

ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS OF CREOLE CULTURE

Trained journalist as he was, Hearn was well aware of America's racial, ethnic, and linguistic realities. He started out as a reporter in Cincinnati in 1872, explored diverse racial and national characters, and made himself famous in Cincinnati for a series of articles on a gruesome crime known as the Tanyard Murder. Yet he left Cincinnati for New Orleans and shifted his focus from journalism to fiction in order to realize his youthful dream of becoming a prose-poet. He polished his linguistic skills by writing articles and book reviews and translating French stories and articles. In so doing, he ended up accumulating what we now would refer to as first-hand ethnographic material, especially those writings concerning Creole culture in New Orleans and Louisiana. Old legends, folklore, songs, proverbs, and voodoo superstitions, moreover, provided him with literary inspiration.

The late nineteenth century abounded with 'local color' journalists and writers. *Literary New Orleans* (1999), an anthology of writers inspired by New Orleans, includes Hearn along with Mark Twain, George Washington Cable, Kate Chopin, and Bret Hart. What makes Hearn unique among these writers is that he was an outsider in the true sense of the word. He was a child of an Irish father and Greek mother, and he held a British passport. It probably did not matter for Hearn that he was not American; rather, his alien status allowed him to identify

with other marginalized people in society. He was by no means obsessed with the idea of American identity. In his writings, his narrators themselves identify with fellow New Orleanians as 'us': 'The season has come at last when strangers may visit us without fear, and experience with unalloyed pleasure the first picturesque old city in North America' (Long, 1999: 89). Hearn's perspective captures more than the map of the US: he demarcates New Orleans not in the American South but squarely in 'North America'. He in this way addresses his cosmopolitan readers and asks them to place New Orleans in a larger world context. Although other writers in the collection are similarly fascinated by New Orleans' exotic cosmopolitanism, they are more or less occupied with questions of American identity, local color, race, and gender. Moreover, Hearn's detachment comes from his anthropological and ethnographical perspective, or, as he himself asserted, a more scientific viewpoint. Simon J. Bronner points out in his introduction to Lafcadio Hearn's *America: Ethnographic Sketches and Editorials* (2002) that Hearn was well read in ethnology and folklore, and '[m]uch of his journalism was ethnographic because he drew symbolic significance from the communicative behavior he directly observed in these cultural scenes' (Hearn, 2002: 1). Collecting old Creole words and phrases together, George Washington Cable (1844–1925) called him a skillful 'French translator and natural adept in research' (Turner, 1969: 228). Keen collector as he was, Hearn ultimately used what he had gathered in his writings. So it was in New Orleans that he discovered his literary theme—the reality of colorful Creole life.

In the introduction to *Inventing New Orleans* (2001), a collection of Hearn's New Orleans writings, Frederic Starr regards Hearn as one of the severest judges of the US, and labels him 'an outsider's outsider' (Hearn, 2001a: xviii). Hearn was critical of self-complaisant and materialistic white 'America', and his point of view as a non-American made him give a sympathetic look at other groups that were repressed in American society—African Americans, Creoles, and European and Asian immigrants. What he was interested in was their rich traditional culture that was different and various. Starr points out:

The late nineteenth century was the age par excellence of archaeology and anthropology. It was the time when Heinrich Schliemann could stun the world with his discoveries at Troy, and a painter like Gauguin could introduce his public to remote and primitive peoples. Hearn was fully part of this pan-European movement in the social sciences and arts. (Hearn, 2001a: xix)

In America, however, such anthropological spirit had not yet impressed many, and Hearn's curiosity was considered freaky and grotesque. In *Concerning Lafcadio Hearn* (1906), George Gould, an ophthalmologist and Hearn's one-time friend, made a case study of Hearn's myopic vision, applying Maxime du Camp's theory of literary myopia (Murray, 1993: 311). Hypothesizing that 'intellect and especially aesthetics are almost wholly the product of vision', Gould assumes correspondences between Hearn's disabled eyesight and his lack of moral sense, or 'the morbidities of vision', and asserts that Hearn 'had no mind, or character, to be possessed of loyalty or disloyalty', and so 'created and invented nothing; his stories were always told him by others; at first they were gruesome tales even to horror and disgust' (Gould, 1908: xi-xiii). Gould indeed had little respect for Hearn's intellect, because he assumed that Hearn's weak eyesight was the cause of his abnormality, and thus his tendency to look at 'the lurid, the monstrous, the enormous, only hot crime, and sexual passion'. Hearn's lack of education, according to Gould, is apparent as Hearn hints of no familiarity with great literature such as 'the Greek dramatists, Dante, Goethe, Shakespeare' (Gould, 1908: 70). A Harvard graduate and medical doctor, Gould was exemplary of white American intellectuals of the North with a rigid puritanical morality. The only originality in Hearn, he adds, is his ability to 'color' the echoes he captures, and rightly calls him a 'chameleon' of 'a chromatic voice, a multicoloured echo' (Gould, 1908: 13). Ironically, a 'chameleon' is an apt name for Hearn, who ambitiously dreamed of becoming a writer of 'all trades' and to write everything in his philosophical prose-poetry.

Hearn was not only interested in Creole culture but also in keeping a record of it, as he feared that some traditional ways were disappearing. Before the founding of the American Folklore Society or any like organization, Hearn worked alone and compiled a Creole dictionary of proverbs and songs published

as *Gombo Zhébes*. In the introduction, he expresses his wish that his book would inspire a 'society of folklorists' to organize in order to pursue systematically the problems he presented (Hearn, 2013: 5). Taking this as a pioneering act in the development of folklore studies, Simon Bronner states that Hearn's 'ethnographic style', or the mode of his narrative, directs readers' attention to 'both linguistic creolization and cultural hybridization' and, most significantly, points out that 'folklore in its essence represents hybridization, and that this process mounts to a racial and cultural development or improvement' (Hearn, 2002: 144). An 'ethnographic style' then was the most appropriate style for Hearn in order to write a hybrid 'multicolored' cultural reality in the changing modern world he witnessed.

THE BIRTH OF A CREOLE STORY: *CHITA* (1889)

In the summer 1884, Hearn, weary of city life, took his first vacation and visited Grande Isle. Grande Isle was then an emerging bathing resort for wealthy New Orleanians. Nevertheless, it still attracted Hearn as a 'romantic' place with islanders whose ancestors were said to have been pirates of Baratavia. Life on the island was in contrast to that of New Orleans, which was fast becoming a prosaic modern city. Hearn was inspired and started taking notes, talking to the islanders who soon grew to like him. He visited Grande Isle a few more times, and in the spring of 1886, he decided what to do with the material he gathered on the island. He remembered a story he had heard from George Washington Cable one evening in 1883. It was a story of a small girl who was discovered alive in her mother's dead arms after the seismic coastal tide that hit Last Island on August 10, 1856. Elizabeth Stevenson tells Cable's story as follows:

[Cable] fell to talking of the hurricanes which regularly ravaged the Louisiana coast. He told them of the disaster of 1856 and the horror which seized New Orleans when news came that Ile Dernière, the favorite vacation place of the day, had been swept clean by a storm. Out of a group of summer visitors assembled late and recklessly to dance in the hall of a wooden hotel near the beach, ignoring the accelerating storm, hoping it would pass them by, only one human soul survived. The storm had smashed the hotel and washed the dancers out to sea. The survivor was a child, a little girl. She was found by a fisherman and brought home

Hitomi Nabae
Kobe City University
of Foreign Studies
Japan

to his wife. The two lonely, childless people kept her as their own. It was only years later that a Creole hunter recognized the girl from some trinket she was wearing. She was brought back to her proper place in New Orleans society, but she did not love the civilization that had reclaimed her. She rebelled, returned to the coast, married a fisherman and, as far as Hearn knew, lived there still. (Stevenson, 1961: 151)

The sea and the airy atmosphere of the story inspired and excited Hearn to the point that he felt that he could write something original. He wrote to a friend in New Orleans: 'So I wait for the poet's pentecost, –the inspiration of nature, the descent of the Tongues of Fire. And I think they will come, when the wild skies brighten, and the sun of the Mexican gulf reappears for his worshippers, –with hymns of wind and sea, and the prayers of birds' (Hearn, 1956: 87). Although Hearn's novella is titled after the name of the child, the only survivor of the catastrophe, she does not emerge as the sole heroine, for he also perceives leading actors to be what he calls 'hymns of the wind and the sea' and 'the prayers of birds'. They constantly act on the lives of people regardless of their race and occupation, causing humans to come together or to part, depending on weather changes and even epidemics. In the actual episode, the child's identity was discovered because of a trinket, and she was returned to her family in New Orleans, although she never readjusted to her former place in wealthy white Creole society. In Hearn's story, she never returns to her former life in the city and is adopted by a Spanish fisherman, Viosca, and his wife, Carmen, and named Chita. Had she stayed in the city, she would have been confined in a nursery room and given a discipline suitable for a future Southern Belle, but, in the fishing village by the sea, she grows up as a nature's child who can run in the fields and swim in the sea. Such an environment creates an ideal multi-lingual and -cultural society where men and women, fishermen, doctor, and lawyer all speak different languages on equal terms. Trying to talk to Chita at first, for example, the villagers tried Spanish, English, Italian, and German. Then, lastly, she responded to a Creole from New Orleans who could talk 'gumbo', or Creole French, which she had learned from her black Creole nurse (Hearn, 2003: 53–57). Chita already talks gumbo, or a hybrid language,

and easily acquires another one, 'garagouin', or the crude French of the fishing villages (Hearn, 2003: 100).

Chita also receives a moral education through her village life. Although she was raised multi-lingual, she was not without a racial prejudice when she first came to the village. She had once contemptuously called her foster mother's black Virgin 'a negra!' Yet, her 'eccentricities', as such racially biased behaviors are objectively termed in the story, were 'gradually eliminated from her developing life and thought' (Hearn, 2003: 72). Growing up in the multi-lingual and -cultural environment of the village, she learns to feel affinity with other human beings regardless of different linguistic and ethical backgrounds. Wild nature also makes her learn to revere its mighty power in the face of which all humans are equally helpless. She becomes a physically healthy and morally sensitive child.

Chita never knows about her biological parents. Toward the end of the story, however, Hearn brings her biological father, Julien, to the island as he is making his doctor's rounds. Yet, the story does not result in a family reunion in the manner of a Shakespearean romance such as *The Tempest* in which the sea change brings about the discovery of a lost child, recognition and reconciliation, and, subsequently, the restoration of order in society. In Hearn's case, the separated family members will not reunite and are only left to live separately. They, however, seem to be always united unawares, as it were: at the end of the novella, they are mysteriously brought together like ghosts in Julien's deranged mind. He contracts yellow fever and Carmen and Chita attend him. In his half-conscious state of mind, he discerns a birthmark below Chita's right ear, which reminds him of his own lost daughter who had a birthmark exactly at the same spot, but he is so feverish that he is unable to think clearly. A romantic reunion is thus denied, but the narrator describes how the lost memory of his wife and daughter all at once flood in and how different languages echo in his delirious mind: he 'talked wildly at intervals in French, in English, in Spanish [...] "¡Mentira!" [...] "Qui ça" [...] "Quick!—quick!—hold fast to the table [...] "' His wife, of Scandinavian and New Orleans white Creole descent, surprises him as she speaks in Spanish, and he is with her at sea, drown-

ing together in the great waves. The novella ends with another voice, Carmen's prayer for the dying man in Spanish: '¡O Jesus misericordioso! –¡tened compasión de él!' (Hearn, 2003: 107–110). The Spanish Julien hears may be Carmen's prayer; nonetheless, the last human voice he hears merges with that of his dead wife in his hallucinating mind which may well be called a linguistic gumbo in the unconscious. His multi-lingual mind may also be said to be bequeathed to his daughter, a speaker of 'garagouin', or a hybrid vernacular language. In *Chita*, Hearn in this way focused on the linguistic hybridization as a natural development of civilization and portrayed it as the core characteristic of a Creole life. When he finished writing *Chita*, which had taken him more than a year, Hearn wrote to his friend and musicologist Henry E. Krehbiel (1854–1923):

I have sent on my completed novelette,—an attempt at treatment of modern Southern life in the same spirit of philosophic romance as the 'Ghosts' attempted to exemplify,—an effort to reach that something in the reader which they call Soul, God, or the Unknowable, according as the thought harmonizes with Christian, Pantheistic or Spenserian ideas, without conflicting with any. (Hearn, 1988: 14, 28–29)

Hearn called his 'novelette' a 'philosophic romance' because he wanted to write a story that expressed life's universal laws which he believed to be based on the evolutionary theory advocated by Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). In New Orleans, he read Spencer with fascination, and was convinced that life's mysteries were sensibly explained by the Spencerean idea of the Unknown. In *Chita*, or his 'philosophical romance', therefore, he wanted to render a sense of the unpredictable and unknown as a real life experience. The great hurricane in *Chita* completely destroys the summer resort of the wealthy white New Orleanians and, miraculously, a little girl survives. Nature, as Hearn interprets Spencer, is indifferent, and her mother dies, but the catastrophe it causes does not only result in malicious annihilation; it opens up life's possibilities in an unexpected way. The child is saved and grows up in a new environment where people of different backgrounds are thrown together on equal terms in order to survive in the severe natural world.

At the time of its publication, *Chita* was criticized for the lack of structural coherence in both its characterization and plot development. One favorable review of the time barely pointed out his poetic language and slighted his descriptions of Creole life: 'Half descriptive essay half short story [...] a work remarkable for the beauty of the poetical prose, a work only superficially a study of Creole life' (Frost, 1958: 210). It was only after the rise of postcolonial criticism and Caribbean studies in the 1980s that the novel was remembered, appreciated and reprinted.

In the preface to the 2003 edition of *Chita*, Delia LaBarre calls readers' attention to Hearn's 'insights of regeneration, represented by the blending of languages and culture in South Louisiana—the 'creolization' that Hearn experienced himself during his Louisiana decade'. She also refers to Hearn's 1878 article, 'Los Criollos', as 'the most reliable place to begin', as it defines the word 'Creole' always as a 'relative' term. *Chita*, she finds, reflects 'Hearn's further views on the meaning of this mysterious word that shifts and changes shape in language according to internal and external forces', and declares:

Chita is the culmination of all Hearn's studies and writings while in Louisiana and is indeed the quintessential Creole novel, even in its demi-novel form, like the Crescent City shaping itself around a curve of the Mississippi, or a tiny barrier island that bears the brunt of the sea's wrath, with a stunning tale to relate—if it survives. (Hearn, 2003: X)

If Hearn's use of the word 'Creole' varies in definition every time it appears, as in *Chita*, the novel then certainly lacks coherence. However, what he aims to create, as mentioned in his letter quoted above, is a new 'philosophical romance' in which the transient quality of human life is projected which is best represented by the notion of the Creole. The word 'creolization' is Hearn's coinage that he used to describe the phenomena of constant transformations caused by hybridization of language, culture, and, not to mention, race. In *Chita*, the girl grows up healthy and happy in a fishing village, and the story can be read as an innocuous story where nature plays the role of a healing power and the foundling is in the hands of good country people. Such an idealized hybrid community, however,

would be unacceptable for Hearn's contemporary American readers if he had portrayed 'black' Creole elements, the result of miscegenation. Carmen's black Virgin is an exception, although it can be interpreted as an exotic tool to test Chita's Christian faith and not her racist upbringing. In this way, Hearn carefully constructed his story in order to render his notion that creolization works unawares as the driving force in the evolutionary process of modern civilization.

CREOLIZATION AND EVOLUTIONARY NARRATIVE

Although he had witnessed miscegenation between blacks and whites in Cincinnati, Hearn recognized that this racial intermixing was also deeply embedded in Creole culture in New Orleans. Yet, this culture grew not only from racial mixing, but also from the mixing of language and other cultural components, such as music, songs, stories, and food. Hearn's interest in Creole culture made him curious about its origins. About a year after his arrival in New Orleans in 1887, in a letter to Henry E. Krehbiel, music editor of the *New York Tribune* whom he had befriended in Cincinnati, Hearn referred to 'a charming writer', George Washington Cable, and wrote in 1878 that he was helping Cable collect Creole songs for his book (Hearn, 1988: 13, 164). Working with Cable, Hearn became more interested in Creole dialects, songs, and stories. In his pioneering study of American dialect literature, *Strange Talk: the Politics of Dialect Literature in Gilded Age America* (1999), Gavin Jones points out the power of black language inherent in Creole language and culture:

Black language was a powerfully disruptive force because its relation to white English was both generative and undermining. Mixed with white language, black language had produced a distinctive, hybrid southern accent yet had still retained the power of resistance in its ambiguous rhetorical rituals that lay partially beyond white comprehension. (Jones, 1999: 108)

Cable's first novel, *The Grandissimes* (1880), a story of an early nineteenth-century aristocratic French Creole family, depicts white characters who mix New Orleans black Creole language into their speech, which, Jones argues, despite the novel's idyllic and 'local

color' setting, turns out to be particularly unsettling for white Creoles who believed in racial purity. Jones states that some words and pronunciations a white Creole uses are transcribed in Cable's novel exactly the same way as those of a black Creole, such as in the phrases, 'pilgrim fathers of the Mississippi Delta' took 'wives and moot-wives from the ill specimens of three races' or 'a Creole is a person of mixed blood' (Jones, 1999: 122–3). In this way, Cable makes allusions in his novel to the reality of linguistic as well as racial intermixing with African blood in white Louisiana culture, or 'white' Creole culture.

Hearn had already pointed out in 'Los Criollos' (1877), whose publication preceded Cable's 'Creoles of Louisiana' (1883), that New Orleanians call themselves 'Creoles', whether their ancestors were French, Spanish, or African (Hearn, 1925: 195). In other words the term Creole is always fraught with double meaning, suggesting that it contains African, or black, elements. The boundary between the white Creole and the black Creole is thus ambiguous. The same can be said of their racial identity; as their languages are hybridized, so are their racial identities. As Jones points out in the above-mentioned essay, Cable observes that the white Creole, despite the fact that he believes in his racial and linguistic purity, is 'probably seldom aware that his English sparkles with the same pretty corruptions' as the 'African-Creole dialect' of French (Hearn, 1925: 124). In 'Creole Patois' (1885), Hearn terms such a phenomenon 'linguistic miscegenation' (Hearn, 2009: 746). The languages Creoles speak, be they English, French, Spanish, or an African language, have mutually influenced one another and have been irreversibly transformed. The African pitch or spirit, as both Hearn and Cable assert, is already internalized in the white Creole language. These writers considered that the 'African-Creole' influence was not a contaminating element but one of creative power, which could be directly felt in orally transmitted literature such as in folktales and songs. Hearn, in fact, researched and collected Creole songs for Cable, who called Hearn a skillful 'French translator and natural adept in research'. (Turner, 1969: 228). However, Hearn was disappointed when he came to know that most songs he collected ultimately were not included in Cable's book. He wrote to Krehbiel:

I was a little disappointed, although I was also much delighted, with parts of Cable's 'Grandissimes'. He did not follow out his first plan,—as he told me he was going to do,—viz., to scatter about fifty Creole songs through the work, with the music in the shape of notes at the end. There are only a few ditties published; and as the Creole music deals in fractions of tones, Mr. Cable failed to write it properly. He is not enough of a musician, I fancy, for that. (Hearn, 1988: 13, 220)

Beyond Hearn's assessment, Cable used African-Creole songs without explanation or translation, signifying them as part of an alien culture. He was also keenly aware that these songs could refer to or insinuate the rebellious desire of the ex-slave African-Creoles. A native of Louisiana, who fought the Civil War on the Confederate side, Cable knew the mentality of the white Creole. He was, therefore, 'forced to avoid explicit reference to the threat of black insurrection that had dominated Louisiana society since colonial times—a censorship that continued throughout his career' (Jones, 1999: 129). While Hearn was upset that Cable did not make use of the songs he had collected for him, this might have been because he was a stranger in the South who did not share Cable's reservation and anxiety. Hearn was simply fascinated with the power and beauty of the sounds of African origin for what they were.

Hearn's fascination in sounds can be traced back to his Cincinnati days in early 1870s. Although he suffered from an extreme myopia with one nearly one blind eye, he had a keen ear for sounds, especially for foreign phonetic sounds. While in Cincinnati, he was introduced into the realm of world music by a fellow journalist and musicologist Krehbiel. Hearn wrote not only about African American music, but also of Chinese, or Oriental, music. He was fascinated by foreign languages and tended to use the original language in his translations and articles in order to create exotic and alien acoustic effects, as he later did in *Chita*. In *Some Chinese Ghosts* (1887). Foreignness in the text unsettles and stimulates the sensory experience in the act of reading, and Hearn thought that it reminded him of something long lost, the original state of mind—Hearn's birthplace, or 'Orient'.

Hearn followed the mid-nineteenth-century fad for 'Oriental studies' and read Egyptian, Islamic, and Talmudic stories in French translation. Fascinated by these stories, he re-translated

them into English and published a small book, *Stray Leaves from Strange Literature* (1884), in which he included stories gathered from 'the anvari-soheili, Baitál pachísf, mahabharata, pantchatantra, Gulistan, Talmud, and Kalevala'. Stories from areas surrounding Western Europe in all directions are included in his collection of 'strange' stories, serving as his examples of 'Orientalism'. In his letter to Krehbiel in 1886, Hearn infers that there could be a common denominator among these foreign stories, or some essential factor that had originally influenced Western civilization. Moreover, his belief in the original source, or the first cause in literature parallels his understanding of Spencer. These 'strange' stories for Hearn were not merely 'fantastic metaphysics' originating in the 'Orient', but they were the very means to access the origin, or what Spencerian evolutionary theory calls the ultimate 'eternal reopening of the Great Doubt' (Hearn, 1988: 13, 371).

The 'Orient' for Hearn, who was born in a Greek island, generated an image full of light and tropical air. He wrote to Gould from Martinique in 1888: 'When you think of tropical Nature as cruel and splendid, like a leopard, I fancy the Orient, which is tropical largely, dominates the idea'. Hearn's 'tropics' is not devoid of the dark powers of 'the mysterious Nature' but is 'rich in death as in life' (Hearn, 1988: 14, 62). The 'Orient', therefore, lies where the life-source springs, and there the power of 'Nature' is both 'cruel and splendid'. Hearn in his writings overlays his concept of 'Orient-tropics' with the image of a primordial wholeness of nature, which is constantly in flux, ever creating and recreating different patterns of colors and shapes. In New Orleans, he came to believe that in the transformative quality of creolization could be seen the very proof of the evolutionary theory that was conceptualized by Spencer. As Hearn witnessed the varieties of Creole culture, racially mixed colors of people's skins, their languages, and their lifestyles, he came to believe that creolization, or the miscegenation and hybridization of race and language, would further trigger the advancement in the process of human evolution. Both Cable and Hearn saw that African traits, which white purists had rejected as a sign of contamination, were in fact the essential source of creative power in Creole culture.

Chita, Hearn's Spencerean 'philosophical romance', lyrically foregrounds such creative power and describes the Creole life, or that of the multi-lingual mix-breeds, in the fierce natural climate. The ever-changing modes of the sea reflect the transiency of life that is all in flux and ever changing. In this natural setting, Hearn provides *Chita*, the girl who survived the hurricane, with both moral and physical education that is very different from what she would have had in New Orleans. In his letter to Gould from Martinique in 1888, Hearn states that Western civilization has drawn 'a sharp distinction between moral and physical sensibilities' and 'plac[ed] mind and reason over body and feelings', and that such a civilization will prove to counter development. He opines: 'When one's physical sensibilities are fully developed and properly balanced, I do not think wickedness to others possible. The cruel and the selfish are capable of doing what is called wrong, because they are ignorant of the suffering inflicted' (Hearn, 1988: 14, 60). Further, he believes the happy turn of the evolutionary process if both moral and physical sensibilities are equally valued: 'Evolutionally, egotism must precede altruism;—altruism itself begin only a sort of double reflex action of egotism' (14, 61). Spencerian evolutionary theory, as Hearn interprets it, is ultimately directed towards a selfless state of civilization. In *Chita*, therefore, Hearn plays out this theory by letting a white Creole girl suffer the loss of her city-bred white parents but adjust herself in a rural and wild environment. There, she grows up as a morally compassionate and physically healthy girl. In *Chita* is thus represented Hearn's 'romance', his wishful future vision of creolization evolving into an ultimate ideal of an altruistic society.

A CREOLE VISION MISFIRED

Hearn begins his 1885 essay 'The Creole Patois' by stating that 'the pure Creole element is disappearing from the Vié faubon', an area on the margins of New Orleans, known as an exotic place where rich white Creoles lived in villas with their colored mistresses. From here emerged a mixed Creole language that white children learned from their black nurses. Hearn regrets that such a hybrid speech is fading away:

It will be sufficient, therefore, to state that the creole patois is the offspring of linguistic miscegenation, an offspring which exhibits but a very faint shade of African color, and nevertheless possesses a strangely supple comeliness by virtue of the very intercrossing which created it, like a beautiful octoroon. (Hearn, 2009: 746)

Hearn's language is subtle. He focuses on the language and describes how 'the creole patois' reveals 'a very faint shade of African color' and concludes that the 'intercrossing' of languages creates 'comeliness'. Then he shifts his focus to the 'beautiful octoroon'. His point of the beautiful sound effect of the 'linguistic miscegenation' deftly refers to the racial miscegenation that produces the 'beautiful octoroon'. Then, instead of describing the 'beautiful octoroon' and the *fait accompli* of racial miscegenation, he, in the manner of a philologist, traces the social history of the Creole language. The 'linguistic miscegenation', therefore, is a phenomenon that has evolved side by side with racial miscegenation. In *Chita*, however, he only deals with 'linguistic miscegenation' of European languages and no black Creole language is referred to, not to mention racial miscegenation. Hearn knew that, if he wanted to write more about the reality of Creole life and of the 'beautiful octoroon', he had to depart New Orleans, so he did. He left for Martinique, where he expected that he could more freely write about it.

The essays Hearn wrote in Martinique were compiled into a book titled *Two Years in French West Indies* (1890). He colorfully described Creole culture, women, and their exotic coiffures and observed religious and supernatural practices. He also subtly made references to historical upheavals of the African slaves of the past. The book attracted those who were seeking for an exotic reading experience, and received good reviews, but Hearn in a letter self-effacingly wrote: 'What they admired, I do not know, for I have no originality. I am but an echo of other people's stories and experiences, but if I can color this echo with the iridescence of the soap bubble [...] I shall be satisfied' (Murray, 1993: 313). Although his response sounds modest, he does refer to his strength in expressing 'the iridescence of the soap bubble' in words. Hearn ambitiously used the Creole language and local dialects in his text in order to represent the varieties of culture

he witnessed. In 'Midsummer Trip to the Tropics', the first essay in *The Two Years in the French West Indies*, for example, he hears 'the creole street cries, a sonorous far-reaching high key', calling "‘Çé moune-là, ça qui lé bel mango?’" He sees a pastry-seller, who is 'black as ebony, but dressed all in white', and 'chants half in French, half in creole, with a voice like a clarinet: "C'est louvouier de la pâttisserie qui passé [...]"' (Hearn, 2001b: 21-22). The musicality of the local Creole language as well as the beautiful 'ebony' color of the skin equally captivated Hearn. However, he found his confidence in human intellect, or the belief in moral evolution, challenged. In short, as he wandered into the tropical woods in Martinique, he was dumbfounded by the mightiness of nature's destructive and, at the same time, procreative and transformative power. He could only regard himself frail and unfit to survive in the harsh tropical climate:

[...] that splendid and terrible Nature of the tropics [...] consumes the energies of the races of the North' and 'devours all that has been accomplished by their heroism or their crimes,—effacing their cities, rejecting their civilization. To those peoples physiologically in harmony with this Nature belong all the chances of victory in the contest—already begun—for the racial supremacy. (Hearn, 2001b: 73)

What Hearn means by 'the racial supremacy' is not only the question between the whites and the blacks; it is a matter of survival of the fittest for all, including the Creole. Therefore, he concludes that 'the true black element, more numerically powerful, more fertile, more cunning, better adapted to pyrogenic climate and tropical environment [...] would win', and mourns because 'all these beautiful fruit-colored populations seem doomed to extinction' (Hearn, 2001b: 73). It must be emphasized here that Hearn, who is a hybrid himself and was once married to a mulatto, is not making a racist comment, positing 'black element' as an evil factor. Rather, it is Nature's unknown and indifferent life-mover. Hearn tries to argue objectively from an evolutionary point of view, and refers to 'the black element' of the tropical 'Nature' as the representation of a devastating power against which the locals, whose skin color happens to be 'black', are environmentally only fit for survival. He does not fail to add a point that the seed of such struggles has been originally

planted by the original white colonists: 'Everywhere the sins of the past have borne the same fruit, have furnished the colonies with social enigmas that mock the wisdom of legislators, –a dragon-crop of problems that no modern political sense has yet proved competent to deal with' (Hearn, 2001b: 74). His dream of a happy Creole society becomes indeed just 'the iridescence of the soap bubble' and he, in a way, rewrote his Creole story by setting it in the historical context of colonization. In *Youma* (1890) he wrote a new 'philosophical romance' based on the 1840 slave riot that he learned in Martinique.

At the end of *Youma*, angry black slaves set fire to the white master's mansion, and Youma, a black Creole nurse, dies in there, embracing her charge, a white Creole child. The story speaks for Hearn's ambivalent feelings about the future of race conflicts and creolization. In *Chita*, the child in her dead mother's arms survives and finds the arms of a foster mother. In *Youma* a white child is entrusted to the arms of her faithful 'da', but they both die. A *New York Times* book review at the time noted that Hearn 'is not of the Abolitionist breed, but makes one feel that slavery of some kind is good for the men and women of African descent, assuring himself thereby incidentally of sympathy on the part of his fellows in Louisiana who have not forgiven Mr. Cable his Northern heresies' (1 June 1890). As the reviewer notes, Hearn leaves 'moral questions to be decided by his readers', and the ending of the story is ambiguous. Does the black nurse sacrifice herself for the white child? Is she morally whitewashed and good? Is the violence inflicted by the black rioters good because their cry for freedom is justified? Is Hearn on the side of the blacks, or the whites? Hearn seems to seem to suggest that taking sides does not resolve the racial conflict. Youma, a black Creole, dies with the white child, despite the fact that her lover, a black slave, pleads with her to abandon the child and join him. The last scene does not determine morally whether she should belong the white side or the black side. Hearn perhaps could only portray the fact that white and black elements are related so that neither can be taken apart. The nurse embracing the child, or the image of the mother and child, symbolizes such truth. Their bond, Hearn seems to emphasize, is the very

fruit of creolization. It is not possible to differentiate the white element from the black ones in a Creole society. Modern history made them close-knit, be it biological or metaphorical.

Hearn dreamed of writing a 'philosophical romance' of creolization, but as seen in *Youma*, he found it impossible to portray a happy future life as he once did in *Chita*. The race issue, he was aware, was deeply rooted in the history of Western colonization, and *Youma* demonstrated how unrealistic a peaceful ending for a Creole story would be. After Martinique in 1890, Hearn left the US for Japan. There, he married a Japanese woman and became a hybrid father to three hybrid children. With an ethnologist spirit, he collected old Japanese stories and wrote about them. His bitter American memory, however, was never forgotten. While living in Kobe from 1894 to 1896, he worked as a journalist for the *Kobe Chronicle*. He once again had to face reality. One of his articles was titled 'The Race-Problem in America':

The old prediction that miscegenation would settle the problem, –that the race would be 'bleached out of existence'–would never be ventured to-day [...] it is sadly evident that the worst ultimate consequences of slavery are yet to come; and that the enormous error of it will furnish legislators yet unborn with a host of Sphinx-riddles to solve. (Hearn, 2002: 216)

It is apparent that race is still a part of his concern and is still an unanswered question. In an earthquake-prone Japan, he must have thought about life's unpredictability and human frailty. In 1896, Hearn heard about an earthquake and tsunami disaster that happened in north Japan, and immediately wrote a survival story based on an old Japanese legend, 'A Living God'. This time, he ventured to write a hybrid religious story which envisions people sharing the same faith in the goodness of human heart. Faced with Nature's power, he knew, humans, regardless of race or class, are equally powerless. And in the aftermath of such a cataclysmic event, Hearn did not fail to observe how a society's vulnerabilities could surface like debris floating atop waves. For Hearn's America, it was the question of race.

WORKS CITED

- Frost, O. W. (1958) *Young Hearn*. Tokyo: Hokuseido.
- Gould, G. M. (1908) *Concerning Lafcadio Hearn: with a Bibliography by Laura Stedman*. Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs.
- (1922) *La cuisine creole: a collection of culinary recipes from leading chefs and noted creole housewives, who have made New Orleans famous for its cuisine*. 2d ed. New Orleans: F. F. Hansell. (Original work published 1886).
- (1924) *An American Miscellany*. 2 vols. Ed. Albert Mordell. New York: Dodd Mead .
- Hearn, L. (1925) *Occidental Gleanings: Sketches and Essays Now First Collected*. A. Mordell (ed). New York: Dodd Mead.
- (1933) *Letters of Pagan*. Detroit: Robert Bruna Powers.
- (1956) *Newly Discovered Letters from Lafcadio Hearn to Dr. Rudolph Matas*. I. Nishizaki (ed). Tokyo: Hokuseido.
- (1988) *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn. Large-Paper Edition. In Sixteen Volumes*. [Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1922.] Tokyo: Rinsen.
- (2001a) *Inventing New Orleans: Writings of Lafcadio Hearn*. S. F. Starr (ed). Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- (2001b) *Two Years in the French West Indies*. [1886] New York: Interlink.
- (2002) *Lafcadio Hearn's America: Ethnographic Sketches and Editorials*. S. J. Bronner (ed). Louisville: University Pres of Kentucky.
- (2003) *Chita: a Memory of Last Island*. [1890] D. LaBarre (ed). Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- (2009) *Hearn: American Writings*. C. Benfey (ed). Library of America. Literary Classics of the United States.
- (2013). *'Gombo zhèbes': Little dictionary of Creole proverbs, selected from six Creole dialects*. [1886] London: Forgotten Books.
- Hardwig, B. (2013) *Upon Provincialism: Southern Literature and National Periodical Culture, 1870-1900*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Hitomi Nabae
Kobe City University
of Foreign Studies
Japan

- Hirakawa, S. (ed) (2000) *Koizumi Yakumo Jiten [Reader's Guide to Lafcadio Hearn]*. Tokyo: Kobunsha.
- Imafuku, R. (1994) *Kureoru-shugi [The Heterology of Culture; the Creole-ism]*. Tokyo: Seidosha.
- Jones, G. (1999) *Strange Talk: the Politics of Dialect Literature in Gilded Age America*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Long, J. (1999) *Literary New Orleans*. Athens, Georgia: Hill Street Press.
- Murray, P. (1993) *A Fantastic Journey: The Life and Literature of Lafcadio Hearn*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- 'New Books', in *The New York Times* 1 June 1890 <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F00B16F8395F10738DDDA80894DE405B8085F0D3>
- Stevenson, E. (1961) *Lafcadio Hearn*. New York: Macmillan.
- (1999) *The Grass Lark: A Study of Lafcadio Hearn*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, Macmillan.
- Turner, A. (1969) 'Introduction', *Chita: A Memory of Last Island*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

THE 'OCEANIC FEELING'

in Stephen Crane's *The Open Boat*
and S. T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

Stephen Crane's *The Open Boat* (1897) gives a fictionalized account of his shipwreck and subsequent rescue after the steamboat *Commodore*, on which he was heading to Cuba to act as a correspondent in the Cuban War, ran into bad weather off the coast of Florida. The story focuses on the hours during which four men (the captain, a cook, an oiler, and the correspondent) struggle to reach shore in a ten-foot dinghy. Crane also wrote a journalistic account of the same event (*Stephen Crane's Own Story*), which focuses on the events leading up to the four men's abandonment of the *Commodore*, and announces that the struggle for survival after the shipwreck will be dealt with separately (Crane, 1984a).

Claudia Ioana
Doroholschi
West University
of Timișoara
Romania

At several points in the story, *The Open Boat* seems to reference Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Although we have no direct account of Crane reading Coleridge (as indeed we have little direct information on Crane's life and thought in general), literary references and allusions in *The Open Boat* have been noticed before—including references to Coleridge (e.g. Dendinger, 1968, who reads *The Open Boat* as a parody of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, or Hoyle, 1969, addressing the issue in the [unpublished] master's thesis). Indeed, in the short story under study there are several striking scenes which seem to offer direct hints at *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Some of the common elements (such as the lighthouse) are elements which quite naturally occur in the context of nautical discourse. Some similarities, however, are harder to pin down, yet they may

arguably be demonstrated in the parallelism of certain traits of style and imagery (e.g.: the use of color in depicting the sea). There also are several instances which suggest *intended* allusions to Coleridge, and which will be discussed in greater detail in following sections of this article. One of these cases occurs in the beginning of Crane's narrative, where not an albatross, but a gull lands on the captain's head, and is described as 'somehow grewsome and ominous' (Crane, 1984b: 888). The latter part of the story finds the sailors in 'dead sleep' (Crane, 1984b: 899), which once again resonates with Coleridge in a way that suggests a direct reference. So does the scene towards the end, in which the correspondent finds himself contemplating a shark, and which bears similarities in both description and functionality to the scene where the Mariner 'blesses' the water snakes 'unaware' (Coleridge, 1970: 40). *The Open Boat* is divided into seven parts, just like the *Mariner*, and although no exact section-by-section parallel can be drawn between the two texts, it is tempting to see this as yet another intertextual allusion. In the present paper I will look at the two texts in relation to what Freud and Romain Rolland define as 'the oceanic feeling', in an attempt to illuminate the way the texts 'read' the relationship between man and sea / nature, and to elucidate what Crane might have intended by referencing the *Ancient Mariner*.

The term 'oceanic feeling' was developed in a dialogue between Freud and Romain Rolland, in an exchange of letters initiated after Freud had sent Rolland a copy of his *The Future of an Illusion*. In his reply to Freud, Rolland argues that he has not accurately tracked down the source of religious feeling, and that this sensation should be viewed in terms of what he calls an 'oceanic' feeling. In Rolland's view, the oceanic feeling represents a feeling of connectedness with the universe, of mystical oneness with everything, which lies at the root of all mystical experience, regardless of religion (at the time, Rolland was immersed in the study of Asian writers):

'What I mean is: totally independent of all dogma, all credo, all Church organization, all Sacred Books, all hope in a personal survival, etc., the simple and direct fact of *the feeling of the "eternal"* (which can very

well not be eternal, but simply without perceptible limits, and like oceanic, as it were).

This sensation, admittedly, is of a subjective character. But as it is common to thousands (millions) of men actually existing, with its thousands (millions) of individual nuances, it is possible to subject it to analysis, with an approximate exactitude.

I think that you will classify it also under the *Zwangsneurosen*. But I have often had occasion to observe its rich and beneficent power, be it among the religious souls of the West, Christians or non-Christians, or among those great minds of Asia who have become familiar to me and some of whom I count as friends'. (Rolland, 1927: 173)

Freud subsequently develops the idea in *Civilization and its Discontents*, where he argues that, while he cannot detect any trace of the 'oceanic feeling' within himself, it is probably there in others, and tracks it down to the initial stages of life, where the newborn's ego has not yet differentiated itself from the surrounding world (1962: 15). The 'oceanic feeling' is, in Freud's view, a residue of the primal confusion between ego and world, and 'might seek something like the restoration of limitless narcissism' (therefore it is insufficient, he argues, to explain the religious feeling) (1962: 19).

The concept of 'oceanic feeling', as developed in the correspondence between Freud and Rolland, does not refer to the ocean or the sea as such. Rolland calls it 'oceanic' because of its 'lack of perceptible limits' (1927: 173). However, the metaphor does speak for itself, and the motif of man alone at sea has often been used as a way to speak of man's encounter with limits—the limit between life and death, between human and nature, between the self engaged in contemplation of the world and the self-engaged in introspection. The sea has long functioned as the 'most appropriate, if not exemplary, metaphor' of the sublime (Freeman, 2010: 11). For Kant, for instance, the contemplation of the 'boundless ocean' and other similar awe-inspiring elements from a safe vantage point arouse a sentiment of the sublime, since 'they raise the forces of the soul above the height of vulgar commonplace, and discover within us a power of resistance of quite another kind, which gives us courage to be able to measure ourselves against the seeming omnipotence of nature' (Kant, 2007:91). In what follows, I will try to establish whether the representation of the ocean in Coleridge and Crane resonates in any way

with the idea of the 'oceanic feeling' understood in such a context. If yes, I will endeavor to determine whether it can be read as a mystical (Rollandian) union between the human being and the world, or, in the Freudian sense, as nostalgia for a primitive communion with the universe. Ultimately, such a reflection may provide a conceptual fundament upon which it would be possible to argue for a more profound relationship between the two texts.

Canonical readings of the *Ancient Mariner*, especially in relationship with glosses to the text, have interpreted the poem as one reinforcing the Romantic unity between man and nature. The Mariner somehow disturbs this unity, by arbitrarily killing the Albatross, which, over the course of the poem, acquires a whole range of mystical connotations—some Christian, some of a more obscure and primitive nature. Order seems to be restored when the Mariner 'blesses' the water snakes 'unawares', in what seems to be a gesture of unpremeditated reconciliation with God's creation; at the end, we encounter the Mariner re-telling his story to the wedding guest, and reasserting his bond with 'both man and bird and beast' (Coleridge, 1970:73). Although the Mariner fails to maintain this connection, it seems to be positively valorized in the poem. The nature of this bond seems rather close to Roland's understanding of it as a mystical feeling of connectedness with the universe. It is not merely a Christian feeling, but one that encompasses nature in a wider sense—in which man feels consubstantiality with nature ('bird and beast')—an attitude in which it is easy to read echoes of Asian thought (Stokes, 2011: 137–138), one further point of convergence with Rolland.

In Crane's story, the sea appears as a hostile element from the very outset of the narrative. From the very opening scene, Crane's imagery seems to render the sea an object of contemplation, but there is an insistence on its cold, insensitive beauty. The imagery also emphasizes its 'unnaturalness' by resorting to concrete, non-liquid objects: water is not the limitless, permissive medium it 'ought to be', but has 'points like rocks'; the waves of the sea are 'most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall' (Crane, 1984b: 885), a wall into which one may

crash: rather than that of limitlessness, these are the tropes of limitedness reified. The effect is one of alienation, certainly not an 'oceanic' experience in the Rollandian sense.

In the early stages of the story, the motif of flying gulls is employed to build an image that simultaneously suggests the proximity of the shore and, ironically, renders the protagonists' inability to reach it almost palpable. The men are angry at the birds' apparent ease on the water, and, when one of the gulls lands on the captain's head, he refrains from knocking it off only because he is afraid that a sudden gesture would capsize the boat, so 'he gently and carefully wave[s] it away' (Crane, 1984b: 888). The scene reminds one of that of the arrival of the Albatross from the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, but the sense of guilt awoken by the severing of the bond with nature, so pervasive in the poem, is absent here. In Crane's story, there seems to be no bond to break. The gull is there merely to highlight the very absence of the connection (a function it shares with other elements of the sea imagery in the beginning of the text), to open one's eyes to the ocean's inhuman indifference to human frailty.

As the story progresses, the sea becomes more and more hostile. The life-saving station scene (Crane, 1984b: 895–898), in which the men on the boat struggle to read the gestures of the people on shore, who run and wave, yet ultimately fail to communicate, increases the overall sense of alienation. It is at this stage, when night falls, finding the men asleep, extremely tired, rowing in turn to prevent the boat from capsizing, that an interesting shift in point of view occurs. While up to this point in the narrative focalization has been a fairly detached third person, it is now, as the other characters are asleep and we are only witnessing the workings of the correspondent's mind (Crane, 1984b: 901), that it becomes clear that the story's focalizer is in fact the correspondent. It becomes clear that the events are filtered through his perception, and that the refrain 'If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees?' (Crane, 1984b: 898), initially unattributed, is his own interrogation of the absurdity of Fate. While the scene is remi-

niscent of the 'life in death' scene in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, here once again there is no suggestion of a broken order to restore. At least to the mind of the struggling correspondent, the sea is ruled by 'seven mad gods', a site of chaos.

However, the correspondent does discover a deeper feeling of connectedness—not with nature, but with his fellow humans. From early on, they are bound by a 'subtle brotherhood', a 'comradeship', they are 'friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common' (Crane, 1984b: 890), and the bond only deepens in the face of adversity. There is indeed a sense of transcending the self and perceiving it as one with the universe inherent in the oceanic feeling, but not in the mystical sense in which Rolland is reading it. Instead, it seems to be a primordial bond with other humans, disillusioned and simple, closer perhaps to Freud's non-religious version of the concept. The use of focalization seems to underscore this idea: the story is told not as the experience of an assertive autobiographical 'I', but by focusing on a group of people, who are initially all nameless. When the focalization shifts, becoming more clearly concentrated on the correspondent, this is simultaneous to the moment when the only person who is individualized during the story, the oiler, Billy, begins to be named. Therefore we get not one character who is individualized by focalization, but two characters who are individualized simultaneously and become interchangeable: not only do they literally exchange roles while they are rowing, but we also get an increasing sense of the correspondent's relation with the oiler, and his fraught sense of identification with him. The only one who dies, the oiler, becomes, in a sense, the correspondent's double: the mirror in which he can see and question the arbitrariness of his own survival.

Another interesting Coleridgean echo is the moment when the correspondent, alone at night, contemplates a shark. The initial description of the shark is that of a terrifyingly beautiful creature, and reminiscent of the Mariner's contemplation of the water-snakes (Coleridge, 1970: 40). In Coleridge's poem, the Mariner, seeing the beauty of the snakes, blesses them 'unawares', is once again able to pray, and subsequently the dead albatross falls from his neck. In *The Open Boat*, the correspondent

looks at the shark, and has an acute perception of his being alone, wishing that one of his companions were awake with him (Crane, 1984b: 901). This triggers a revelation of the indifference of nature, which somehow brings to his mind a verse on the soldiers of Algiers: 'The correspondent plying the oars and dreaming of the slow and slower movements of the lips of the soldier, was moved by a profound and perfectly impersonal comprehension. He was sorry for the soldier of the Legion who lay dying in Algiers' (Crane, 1984b: 903). Thus, his experience of limit, danger and isolation has led him to discover empathy, an empathy which is 'impersonal' because it transcends the boundaries of his own self, and which interestingly occurs immediately after the correspondent challenges the indifference of nature with a plea of 'Yes, but I love myself' (Crane, 1984b: 902), in an echo (and partial reversal) of one of Crane's more or less contemporary poems from *War is Kind*:

'A man said to the universe:
"Sir, I exist!"
"However," replied the universe,
The fact has not created in me
A sense of obligation."'
(Crane, 1984c:1335)

Where the Mariner discovers a unity with all living things, the correspondent first cries out his own existence, and demands a recognition of his own individuality, only to then transcend his sense of self by discovering a link with humanity—not a mystical link with nature, but a psychological unity with others, more consistent with the Freudian than the Rollandian reading of the oceanic feeling.

Although I will not go so far as to undertake an exhaustive psychoanalytical reading of the story, it is tempting to read the correspondent's rescue after the shipwreck as a metaphorical rebirth, consistent with Freud's account of individuation. As the correspondent slowly comes back to himself among the protective rescuers (the 'parents' of his second, post-shipwreck delivery into the world), all he perceives seems to be the connection with the others—perhaps an oceanic feeling in the Freudian sense, generated by the safety of the original bond with other humans.

The very end, however, presents us with a moment of contemplation of the sea which at first sight might suggest a shift towards an almost Rollandian, mystical version of the oceanic feeling: 'When it came night, the white waves paced to and fro in the moonlight, and the wind brought the sound of the great sea's voice to the men on shore, and they felt that they could then be interpreters' (Crane, 1984b: 909). The suggestion seems to be that of a connection with the sea, which the men seem to have understood in some deeper way. Recent criticism (cited in Wolford, 2007: 61-62) is wondering, however, if the ending is to be read literally or in an ironic key. As Wolford notes, Crane's 'lyrical' endings are most often ironic, and the last paragraph can be understood both as a return to a quasi-mystical oneness with the universe, and as an ironic statement of the men's incapacity of realizing any connection with the sea.

Examining the purpose of Crane's allusions to the *Ancient Mariner* can help shed some light on the matter. If these allusions are conscious, one of the reasons why Crane might have wanted to employ them is their Gothic effect. The *fin-de-siècle's* affinity with Romantic Gothicism is well documented, and so is Crane's interest for Gothic writers such as Edgar Allan Poe (Fusco, 2003:34). Moreover, the early readers and reviewers of Coleridge's poem (Jackson, 2002) perceived it as being fragmentary and obscure. While we can only speculate what Crane's own reading of the poem may have been, we can hypothesize that he might have shared in his contemporaries' perception to some extent, and that he may have alluded to Coleridge to conjure up a sense of fragmentariness, obscurity, Gothic terror, and absurd. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* itself is perhaps not as simple as we have got used to thinking. Christopher Stokes' reading (2011: 85-107) emphasizes that the poem does not end with the Mariner's blessing of the water snakes and the fall of the Albatross from around his neck, nor does the ending of the poem suggest full reconciliation and restoration of order, particularly if we look at the text without Coleridge's ulterior glosses. Stokes shows that the text has its own indecisiveness, a 'divided tone' which he ascribes to 'Coleridge's difficult passage between Unitarianism and Anglicanism', particularly in what the attitudes towards sin

and irrationality are concerned (Stokes, 2011: 95). It is perhaps precisely this indecisiveness that serves Crane and helps him open up his realistic text to a sense of Gothic anxiety.

Most importantly, however, what the allusions to Coleridge seem to achieve is a systematic undermining of any sense of mystic connection with the world. Each of the points of convergence between Crane's short story and Coleridge's poem (the gull, the 'death sleep', the shark) seems to call to the foreground a moment of potential connection with the supernatural, since it relates to the very moments where in Coleridge's text the human subject connects with the supernatural world. The allusions to Coleridge manage to simultaneously create a sort of metaphysical resonance in the text and to show the Universe 'refusing itself' to human consciousness, thus underscoring the absence of any supernatural element, and indeed any sense of the universe's 'obligation' or accountability for the fate of humans, in what is practically a deconstruction of the Rollandian oceanic feeling.

In this context, it is interesting to notice that in the last paragraphs of the story Crane uses religious imagery. The wave that brings the correspondent to shore is a 'true miracle of the sea' (Crane, 1984b: 908–909), while the man who comes to his rescue has 'a halo [...] about his head, and he shone like a saint'. (Crane, 1984b: 909). However, if there is a miracle at work, it is the miracle of a very capricious deity, since the correspondent's relief at being rescued has a sinister counterpoint in the revelation of the death of his symbolic double, the oiler. In both examples above, the religious terminology is linked to human actions and perceptions and is presented not in the account of the omniscient narrator, but as the correspondent's perception of the fact, or, indeed, his projection. Like earlier in the story, when the correspondent asserts his existence and holds Fate accountable for its meaningless treatment of humans, here too we get the impression that coherent meaning is a human projection. Making sense is a demand that humans place on the Universe, but the Universe fails to comply. This enhances, rather than resolves, the sense of indecisiveness and fragmentariness created, among other things, by the Coleridge allusions.

As for the last paragraph, if there is a resolution or harmonization, a sense in which the self transcends its own boundaries, it is within the bond of the group of men. It is perhaps not by chance that the ending returns to the collective focalization of 'the men', once again dissolving the individuality of the correspondent into the mass of his companions, and that the moment of understanding is thus a collective one, not one that belongs to the individual. Also, it is significant that the moment of their perceived ability of interpreting the voice of the sea, whether it is to be read as a true moment of understanding, a calming projection now that they have returned to the safety of the shore, or a declaration of solidarity in a liminal experience, can only occur from a distance. The human subject only achieves some type of understanding of nature once it becomes separated from it—and from itself.

WORKS CITED

- Coleridge, S. T. (1970) *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. New York: Dover Publications Inc.
- Crane, S. (1984a) 'Stephen Crane's Own Story', in S. Crane and J. C. Levenson. *Prose and Poetry*. New York: Literary Classics of the US. 875-884.
- (1984b) 'The Open Boat', in S. Crane and J. C. Levenson. *Prose and Poetry*. New York: Literary Classics of the US. 885-909.
- (1984c) 'War is Kind', in S. Crane and J. C. Levenson. *Prose and Poetry*. New York: Literary Classics of the US. 1325-1345.
- Dendinger, L. (1968) 'Stephen Crane's Inverted Use of Key Images of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"', *Studies in Short Fiction* 5 (Winter, 1968): 192-94.
- Freeman, B. C. (2010) 'The Awakening: Waking Up at the End of the Line'. H. Bloom (ed), *The Sublime*. New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism. 1-26.
- Freud, S. (1962) *Civilization and its Discontents*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc.
- Fusco, R. (2003) 'Stephen Crane Said to the Universe', in S. Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage and Selected Short Fiction*. New York: Barnes and Noble Classics.
- Hoyle, L. A. (1969) *Stephen Crane and an Unsacramental Nature*. A Master's Report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts. Department of English, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. <http://krex.k-state.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2097/7206/LD2668R41969H68.pdf?sequence=1>, 31.07.2013.
- Jackson, J. R. de J. 1969 (2002) *Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The Critical Heritage. Vol. 2 (1834-1900)*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kant, I. (2007) *Critique of Judgement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rolland, R. (1999) 'Dec 5, 1927. Letter to Sigmund Freud', in W. B. Parsons. *The Enigma of the Oceanic Feeling. Revisioning the Psychoanalytic Theory of Mysticism*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. 173-174.

Claudia Ioana
Doroholschi
West University
of Timișoara
Romania

- Stokes, C. (2011) *Coleridge, Language and the Sublime. From Transcendence to Finitude*. Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wolford, C. L. (2007) 'This Booming Chaos: Crane's Search for Transcendence', in H. Bloom (ed), *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Stephen Crane—Updated Edition*. New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism/Infobase Publishing, 57-73.

ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

(in the order of appearance)

Regina Schober

The World Wide Sea: Oceanic Metaphors, Concepts of Knowledge and Transnational America in the Information Age

*Oceans Apart:
In Search of New Wor(l)ds*
RIAS vol. 7,
Spring-Summer,
Nº 1/2014

'I have swam through libraries and sailed through oceans', Ishmael declares in *Moby Dick*, comparing the accumulation of knowledge to traveling the vast and boundless space of the sea. The ocean has always been related to human curiosity as well as anxiety towards (yet) unknown terrains, reflecting the restless desire to travel, explore, and seek the 'truth'. As Elizabeth Bishop notes, the sea 'is like what we imagine knowledge to be, dark, salt, clear, moving, utterly free, drawn from the cold hard mouth of the world, derived from the rocky breasts forever, flowing and drawn'. In view of the massive proliferation of information and knowledge in the digital age, it is thus not surprising that the sea has become one of the leading metaphors for the Internet, the mythical space in which knowledge is stored, generated, and from which it emerges. Whether we navigate or surf on the World Wide Web, whether we immerse in data flows, or participate in swarm intelligence, nautical/sea imagery has been central in conceptualizing the Internet from the beginning on, suggesting notions of openness, infinity, shapelessness as well as creativity, diversity, and fluidity. In my paper I investigate the cultural and ideological functions of sea imagery in relation to new digital information technology, as manifest in American literature and culture, accounting for ascriptions of the Internet as a 'particularly American technology'. From the creation of the term 'cyberspace' (*cyber*=Greek for steersman) in William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984), to the crowdsourced YouTube film collaboration *Life in a Day* (2011) with its extensive sea imagery to Google's recent underwater mapping project 'SeaView', I seek to unravel the diverse web of connotations, implications, and allusions at play in conceptualizing the Internet in relation to maritime imagery. Against the backdrop of traditional concepts and models of knowledge, I thus intend to explore the heuristic potential and cultural propositions of the sea metaphor

in America's creative engagement and critical negotiation with the new worlds of the 'Information Age', taking into consideration its transnational and potentially posthuman future.

Regina Schober is Assistant Professor at the American Studies Department of Mannheim University. She obtained a Ph.D. at the University of Hannover, entitled Unexpected Chords: Musico-Poetic Intermediality in Amy Lowell's Poetry and Poetics in 2009 (summa cum laude). Her teaching and research interests include literature and culture of American Romanticism and Modernism, Intermediality, the American Grotesque, and Network Aesthetics. Her current research project (habilitation thesis) examines the network paradigm in American literature and culture from the 19th to the 21st century.

Alicja Bemben

History as an Ocean

'But there is a huge difference between writing a historical novel and writing history. If I may put it like this: history is like a river, and the historian is writing about the ways the river flows and the currents and cross-currents in the river. But, within this river, there are also fish, and [...] I am interested in the fish. The novelist's approach to the past, through the eyes of characters, is substantially different from the approach of the historian'. This quotation might seem to have been taken from some pre-narrative-turn text whose author appears to profess the conviction that the scientific status of history and the fictional character of literature is what makes these two modes of writing about the past essentially different. In fact, these words come from Amitav Ghosh, a contemporary historian, social anthropologist, historical fiction writer who, more than forty years after the Linguistic Turn, seems to advocate a new version of 'wie es eigentlich gewesen' and literature opposition. Starting with Dipesh Chakrabarty's arguments in favor of 'regional and global configurations in modern history', I would like to use them to criticize Ghosh's idea of history as a river and put forward a thesis that history is like an ocean and if we understand it as such, then the boundary between writing a historical novel and history might be considered conventional and possible to be blurred. In order to justify this thesis I intend to provide a series of arguments supported mainly by Hayden White's philosophy of history presented in *Metahistory* and Hans-Georg Gadamer's theory of understanding from *Truth and Method*. In conclusion, I point to idiosyncrasies of the ocean-like perspective on history as a construct alternative to this proposed by Amitav Ghosh.

Alicja Bemben is a Ph.D. student in the Institute of English Cultures and Literatures at the University of Silesia. Her research interests include philosophy of history, historiography and writings work of Robert Graves. She is a member of the Robert Graves Society, and participated, among others, in [Re]visions of History in Language and Fiction, Robert Graves and Modernism, and TimeLing conferences.

Jolanta Szymkowska-Bartyzel

From the American Wild West to Bojszowy:
Józef Kłyk's Westerns as Social Rituals

Józef Kłyk is an over 60 year old amateur film maker from Silesia region of Poland who for over 30 years has directed over 50 westerns. All his western movies are made with 16mm Russian camera and the shooting is done on location in or near the village of Bojszowo, with the use of local people as actors and film crew. Kłyk's films are a primer on the icons and symbols of the American Wild West: cowboys, Indians, saloons and 'Wanted' signs. In his film stories the Author invokes the history of the American West and the history of Silesian villagers who in 1854 left for Texas and founded Panna Maria. The paper aims to examine the incorporation of the concept of this classical American film genre with its main distinguishing features in amateur production of the Polish director. It will focus on the ritual character of the genre movie and demonstrate how Kłyk's western production is used by local community of the village of Bojszowo for ritual purposes. Reconstruction of village and rebuilding the history of Polish emigrants in Panna Maria within the form of film genre serve basic social function of expressing, fixing and reinforcing the shared values and beliefs of a community.

Jolanta Szymkowska-Bartyzel, Ph.D., is a lecturer at the Institute of American Studies and Polish Diaspora, Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland). She is one of the founders and editors of Ad Americam: Journal of American Studies. Her scholarly interests focus on the history and reception of American popular culture in Poland. She published the book titled Amerykański mit – polski konsument, czyli reklamowe oblicza Ameryki [American Myth – Polish Customer, or Commercial Faces of America] about American myths and cultural motifs used for persuasive purposes in TV commercials. She is also an author of a number of articles on American popular culture, Americanization and mass media communication.

*Oceans Apart:
In Search of New Worlds
RIAS vol. 7,
Spring-Summer,
№ 1/2014*

Justyna Fruzińska

The Young Men and the Sea: Sea/Ocean as a Space of Maturation?

The sea (or ocean) in American literature and culture is marked by a distinctive ambiguity. On the one hand, and quite expectedly, the sea voyage can be a maturation experience: such is the case of Humphrey Van Weyden, the protagonist of London's *The Sea Wolf*; such is also the interpretation that the Disney Company chooses to present in its animated adaptation of R.L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. However, it is also a space of the opposite experience: one that accommodates remarkably immature characters. Be it in the person of captain Delano in Melville's 'Benito Cereno', or the eponymous Billy Budd, it is a site welcoming naïve and escapist heroes, those who do not want to or cannot adapt to the demands of land society.

Justyna Fruzińska is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Department of American Literature and Culture of the University of Łódź, Poland. An award-win-

ning poet herself, she specializes in literary translations from Hebrew and English into Polish. She was one of the authors of the anthology of poetry *Na grani* [On the Perch] (SPP Oł, Łódź 2008). Her debut volume of poetry came out in 2008 under the title *Wiesz dobrze czego się boimy* [You Know Full Well of What We Are Afraid] (Stowarzyszenie Literackie im. K.K. Baczyńskiego, Łódź 2008).

Pilar Martínez Benedí

Revolving the Vortex; or, Working through Trauma at Sea

Even as sea writing in antebellum America might have aspired to literary exploration—and possession, the ocean, as Hester Blum has noted, is a 'landscape than cannot be tangibly possessed'. The of its waters gives the sea a formless, elusive quality, and its apparently material surface hides unfathomable and ultimately ungraspable depths. The view from the masthead, moreover, offered sailors a vast barren, monotonous panorama: rather than discovery, this vantage point showed nothing—only watery emptiness. On the other hand, sea voyages were inherently circular—they ended where they had started. Whaling voyages, in particular, were non-linear and non-teleological. Or, rather, their telos—the whale—was in perpetual motion, and the whaleship circumnavigated the slippery oceanic landscape in his chase. The concern with how these ontological features of seafaring reflect, and are reflected by, the epistemology of sea narratives will broadly frame my paper. In particular, I propose to look at the final vortex in *Moby-Dick* as an image that happily captures these aspects of seafaring—and of sea writing: elusiveness and circuitousness, and, at once, to point at how such aspects, and their blending, eloquently embody psychic trauma. A sea vortex—'a circular movement of water with a vacuum at the center', in Paul Brotdkorb's words—echoes the spiral-like experience of working-through trauma; the ceaseless revolving around an event that cannot be known, since it was not grasped as it occurred, according to Cathy Caruth's formulation. In turn, I will contend, this vortical image is an apt trope for *Moby-Dick's* own circuitous form, visually replicating the convoluted process of working through its narrator's trauma. Therefore, I will explore the ways in which, in his meandering, digressive tale, Ishmael—and, with him, the reader—seems to be revolving the vortex in order to gain mastery over the unclaimed experience of his lonely survival.

Pilar Martínez Benedí holds a J.D. from the University of Zaragoza (2000) and a M.A. in English from the 'Sapienza' University of Rome (2012). She is currently enrolled in the PhD program in English at 'La Sapienza', where she studies the representations of trauma in 19th century American Literature.

Valeria Gennero

Pearl S. Buck and the Forgotten Holocaust of the Two-Ocean War

During the Second World War, Pearl S. Buck was both a successful novelist and an influential political organizer, involved in well-known

campaigns against racism and imperialism. In January 1942 she published *Dragon Seed*, a novel which described the Japanese sack of Nanking in 1937 and engaged the issues of nationalism and male violence from a gendered perspective. Buck wrote the novel before the United States entered the war: she hoped to promote American awareness of the Chinese fight for freedom, knowing that the tragic events which took place in Nanking after the fall of the city were virtually unknown in the United States. I argue that, despite its original propagandistic intent, *Dragon Seed* succeeds—as Buck’s novels often do—in problematizing the notion of national identity, foregrounding the sexual politics of war.

Valeria Gennero teaches American Literature at the University of Bergamo (Italy). She has published books on Djuna Barnes, Pearl S. Buck and Feminist Literary Theory.

Jacek Mydla

United by the Ocean? The Romantic Conan Doyle and the Transatlantic Sherlock Holmes

Biographers describe Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as a ‘Briton enchanted by America’. His letter ‘England and America’ has been called a ‘plea for Britons to understand the American point of view’. ACD entertained utopian (which is not to say, silly) ideas about the English-speaking part of the world, which made him make efforts to overcome mutual prejudices and to bring the English and the American nations together in terms of friendship. This despite the fact that he had reasons to feel sore due to literary piracies committed against him by American publishers. ACD’s fascination with America—which was for him, in his own words, a land ‘full of romance’ shows in his greatest and enduring literary achievement: the Sherlock Holmes stories. Already the first of them, ‘A Study in Scarlet’, which in 1887 gave literary life to the now world-famous consulting detective, is set for a significant part of the plot in the U.S. But ‘transatlantic’ motifs occur also in other stories, most famously in ‘The Five Orange Pips’ (1891), ‘The Yellow Face’ (1893), and ‘The Dancing Men’ (1903). Besides this, a number of other stories contain the motifs and tropes of sea/ocean/voyaging as leading ones, e.g. The story with a ‘whaling’ motif: ‘The Black Peter’. For ACD America was a land on which he projected, as the ‘American’ and ‘voyaging’ stories make evident, his major political and ideological concerns, such as those with justice and equality. In the paper, special attention is paid to the way in which in some of the stories the ocean (also: a sea and a river) features as something like a protagonist, even as one who administers justice and settles other types of account.

Jacek Mydla is Associate Professor at the Institute of English Cultures and Literatures (University of Silesia, Katowice and Sosnowiec, Poland). Currently, he is Director of the Institute. He conducts research and lectures in the history of British literature, specifically British drama (Shakespeare through romanticism), Gothic fiction and drama, and theory of narrative. His book-length publications are: The Dramatic Potential of Time

*Oceans Apart:
In Search of New Worlds
RIAS vol. 7,
Spring-Summer,
№ 1/2014*

in Shakespeare and *Spectres of Shakespeare, a study of appropriations of Shakespeare's drama by early English Gothic authors and playwrights*. Also, recently he has published a collection of essays on the dynamics of human time in Shakespeare. In his recent articles, in *Polish and English*, Mydla has been concerned with romantic drama (e.g. Scottish playwright Joanna Baillie), aspects of British empiricism in the eighteenth century, and the supernatural in fiction.

Hitomi Nabae

Creolization in Lafcadio Hearn's New Orleans and Martinique Writings

The word *tsunami*, now commonly used throughout the world, was, according to the OED, first used in the 1897 story 'A Living God' written by Lafcadio Hearn. He wrote this story in Japan soon after reading the breaking news about the tsunami that had killed more than 20,000 people in North Japan. Having been trained as a journalist for twenty years in America, it was no wonder that he responded so quickly to such a catastrophe. Moreover, his first novel was also about oceanic catastrophe: a decade earlier in New Orleans he had written *Chita*, a story about the Gulf storm of 1856 which had swept away a resort island and swallowed up its inhabitants and vacationers. While Hearn obviously utilizes the catastrophe to dramatize the miraculous moment of survival, he also experiments with his narrative voice to render reality more powerfully. These two stories of oceanic catastrophe well illustrate how he turns journalistic realism into legendary myth by framing it within cross-cultural allegories, which arguably is an essential technique that he consciously crafted and developed so as to effectively address the multi-cultural readers of the world.

Hitomi Nabae, Professor of American Literature and Comparative Literature at the Department of English Studies of the Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, holds the degree of Ph.D. in English from Stanford, as well as M.A. and B.A. from Kobe College, Nishinomiya, Japan. She is an author of a number of monographs, book chapters and journal articles (in English and in Japanese) dedicated to life and work of Lafcadio Hearn, Henry James, Walt Whitman and American women poets, as well as problem-oriented studies within the field of American literary and cultural studies.

Claudia Ioana Doroholschi

The 'Oceanic feeling' in Stephen Crane's *The Open Boat* and S.T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

Stephen Crane's *The Open Boat* is a fictionalized account of the writer's experience of surviving the shipwreck of the *Commodore*, a steamboat on which he was heading for Cuba to act as a war correspondent. The present paper explores Crane's account of the encounter between man and sea, setting it against the background of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, which Crane's story echoes on several occasions, at key points in the plot. It examines the two texts in the light of the con-

cept of 'oceanic feeling', as defined by Romain Rolland and Sigmund Freud, who both use the metaphor of the ocean as a site of the sublime to speak of a sense of oneness, of connectedness between man and world. While in Coleridge's poem the Mariner first loses and subsequently recovers a mystical connection with nature, Crane's short story seems to decode the events in a psychological rather than mystical key. Thus, it seems to suggest that a sense of oneness with nature is not the result of any transcendent connection between man and his surroundings, but merely a projection of the subject's emotions onto an indifferent nature.

Claudia Ioana Doroholschi is a lecturer at the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the West University of Timișoara, Romania, where she teaches English and American literature, as well as writing courses. Her Ph.D. focused on the literature and visual arts of the 1890s. Her publications include articles and studies on Late Victorian as well as contemporary literature, and she has also been involved in a number of creative writing projects.

*Oceans Apart:
In Search of New Wor(l)ds
RIAS vol. 7,
Spring-Summer,
Nº 1/2014*

RIAS EDITORIAL POLICY AND RIAS STYLE

RIAS EDITORIAL POLICY

- *RIAS* is an electronic, print-on-demand, open-access, peer-reviewed journal.
- *RIAS* appears twice a year, in Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter. Copy deadlines for unsolicited submissions are, mid-November, and mid-February respectively. While calls for papers are not always disseminated for upcoming issues, when made, such calls will be announced at least 9 months prior to the scheduled publication date for each issue.
- *RIAS* welcomes submissions from all disciplines and approaches and from all parts of the world, provided that they pertain to the study of 'America' in the broadest implications of that term.
- Please, send your submissions via our OJS system at rias-journal.org. Please, log in as 'Author' and follow the instructions provided by the system.
- *RIAS* seeks articles (up to 5,000 words) of general interest to the international American Studies community. If you have a proposal for an article, please contact the editor-in-chief with a brief synopsis (200 words). Suggestions for special issues, position papers, or similar initiatives should also be addressed to the editor-in-chief.
- Every submission should be accompanied by the author's name, institutional affiliation, and brief author bio, in addition to an abstract of up to 200 words and an attachment bibliography.

*Oceans Apart:
In Search of New Worlds*
RIAS vol. 7,
Spring-Summer,
Nº 1/2014

- In principle, we accept contributions in all 'American' languages (i.e., English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.). Accompanying abstracts should be in English (and, if appropriate, in the language of the article's composition).
- *RIAS* will publish short position papers (approximately 1,000 to 2,000 words) that deal with topical issues in the international arena of American Studies. Only four or more position papers, submitted together, will be considered. These papers will typically be derived from conference panels, colloquia or other kinds of scholarly activity. They should be gathered and edited by one contributor, who will arrange for them to be peer-reviewed prior to submission. The submitting contributor will obtain and submit all author information, and will submit along with the papers a brief explanation or synopsis of the debate that is treated, for the purposes of orienting the reader with regard to the questions or problems to be discussed. The submitting contributor will also obtain and provide a brief (100 words) abstract for each paper submitted.
- Authors retain the copyright to their contributions. This means that the authors are free to republish their texts elsewhere on the condition that acknowledgment is made to *RIAS*. Authors who wish to reproduce materials already published elsewhere must obtain permission from the copyright holder(s) and provide such permission along with their submission. This includes all photographs or other illustrations accompanying a submission.

STYLESHEET FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Please observe the following editorial guidelines when sending in a text for publication in *RIAS*:

- Send your document in RTF format.
- Start with your name, followed by your affiliation between brackets, and the full title on the next line.
- Pre-format your text in Times New Roman or Unicode font typeface, 12 point and 1.5 line spacing.
- For emphasis, use italics only. Do *not* underline words, do *not* use boldface.
- All text should be justified with last line aligned left, without kerning or any special text formatting.
- For page setup, use borders of 2.5 cm or one inch at all sides, format A4.
- Minimum resolution for images is 300 dpi.
- Keep titles, subtitles and section headers as short as possible to conform to the technical requirements of the new *RIAS* template.
- Keep in mind that many readers will want to read your text from the screen. Write economically, and use indents, not blank lines between paragraphs.
- Those writing in English should use American spelling (but quotations should remain as they are in the original spelling).
- Those writing in languages other than English should observe the stylistic conventions (capitalization, alphabetical listing of personal names, etc.) linked to these languages.
- Quotations from other languages should be either in translation or appear both in the original and in translation.
- Cited publications are referred to in parenthetical references in the text as follows: '[...]' (Surname, date: page reference).
- Use single quotations marks. Use double quotation marks for quotations within quotations.
- Longer quotations exceeding three lines should be indented and single-spaced.

- Use single quotation marks around words used in a special sense.
- All punctuation marks that do not appear in the original text should appear outside the quotation marks.
- As to abbreviations, use neither periods nor spaces after and between letters (the US), except for initials of personal names (T. S. Eliot).
- Use em dashes without spaces before and after.
- Footnotes should be numbered automatically 1, 2, 3, etc.
- List your references in alphabetical order of authors' names (type: Works Cited) at the end of your document and format them as follows:

BOOK

- Surname, Initials and Surname, Initials (year) *Title: Subtitle*. Place of publication: Publisher.

ARTICLE IN BOOK

- Surname, Initials (year) 'Title of Chapter', in Initials Surname and Initials Surname (eds) *Title of Book*. Place: Publisher, page number(s) of contribution.

ARTICLE IN JOURNAL

- Surname, Initials (year) 'Title of Article', *Title of Journal* volume number (issue number): page number(s) of contribution.

WEBSITE

- Surname, Initials (year) *Title*. Place of publication, Publisher (if ascertainable). <http://xxx.xxx/xxx>, mailbase and retrieval date.

ARTICLE IN E-JOURNAL

- Surname, Initials (year) 'Title of Article', *Name of Journal* volume number (issue number) <http://xxx.xxxx.xx/xxx>, retrieval date.

MAILBASE LIST

- Surname, Initials (day month year). 'Subject of Message', Discussion List `LISTSERVE@xxx.xxx`, retrieval date.



UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA PRESS
IN KATOWICE



Review of International American Studies
Revue d'Études Américaines Internationales
RIAS Vol. 7, Spring-Summer № 1/2014
ISSN 1991-2773
PRICE: 30 EUR/43 USD/40 CAD/26 GBP