



University of Zagreb

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Martina Kado

**SEA NARRATIVES AS  
MINOR LITERATURE: READING  
HERMAN MELVILLE AND  
JOSEPH CONRAD WITH  
DELEUZE AND GUATTARI**

DOCTORAL THESIS

Zagreb, 2017





Sveučilište u Zagrebu

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KAO MANJINSKA KNJIŽEVNOST:  
ANALIZA TEKSTOVA HERMANA  
MELVILLEA I JOSEPHA CONRADA  
PREMA DELEUZEU I GUATTARIJU**

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Mentorica: dr. sc. Tatjana Jukić Gregurić, red. prof.

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Tatjana Jukić Gregurić is Professor and Chair of English Literature in the Department of English at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. She also teaches on the doctoral programs of Comparative Literature and of Croatian Language and Literature, and has been invited to lecture on literary history and theory by universities and research institutes in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Hungary, Serbia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. From 2005 to 2007 she served as President of the Croatian Association for Semiotic Studies. From 2007 to 2014 she was the Principal Investigator in the research project titled “Limits of Literary Memory: Croatia in Europe and Europe in Croatia, 1939–2005” (funded by Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Republic of Croatia). She is currently the Principal Investigator in the research project titled “A Cultural History of Capitalism: Britain, America, Croatia” (funded by Croatian Science Foundation, HRZZ). Jukić is author of two books: *Liking, Dislike, Supervision. Literature and the Visual in Victorian Britain* (*Zazor, nadzor, sviđanje. Dodiri književnog i vizualnog u britanskom devetnaestom stoljeću*, Zagreb, 2002) and *Revolution and Melancholia. Limits of Literary Memory* (*Revolucija i melankolija. Granice pamćenja hrvatske književnosti*, Zagreb, 2011). While the first explores the intersections of the visual and the literary in Victorian culture in relation to the Victorian handling of politics, colonial experience, subjectivity and sexuality, the second undertakes to analyze the complex relation of the event of the revolution in modern societies, especially in the former Yugoslavia, to the junctures of subjectivity and political economy. *Revolution and Melancholia* was singled out by *Oslobodenje*, the leading Sarajevo daily newspaper, as the event of 2011 in literary studies. In addition, Jukić has published articles, in English, Croatian, Slovene and German, on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature, psychoanalysis, film and philosophy. She is currently completing a book provisionally titled *The Invention of Masochism*.



## ABSTRACT

*Sea Narratives as Minor Literature* is a comparative study of Herman Melville's and Joseph Conrad's sea-themed writing, using the wider critical-theoretical framework of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, centered around the concept of minor literature. Underutilized in maritime literary studies, this platform is highly suitable for studying the paradigm of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Anglo-American sea narratives, including Melville and Conrad: first, the collective and political facets of minor literature provide an apparatus for reading the dominant elements in this genre – the experience of sea labor and the world of the ship. Second, the element of deterritorialization of language in minor literature highlights the technical language of seamanship (sea argot) in literature as an element of linguistic deterritorialization by default. Finally, with its focus on detecting subversive practices within majoritarian configurations, it enables the tracing of both emancipatory and power-complicit strategies in sea-themed literary works. The Deleuze-Guattari framework brings together Melville and Conrad not only as sea authors, but as occupying an eccentric position regarding the English language itself. I chart diachronic overlaps and departures in terms of how they articulate maritime subjectification with various forms of territory, mainly the space of the ship and the space of the sea, but also capitalism and nation. As a result, some existing Deleuze-Guattari readings of Melville as a minoritarian author are revised, while avenues of minoritarian thought are detected in Conrad. Tailoring the Deleuze–Guattari terminology, I introduce the concept of the ship-assemblage, articulated as a machinic assemblage and assemblage of enunciation, as a new tool for examining literary shipboard geographies in Melville, Conrad, and beyond. Examining both authors' employment of sea argot against the concept of minor literature, I identify it as a sub-linguistic system which grafts itself onto literary discourse, able to function in a range of positions from majoritarian to minoritarian. Finally, sea literature in general, and sea narratives of this period in particular, evince resistance to categorization in terms of literary periods, genres and national literary history, fact and fiction, and the analytical apparatus of narratology. I therefore propose a new understanding of the specific textuality and narrativity of sea-themed prose as subscribing to what we commonly recognize as literature, but also transcending it. My research lies at the intersection of literary studies, critical theory, transatlantic studies, and cultural and material history of maritime practices.

**Keywords:** Herman Melville; Joseph Conrad; Gilles Deleuze; Félix Guattari; minor literature; sea literature; sea narratives; American literature; English literature.



## SAŽETAK

Cilj rada je doprinijeti književno-komparatističkim studijama Hermana Melvillea (1819.–1891.) i Josepha Conrada (1857.–1924.) analizom i preispitivanjem manjinskih strategija<sup>1</sup> u njihovim pripovjednim tekstovima s pomorskom tematikom. Analiza uspostavlja interakciju između tekstova Melvillea i Conrada te otvara prostor za čitanje obaju opusa u Deleuzeovu i Guattarijevu ključu kombinacijom pristupa: a) u žarištu je način na koji diskurs književnosti s pomorskom tematikom usvaja materijalne aspekte pomorstva, prostor mora i prostor broda te posebice pomorski žargon; b) analiza tekstova Melvillea i Conrada u dijalogu s Deleuzeom i Guattarijem otvara prostor za obostrano kritičko čitanje; c) revizija samoga koncepta „manjinske književnosti“.

Komparativna analiza tekstova s pomorskom tematikom H. Melvillea i J. Conrada, premda evidentno legitimna, ujedno zahtijeva i pojašnjenje. S jedne strane, pola stoljeća stoji između vrhunaca njihove književnosti s pomorskom tematikom; pišu sa suprotnih strana Atlantskog oceana – Melville u sklopu formiranja američke nacionalne književnosti koja bi pratila novoostvarenu političku neovisnost Sjedinjenih Američkih Država, a Conrad iz pozicije etablirane književnosti Velike Britanije i njezine dominacije kao pomorske sile kroz povijest. S druge strane, radi se o dvojici najistaknutijih književnika pomorske tematike uopće; kao Amerikancu i Poljaku koji piše na engleskome jeziku, zajednička im je ekscentrična pozicija spram jezika i književnosti Velike Britanije. Nadalje, u književnim je opusima obaju pisaca očita ambivalentnost spram nacije i nacionalne književnosti, što je, obzirom da koncept mora poprima različito značenje kroz povijest američke i britanske književnosti, od posebnog interesa za proučavanje književnosti. Ipak, svega se nekoliko poredbenih studija dosad pozabavilo Melvilleom i Conradom zajedno, naročito onih koje analiziraju način na koji jezik i prostor mora figuriraju u književnom diskursu. Studija C. Casarina *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis* (2002.) se dosad najviše približila takvom pristupu, dok se među drugim relevantnim autorima drugačijih pristupa izdvajaju J. Guetti, *The Limits of Metaphor: A Study of Melville, Conrad, and Faulkner* (1967.); L. F. Seltzer, *The Vision of Melville and Conrad: A Comparative Study* (1970.); D. Simpson, *Fetishism and Imagination: Dickens, Melville, Conrad* (1980.); C. R. La Bossière, *The Victorian Fol Sage: Comparative Readings on Carlyle, Emerson, Melville, and Conrad* (1989.).

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<sup>1</sup> „Manjinska književnost“, *littérature mineure*, je pojam Deleuzea i Guattarija.

S obzirom da uz dosadašnje komparativne studije pripovjednih tekstova s pomorskom tematikom Melvillea i Conrada postoji potreba za dodatnim istraživanjima, osnovni kritičko-teorijski okvir u ovoj disertaciji čine samostalni i koautorski tekstovi G. Deleuzea koji u žarištu imaju književnost i književne teme, konkretnije tekstovi u kojima razrađuje pojam „manjinske književnosti“ [*littérature mineure*], a koji je formulirao u suradnji s F. Guattarijem. Prema Deleuzeu i Guattariju, „Tri su karakteristike manjinske književnosti deteritorijalizacija jezika, povezanost individualnog s političkom neposrednošću i kolektivni sklop iskazivanja.“<sup>2</sup> Nije riječ o književnosti pisanoj na manjinskom jeziku, već o manjinskoj praksi većinskog jezika u književnosti; svojevrsnog tuđinstva, ili pak delirija, u vlastitome jeziku, kakve prakticiraju Marcel Proust u francuskome, Herman Melville u (američkome) engleskom, ili Franz Kafka u njemačkome jeziku.<sup>3</sup>

Koncept manjinske književnosti je primijenjen u disertaciji na nekoliko načina. Prvo, pripovjedni tekstovi s pomorskom tematikom naginju manjinskoj književnosti po svojim osnovnim elementima: tijesan je prostor broda sličan „skučen[om] prostor[u koji] tjera svaku individualnu intrigu da se odmah poveže s politikom“;<sup>4</sup> pomorci predstavljaju tek djelić populacije bilo koje nacije, no obilježja njihova rada nadilaze prostor pojedinačnih lokacija ili nacija; pomorski žargon, koji je sastavni dio pripovijesti s pomorskom tematikom, sam po sebi uvodi element jezične deteritorijalizacije. Drugo, koncept manjinske književnosti pridonosi komparativnom pristupu disertacije time što nudi zajednički kriterij za analizu (i preispitivanje) do koje mjere oba autora izražavaju suglasje, odnosno ambivalenciju, spram nacije i nacionalne književnosti. Na kraju, analiza Melvillea i Conrada u dijalogu s Deleuzeom i Guattarijem otvara prostor za reviziju samoga pojma manjinske književnosti.

Velik se broj Deleuzeovih književno orijentiranih tekstova, objavljenih samostalno ili u suradnji s drugim autorima, dotiče H. Melvillea, među njima *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975.), *Dialogues II* (1977.), *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980.) te *Essays Critical and Clinical* (1993.). S druge strane, Deleuze se rijetko bavi J. Conradom (kao, primjerice, u knjizi *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 1981.), što još više upućuje na potencijal čitanja Conrada u Deleuzeovu ključu. Istovremeno, sve je veći broj deleuzeovskih analiza Melvillea i Conrada (premda rijetko u poredbenim studijama), primjerice autora C. Casarina (2002.), G. Z. Gasyne (2011.), J. Hughesa (1997.), S. M. Islama (1996.), ili pak N. Israela (1997.).

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<sup>2</sup> Gilles Deleuze i Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, prev. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.), 18 (hrvatski prijevod moj).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 18–19; 25–26.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Anglo-američki pripovjedni tekstovi s pomorskim tematikom devetnaestog i ranog dvadesetog stoljeća bili su „putujući žanrovi“,<sup>5</sup> što znači da su objavljeni s obje strane Atlantika i povratno utjecali jedni na druge te da ih je čitala ista transatlantska publika (T. Smollett – Sir W. Scott – J. F. Cooper – Frederick Marryat – R. H. Dana Jr. – H. Melville – J. Conrad itd.). Premda je more tema velikog broja djela zapadnog književnog kruga od Homerove *Odiseje* nadalje, u navedenom razdoblju dolazi do radikalnog pomaka u pravcu literarnih prikaza materijalnih aspekata plovidbe, što je uvelo elemente diskursa rada, znanosti i tehnike u književni diskurs. Na kraju, u ovom je tipu narativa vidljiva napetost između načina na koji pristupaju značaju mora u procesu formiranja nacionalnog identiteta Velike Britanije i Sjedinjenih Država te temeljno inter- i transnacionalnih obilježja pomorstva kao takvog. Iz ovih razloga valja uspostaviti okvir proučavanja narativa s pomorskom tematikom iz više očišta: komparativne i nacionalne književne povijesti; književne i kritičke teorije; engleskih i američkih studija; kulturne povijesti pomorskih praksa.

Književna povijest anglo-američkih narativa s pomorskom tematikom je pomno istraženo područje sa iscrpnim resursima, među kojima su i kronološki pregledi i antologije autora relevantnih za ovu disertaciju: B. Bender (1988.); H. Blum (2008.); C. Casarino (2002.); M. Cohen (2003.; 2010.); J. O. Coote (1989.); R. Foulke (1997.); B. Klein (2002.); J. Peck (2001.); T. Philbrick (1961.); J. Raban (1993.); M. J. Smith i R. C. Weller (1976.); H. Springer (1995.); T. Tanner (1994.); H. F. Watson (1931.). Među novijim studijama unutar ovog područja ističe se pristup autora koji u interpretacije uvrštavaju poznavanje „praktičnog znanja i vještina“ te „radnog etosa“,<sup>6</sup> čija relevantnost u pripovjednim tekstovima s pomorskom tematikom jača od devetnaestoga stoljeća nadalje. U disertaciji je primijenjen upravo takav pristup, iščitavajući na koji način diskurs književnosti s pomorskom tematikom usvaja jezik materijalnih aspekata pomorskih praksa, uloge rada u pomorstvu te pomorskog žargona. U analizi relevantnih pripovjednih tekstova H. Melvillea i J. Conrada korištena je sekundarna literatura čije je područje specijalizacije podjednako književnost i kulturna povijest pomorskih praksa te autora koji inzistiraju na interdisciplinarnosti i primjeni tehničkih načela u svojim interpretacijama: povrh već navedenih autora, tu su i W. W. Bonney (1973.; 1978.; 1979.), P. Giles (2003.).

Podloga ovome istraživanju je područje kulturne povijesti pomorstva, unutar kojega se izdvajaju pristupi formirani od 1960.-ih godina nadalje, a razilaze se od prethodnih tumačenja

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<sup>5</sup> Pojam „putujući žanr“ preuzet je iz članka Margaret Cohen „Traveling Genres“, u *New Literary History*, br. 34 (2003): 481–99.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 486–88.

mora/oceana kao ahistorijskog, praznog prostora te pomorske prakse proučavaju kroz pojam „zone kontakta“ između kultura (M. L. Pratt, 1991.). Nadalje, takvi pristupi područje istraživanja proširuju uključenjem problematike i ispovijesti običnih mornara i u obzir uzimaju različite oblike pomorskih djelatnosti (trgovačka mornarica, istraživačke misije, ribarstvo) uz već etablirane aktivnosti ratnih mornarica. Među autorima koji primjenjuju ovakav pristup ističu se V. Burton (u Howell i Twomey, 1991.; 1999.), M. Creighton i L. Norling (1996.), C. D. Howell i R. J. Twomey (1991.), B. Klein i G. Mackenthun (2004.), J. Lemisch (1968.), C. Linebaugh i M. Rediker (2000.).

Metodološki je pristup komparativan i interdisciplinaran, objedinjujući temeljni okvir književne povijesti te književne i kritičke teorije sa kulturnom poviješću pomorskih praksa. Primarna literatura uključuje sabrana djela H. Melvillea i J. Conrada, među njima fiktionalne (romane, kratke priče) i nefiktionalne tekstove (pisma, autobiografske zapise te bilješke), s time da najvažniji istraživački materijal u oba opusa čine pripovjedni tekstovi kojima je u žarištu tema mora. Sekundarna literatura uključuje relevantne monografije i članke u području književne povijesti te književne i kritičke teorije: tekstove G. Deleuzea, objavljene samostalno i u suradnji s F. Guattarijem i drugim autorima; komparativne književnosti; formalističke kritike; dekonstrukcije; feminističke kritike; postkolonijalne kritike; književnosti i transatlantskih/oceanskih studija; teorije prostora; teorija moći; engleskih i američkih studija.

Nacrt strukture disertacije po poglavljima je sljedeći: prvo poglavlje uspostavlja kritičko-teorijski okvir i metodologiju rada. Drugo poglavlje analizira subjektifikaciju spram prostora mora i prostora broda kod oba pisca. Treće i četvrto poglavlje se pojedinačno bave tekstovima Melvillea i Conrada kroz dijalog, razradu i reviziju dosadašnjih čitanja Deleuzea i drugih autora, kao i samog pojma manjinske književnosti.

**Ključne riječi:** Herman Melville; Joseph Conrad; Gilles Deleuze; Félix Guattari; manjinska književnost; književnost s pomorskom tematikom; pripovijesti s pomorskom tematikom; američka književnost; engleska književnost.

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to contribute to comparative studies of Herman Melville (1819–1891) and Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) by (re-)examining minoritarian strategies (Deleuze and Guattari) in these authors' sea-themed fictional and nonfictional writing. The Deleuze and Guattari framework provides a platform to engage these authors in dialogue with one another within the paradigm of nineteenth- to early-twentieth sea narratives, whereas the productive tensions that emerge between Melville's and Conrad's works and the concept of minor literature [*littérature mineure*] introduce the potential to revise the term minor literature itself.

Between Homer's *Odyssey* and the twenty-first century, the sea has figured in a vast body of writing and in almost every genre of prose, poetry, and drama in European and North American literatures: in fact, "Most cultures of the world have a literature or at least a mythology of the sea, and these have developed over time as man's knowledge of himself and of the sea has evolved."<sup>7</sup> The nineteenth century, however, saw the emergence of a new paradigm of sea writing in Anglo-American literature, which took shape as an offshoot of popular sixteenth- and seventeenth-century exploration and travel narratives and the rise of the English novel in the eighteenth century: built around material aspects of seafaring, which introduced elements of labor, science, and technical detail into literary discourse, it ranged in diversity from adventure narratives to philosophical novels. Its immediate historical context involved several pivotal moments relevant for nautical matters: the rise of the bourgeois nation-state and the peak period of overseas explorations, colonial appropriation and international trade by Western nations, supported by national and merchant navies; the transition from mercantile capitalism, based in exchange, to industrial capitalism, based in production; development in shipbuilding toward iron and steel hulls, as well as the advance of steam propulsion.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Bert Bender, *Sea-Brothers: The Tradition of American Sea Fiction from Moby-Dick to the Present* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Nineteenth-century cultural history of maritime practices is an abundantly researched field: virtually every study referenced in this dissertation contains an overview of economic, political, and cultural-political contexts relevant for the study of sea narratives. C. Casarino outlines the political economy of the sea during this period in the Introduction to his *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 4–7. A more general summary, by no means exhaustive, is provided by Ravi Ahuja: "Two processes reinforced each other: first, the world's merchant navy, dominated by British shipping companies, expanded massively (its carrying capacity trebled between 1850 and 1910); second, in a long-drawn process, steamers increasingly replaced sailing ships as the main carrier of long-distance maritime transport. Moreover, the high capital intensity of the new larger, steel-hulled and steam-engined ships, as well as the greater independence of steamers from weather conditions, transformed the rhythm of seafaring fundamentally: extended lay days in port were now neither necessary nor economically viable, implying that a seaman's voyage had fewer breaks and longer periods of confinement in the narrow and inescapable spaces below deck" ("Capital

In sea literature, the transformation entailed a shift away from the space of the sea or the destination territory of sea travel, toward the experience of the voyage and the world of the ship itself. For Cesare Casarino, the nineteenth-century sea narrative is “the spatio-temporal matrix of the crisis of modernity,” modernity being primarily that of capital.<sup>9</sup> Most importantly, “The nineteenth-century sea narrative was the site where visions of the new [...] came to incubate within old forms of representation so as to then explode those forms from the interior.”<sup>10</sup> sea narratives speak from within “the nick of time,” capturing as its own trace that which is at its pinnacle just before it disappears, registering minor histories and serving as repositories of archaic modes of economy and representation at the same time as they participate in the shaping of new forms.<sup>11</sup> Sea narratives lay bare the minutiae of routine ship labor, its biopolitics, the self-regulating mechanisms of the sailing machine. Labor and leisure take place in the same space, often shared with fellow sailors from another watch. Bodies are disciplined in public, for the entire collective to witness and self-discipline in return.

This dissertation relies throughout on the following literary historians, anthologists, and bibliographers: B. Bender; H. Blum; C. Casarino; M. Cohen; J. O. Coote; R. Foulke; B. Klein; J. Peck; T. Philbrick; J. Raban; M. J. Smith and R. C. Weller; H. Springer; T. Tanner; H. F. Watson. English literature has had a longstanding relation with the sea, ships, and sailors that harkens back to ancient Greek authors, most notably Homer (including its seventeenth-century derivative *Homer’s Odysseys*, which Raban describes as “at least as much Chapman’s as it is Homer’s”<sup>12</sup>) and the romancers Heliodorus, Longus, Achilles Tatius.<sup>13</sup> The Elizabethan era marked the beginning of what would become Britain’s global maritime dominance and a shift in attitude toward the sea, with Shakespeare, Fletcher, Sydney, Lyly, and Nash among cardinal authors.<sup>14</sup> The sea-themed material studied in this dissertation, which includes fictional and nonfictional texts, inevitably owes its existence to the eighteenth-century developments in prose on both sides of the Atlantic: on the one hand, there is the rise of the novel, where modern sea narratives find their immediate predecessors

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at Sea, *Shaitan Below Decks? A Note on Global Narratives, Narrow Spaces, and the Limits of Experience*,” *History of the Present* 2, no. 1 [Spring 2012]: 80).

<sup>9</sup> Cesare Casarino, *Modernity at Sea*, 1–2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 45–61.

<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Raban, ed, *The Oxford Book of the Sea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), xvii.

<sup>13</sup> See Margaret Cohen, “Traveling Genres;” Robert Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative* (1997, repr., New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 13–15; 27–65; John Peck, *Maritime Fiction: Sailors and the Sea in British and American Novels, 1719–1917* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 11–29; Harold Francis Watson, *The Sailor in English Fiction and Drama, 1550–1800* (1931; New York: AMS Press, 1966), 1–69.

<sup>14</sup> See Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, 11–29; Watson, *Sailor in English Fiction and Drama*, 1–69.

in Daniel Defoe, Tobias Smollett, and Henry Fielding on the British side of the Atlantic<sup>15</sup> and Freneau and Irving on the American.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, there is the long line of voyage narratives from Christopher Columbus, Richard Hakluyt, William Dampier, Captain Cook and others that helped shape the sea narrative as it emerged in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup>

The sea was a constant in American literature from its inception. During the Early American and Colonial Period, the sea deliverance narrative found one of its major tropes, that of the sea as crucible: those who survived the crossing from Europe to America were prepared for “regeneration in a Land of the Golden Age, Terrestrial Paradise, or Promised Land on the other side,” an attitude that still survives in American thought as “a sense of historical and divine mission.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, if Britain branched out towards the sea as a maritime economy, America’s political and economic history began with the sea. American sea literature accompanied the country’s history with transformations of its own, upholding commercial and national interests in the Revolutionary and Federal periods, including the Revolutionary War and War of 1812, American naval expeditions, the legislation of slavery and maritime law, the rise and American domination in the industry of whaling.<sup>19</sup> During this period, it developed personal, poetic and fictional forms, and finally its romantic and realistic incarnations of the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> The contribution of American antebellum narratives lies in their assignment of literary importance to the world of the ship and the labor of seamanship, as well as the perspective of working sailors in fiction and nonfiction, with three defining moments before Herman Melville: personal sailor narratives written during and about Barbary captivity; James Fenimore Cooper; and Richard Henry Dana Jr.<sup>21</sup>

Using the term “traveling genre” to discuss the history of the novel, particularly maritime fiction as one of its incarnations, Margaret Cohen traces the transatlantic crossings of Anglo-American sea literature: beginning with J. F. Cooper who, in the 1820s, adopted the historical fiction model from Sir Walter Scott, “Sea fiction was international in its poetics as

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<sup>15</sup> See Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, 1–29; Watson, *Sailor in English Fiction and Drama*, 161–87.

<sup>16</sup> See Thomas Philbrick, *James Fenimore Cooper and the Development of American Sea Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 1–41; Donald P. Wharton, “The Revolutionary and Federal Periods,” in *America and the Sea: A Literary History*, ed. Haskell Springer (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 46–63.

<sup>17</sup> See Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative*, 66–111; Haskell Springer, “The Sea, the Land, the Literature,” in *America and the Sea*, 1–31; Watson, *Sailor in English Fiction and Drama*, 1–19.

<sup>18</sup> Springer, “The Sea, the Land, the Literature,” 23.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–31.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–31; Donald P. Wharton, “The Colonial Era,” in *America and the Sea*, ed. Haskell Springer, 32–45.

<sup>21</sup> See Hester Blum, *The View from the Masthead*; Margaret Cohen, “Traveling Genres,” *The Novel and the Sea*; Haskell Springer, ed., *America and the Sea*.

well as in its geography. Cooper's novels and his narrative practices were rapidly transported and translated across the Atlantic, most rapidly in Britain and France. Maritime fiction was pioneered in England by Frederick Marryat," and followed up by Frederick Chamier and William Glascock in England, and Edouard Corbière in France in the 1830s.<sup>22</sup> The genre traveled back across the Atlantic, to the oeuvres of Edgar Allan Poe and Herman Melville; by the end of the nineteenth century production was ample on either coast, with Victor Hugo and Joseph Conrad, as well as many popular authors, joining in. Cohen's work focuses solely on the novel and what she refers to as "maritime fiction," which is at the same time more and less inclusive than the corpus of texts covered in this dissertation: my research includes nonfictional writing but excludes sea-themed narratives written by authors without personal sailing experience (e.g. E. A. Poe).

Studying Herman Melville's and Joseph Conrad's sea oeuvres side by side is as legitimate and self-evident as it warrants justification. On the one hand, the peaks of their sea writing are half a century apart; they write from opposite sides of the Atlantic – Melville being situated in the United States' efforts to lay the foundations of a national literature to match the new country's political independence, Conrad writing from the established fold of British literature and the country's history as a global naval power. On the other hand, the quality and skill of their sea-themed writing is such that it warrants its own field of study since few other authors within this paradigm emerge as candidates for comparative analysis. As an American author and a native Pole writing in English, they share an eccentricity of position regarding the language and literature of Britain, and both their oeuvres demonstrate ambivalence with regard to nation and national literature. Finally, there is a parallel in how their writing relates to their respective historical contexts of seamanship: "they both write at the end of an era, at a point when maritime activity is losing its central position in the economic order and national imagination of their respective countries."<sup>23</sup> Yet, they have so far been brought together in relatively few comparative studies, especially those that focus on the language, space, and ethos of seamanship.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Cohen, "Traveling Genres," 483; for a broader context, see Cohen's *The Novel and the Sea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>23</sup> Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, 166.

<sup>24</sup> C. Casarino's *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis* (2002) comes closest to my approach. Other comparative studies, which address the two authors from perspectives beyond sea ethos, include, chronologically: J. Guetti's *The Limits of Metaphor: A Study of Melville, Conrad, and Faulkner* (1967); L. Seltzer's *The Vision of Melville and Conrad: A Comparative Study* (1970); D. Simpson's *Fetishism and Imagination: Dickens, Melville, Conrad* (1980); C. R. La Bossière's *The Victorian Fol Sage: Comparative Readings on Carlyle, Emerson, Melville, and Conrad* (1989).

Melville's place in American sea authors' line of succession after Cooper and Dana Jr. is pertinent, and continues to be a productive vault for interpretation. Conrad's writing career, on the other hand, is an overall unique literary event: situating his oeuvre between his Polish and continental European influences (Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Dostoyevsky, Flaubert, to name a few), his British alliances (Ford Madox Ford, John Galsworthy, H.G. Wells et al.), and his reluctantly expressed American ties remains a challenge for literary history. The American origins of sea writing that focuses on the labor of seamanship and the personal perspective of working sailors which Conrad adopted and developed would suggest that his nautical lineage be traced back across the Atlantic, yet "Cooper was the only American writer of the early nineteenth century whose significant impact Conrad readily admitted;" also, despite obvious comparisons being drawn by reviewers, "If Conrad was quick to acknowledge a debt to Cooper, he was even quicker to reject any association with Melville."<sup>25</sup> Possible reasons for Conrad's denunciation of Melville include Conrad's fear of "being written off as a sea-writer," which may have been fueled by Melville's poor reputation at the time: the ironic outcome was that "the reputation Conrad established as a writer of sea novels served those who brought Melville back to the surface."<sup>26</sup> It must therefore be noted that, if we are reading the history of the nineteenth-century sea narrative as harkening back to the personal narratives of American sailors, and Cooper, Dana Jr. and Melville as its frontrunners, we must also acknowledge that it was at least partly due to Conrad that this particular strand of literary history was written.

Melville and Conrad remain subjects of vigorous critical interest: they both had their *New Cambridge Companions* published in 2014 and 2015, respectively.<sup>27</sup> As opposed to the New Historicist approach of the 1998 *Companion* to Melville, the 2014 publication "responds to two large impulses in recent American literary studies: an increased questioning of nation-based models of literary study and a renewed interest in the aesthetic. The last fifteen years have seen a turn in American literary studies from nationalist to more expansive hemispheric, transnational, and global approaches."<sup>28</sup> As a consequence, Melville is studied as "something

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<sup>25</sup> Robert Secor and Debra Modellmog, *Joseph Conrad and American Writers: A Bibliographical Study of Affinities, Influences, and Relations* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1985), xii.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, xiii.

<sup>27</sup> *The New Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville*, ed. Robert Steven Levine (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); *The New Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. J. H. Stape (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>28</sup> Levine, Introduction to *New Cambridge Companion to Melville*, 3. See titles by P. Giles; L. J. Reynolds, as well as Wai Chee Dimock's essay "Deep Time: American Literature and World History," where she presents her concept of "deep time" as "denationalized space" (760), for instances of such revision.

more than an ‘American’ author,”<sup>29</sup> which is similar to how the context of contemporary Conrad studies was set out in *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century* (2005), noting “the interest of new scholars from formerly colonized and silenced groups whose readings of Conrad’s texts illuminate them anew,” as well as “investigations of the complicated relation between Conrad and his world, as a sailor and an immigrant in twentieth-century England.”<sup>30</sup> Contemporary approaches thus exhibit a tendency to read both authors beyond the framework of national literatures and from minoritarian perspectives, but despite their international scope, Conrad remains studied outside the paradigms of Atlantic, hemispheric or oceanic studies.

While my research approach does not expressly identify with that of oceanic studies, it does take into account Hester Blum’s programmatic statement that “The sea is not a metaphor:”<sup>31</sup> being a major entry point for my analyses, the study of sea argot in maritime-themed narratives requires familiarization with the discourse of sea labor, which is in turn based in material aspects of sailing. This approach requires building an interdisciplinary background in comparative and national literary histories, literary and critical theory, English and American studies, and cultural history of maritime practices, using research by authors who are specialists in literary studies and maritime cultural history alike. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of minor literature, as well as other Deleuzian concepts (smooth/striated space; nomadic/sedentary travel; de/re/territorialization; assemblage), provide the framework for comparative readings of and with Melville and Conrad with regard to language, space, subjectivity, and textuality.

The structure of the dissertation is as follows: Chapter 1 establishes the critical-theoretical framework and research methodology. Following the twentieth- and twenty-first-century shifts in maritime cultural history and consequently the study of sea narratives, Chapter 2 reads Melville and Conrad focusing on how subjectification is articulated with the space of the sea and the space of the ship. Chapters 3 and 4 concentrate on Melville and Conrad individually, engaging with, elaborating and revising existing readings by Deleuze and other authors, as well as the concept of minor literature itself.

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<sup>29</sup> Levine, Introduction to *New Cambridge Companion to Melville*, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Carola M. Kaplan et al., eds., Introduction to *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century: Contemporary Approaches and Perspectives* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), xv.

<sup>31</sup> Hester Blum, “The Prospect of Oceanic Studies,” *PMLA* 125, no. 3 (May 2010), 670.

## **1. SEA NARRATIVES AND MINOR LITERATURE**

### **1.1. Introduction: Critical-theoretical framework**

A short history of Anglo-American sea literature was presented in the Introduction, focusing on elements that contributed to the formation of the new paradigm of sea narratives encountered in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British and American literature, more specifically, in the sea writing of Herman Melville and Joseph Conrad. This chapter has two objectives: the first is to provide a short overview and discussion of relevant problem clusters in studying this type of literature and these specific authors. The guiding questions for my dissertation are: what does it mean to study nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sea narratives? What discursive issues and implications does this kind of literature bring to the table, which must be kept in mind throughout these chapters? The second objective is to place this type of literature in dialogue with Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of minor literature and smooth/striated space, in order to detect potential areas of overlap, slippage, productive analysis and/or mutual transfiguration to be explored in subsequent chapters. The overall aim is to set out the main critical-theoretical framework for the analyses provided in other chapters, as well as to lay out the basic tenets of my own approach to sea narratives, which focuses on the language of the sea, the space of the sea and the space of the ship, and the textuality and narrativity of sea literature.

### **1.2. Nautical realism in sea narratives: Transformative experience between fact and fiction**

As a literature of labor and science, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Anglo-American sea narratives exhibit tension between literary discourse and the specialized discourse of seafaring. The requirement for nautical authenticity, rising during this period to the level of a dominant in sea narratives, brought about issues of authorial credibility and plausibility of events narrated: did the events narrated actually happen, or *could* they have happened? Does the author have personal experience of sea labor and in what capacity? What is the truth behind the voyage depicted, and – if there is any – is it conveyable and intelligible? To name but a few legitimacy issues, one of the most famous assumptions about J. F. Cooper's *The Pilot*, until recently, was that he composed it in response to the allegedly insufficient nautical realism of Sir Walter Scott's *The Pirate*: however, as Hester Blum has shown, this motivation

was not expressed in Cooper's original preface to *The Pilot*, but only added in the 1849 reprint, suggesting that it might have been more of an effort to align his writing with the shift toward realism brought by Dana Jr. than Cooper's initial intent.<sup>32</sup> Thomas Philbrick notes how Nathaniel Ames and Charles F. Briggs, working sailors and sea authors themselves, criticized Cooper for his inadequacies in depicting the codes of maritime practices.<sup>33</sup> Further, Melville experienced his fair share of having his credibility in *Typee* and *Omoo* suspected by reviewers, heavily influencing his subsequent sea-themed writing.<sup>34</sup>

A significant effect of the demand for nautical authenticity and authorial legitimacy in sea narratives, already visible in the few examples cited above, is that as sea labor takes center stage, the voyage is now being presented as a form of insider experience, articulated against supposedly faulty or misguided perceptions of "outsiders." Consequently, a division is formed along a binary line, where authors and readers are obliged to take up position on either side, despite the fact that nautical know-how is a thing of intensity and accretion: the difference in maritime knowledge between Sir Walter Scott, J. F. Cooper, and Nathaniel Ames and C. F. Briggs is a question of degree, rather than a binary designation. One could have sailed as a passenger, labored as a merchant marine or fisherman, served in a navy or participated in exploring expeditions, for a various number of voyages or years; one could have attained different ranks and responsibilities aboard different kinds of ships; one did not have to be a professional sailor but could have merely traveled to a location described in a voyage narrative to be able to verify whether events depicted are plausible; yet, the effect in the narratives seems to be a reduction to an either/or qualification.

The element of class should be added to the discussion: Thomas Philbrick stresses that William Leggett was the first sea author based out of the forecabin who came from a genteel background, followed by Nathaniel Ames, John Gould, and Richard Henry Dana Jr.;<sup>35</sup> Jason Berger proposes that social background might have been exactly that which enabled Cooper and Melville to speak to the antebellum audience's fantasies of the common sailor.<sup>36</sup> The fact of the matter is that the most prominent narratives to have found their place in literary studies

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<sup>32</sup> Hester Blum, *The View from the Masthead: Maritime Imagination and Antebellum American Sea Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 81–84.

<sup>33</sup> Philbrick, *Cooper and American Sea Fiction*, 116.

<sup>34</sup> See chapters 11 (pp. 204–18); 20 (pp. 392–408); 23 (pp. 449–75), 25 (pp. 498–524) of Hershel Parker's *Herman Melville: A Biography*, vol. 1, 1819–1851 (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) for a detailed overview of the composition, publication and reception of *Typee* and *Omoo*, as well as chapters 28–30 (pp. 565–635) on *Mardi* for comparison.

<sup>35</sup> Philbrick, *Cooper and American Sea Fiction*, 113–14.

<sup>36</sup> Jason Berger, "Antebellum Fantasies of the Common Sailor; Or, Enjoying the Knowing Jack Tar," *Criticism* 51, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 34.

happen to be those written by educated authors from middle- or upper-class backgrounds. To this day we study Cooper, Dana Jr., Melville and Conrad, whereas there remains, as H. Blum argues, “the sizable and critically untapped archive of narratives written by laboring sailors,”<sup>37</sup> including Barbary captivity and first-person labor narratives from the antebellum period.

In her outline of the typical antebellum personal sailor narrative, Hester Blum lists the most common structural elements of this type of writing.<sup>38</sup> Among them is the sailors’ description of their motivation toward going to sea, usually mediated by romanticized stories of sea life they hear or read, followed by disappointment upon experiencing sea labor: “The novice seaman finds that his romantic ideas of seeing the world from a ship are betrayed, however, by the difficulty and monotony of nautical labor.”<sup>39</sup> Blum also notes a self-reflexive dimension: “sailors themselves recognize that most of their narratives display common features – indeed, when an individual mariner’s work deviates from these shared characteristics, he often notes the fact.”<sup>40</sup> While Blum’s analysis focuses on American antebellum personal sea narratives, these elements apply to a substantial degree to the sea writing of other authors, including Melville and Conrad. In addition, Foulke says:

[...] Columbus was *not sailing into blank space* as he voyaged along new ocean tracks to uncharted islands and coastlines. But he was entering regions of the globe *constructed from the hypotheses of philosophers and geographers at best*, and derived from ancient myth and irrepressible sailors’ lore at worst. *The speculation that shaped his mission was more fictional than scientific*, confirmed, if at all, by vague and apocryphal reports of other voyagers, yet he was nevertheless enjoined to make discoveries and bring back hard evidence to establish them [...].<sup>41</sup>

Whether we are speaking of navigators and explorers who have written of their own experiences or of authors of fiction who have voyaged or labored at sea – and the entire gamut of nautical fact and fiction contributing in between – there seems to be an intimate connection between sailing and textuality. “Columbus’s compulsion to tell his tale is one of the paradigms of sea voyage literature,” Springer comments, and maritime labor is an archetypal

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<sup>37</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 6–7.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>41</sup> Foulke, *Sea Voyage Narrative*, 70 (emphasis mine).

storytelling milieu, Walter Benjamin says.<sup>42</sup> Narratives of actual voyages are bound to contain elements of literary discourse, while fictional works will rely on documentarism and incorporating events, locales, and figures pertaining to maritime history. Part of this connection certainly seems to be the specific relationship between sea labor and writing – “representing work in textual form,” including writing seen as labor: Blum notes how “experiential knowledge is imagined as reading a book” in antebellum personal sailor narratives, and how “the practice of reading or crafting a book is in turn figured as akin to sailing.”<sup>43</sup> Speaking of sea literature in general, Foulke states, and I agree, that “An unusually close relationship exists between historical accounts of voyages and literary fictions based on them – so close that it is often difficult to determine the purpose of the narrative by looking at its structure,” and that factual and fictional accounts have “remarkably similar configurations. They seem to be isomorphic with the experience of voyaging itself, in the sense that a map resembles the landscape it surveys.”<sup>44</sup>

This complexity is reflected both in maritime historiography and in critical overviews of sea literature: for most scholars, discussing the history of voyaging and discussing writing about voyaging gets intertwined. We need only look at the title of the first chapter in Bert Bender’s study *Sea Brothers* for an example: “The Voyage in American Sea Fiction after the *Pilgrim*, the *Acushnet*, and the *Beagle*”<sup>45</sup> – the *Pilgrim*, the *Acushnet*, and the *Beagle* are all actual ships, on which Dana Jr., Melville, and Darwin sailed, yet they are involved in a discussion of sea *fiction* in America. Further, Bender groups Dana Jr., Cooper, and Melville together in his readings without making note of the fact that the kinds of texts they produce, albeit classifiable as sea narratives, are quite different from one another in form, structure, and degree of fictionality.<sup>46</sup> Historian Marion Diamond says: “The ordinary sailor [...] is hard to find in the historical record, but emerges instead, however unrealistically, in the images of Dana, Melville, Conrad and O’Neill.”<sup>47</sup> Blum’s study *The View from the Masthead* focuses on personal nonfictional narratives written by American common sailors in the antebellum period, but it also engages in analysis of sea writing by Cooper, Dana Jr., Melville, and Poe. The first chapter of Foulke’s book *The Sea Voyage Narrative* is tellingly entitled “The Nature of Voyaging,” yet it opens with a lyric by Masfield and a quote from Conrad’s *The Mirror of*

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<sup>42</sup> Springer, “The Sea, the Land, the Literature,” 16; Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov,” in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zorn (1955; London: Pimlico, 1999), 91.

<sup>43</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 110; 114.

<sup>44</sup> Foulke, *Sea Voyage Narrative*, 13.

<sup>45</sup> Bender, *Sea Brothers*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 3–18.

<sup>47</sup> Marion Diamond, “Queequeg’s Crewmates: Pacific Islanders in European Shipping,” *International Journal of Maritime History* 1, no. 2 (Dec 1989): 140.

*the Sea*, moving to discuss the nature of voyaging not as recorded by maritime history, but in an array of generically diverse sea-related texts, from the *Odyssey* to Hilaire Belloc's *On Sailing the Sea*, from the "class of narratives" dealing with mutiny on the *Bounty* to Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. "[...] the symbiosis between literature and history, imagination and experience, fiction and autobiography is very close and full of quite complex interactions," Foulke writes.<sup>48</sup> Margaret Cohen's book *The Novel and The Sea* ostensibly uses various genres of maritime literature, from fictional and nonfictional narrative accounts to technical writing such as sea atlases and seamanship manuals. These are just a few examples from secondary literature used in this dissertation, by no means exhaustive. The point of highlighting this aspect of sea narratives and their study is not to see these continuous crossovers as somehow lacking or misguided: if anything, they are indicative of the richness of the material explored, and of the isomorphism, as Foulke says, between the map and the thing surveyed.

For these reasons, it is essential that the study of sea narratives be carried out in connection with the cultural history of maritime affairs, including naval history, maritime anthropology, naval architecture and archaeology. This principle is obviously not new: H. F. Watson noted back in his 1931 study *The Sailor in English Fiction and Drama, 1550-1800* that "The study of the presentation of the sailor in English literature should begin with the narratives of actual voyages, for it is from them, especially in the earlier periods, that our knowledge of the facts must be obtained."<sup>49</sup> However obvious and self-explanatory, it could use more endorsement in sea literature readership: although most scholars of sea narratives now pad their studies with findings from maritime cultural history, the principles of sailing, shipbuilding, and navigation have yet to see a wider application in the analysis of narratives themselves. To take a step further, again building from Watson's comment that although "the mariners' tales become less essential as official documents become more complete, the former continue to supplement the latter to a surprising degree,"<sup>50</sup> it should be emphasized that narratives of actual voyages lie not only at the origin of sea literature studies, but at the origin of maritime cultural historiography as well.

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<sup>48</sup> Foulke, *Sea Voyage Narrative*, xv.

<sup>49</sup> Watson, *Sailor in English Fiction and Drama*, 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

### 1.3. Sea narratives: Resistance to literary periodization, taxonomy, narratology

A second answer to the question “What does it mean to study sea narratives?” and a second problem cluster relevant for this dissertation is that it means dealing with a literature that resists classification according to what we have come to understand as conventions of literary periodization and generic taxonomy. H. F. Watson opened his 1931 study with the following remarks: “frequent borrowings among the various types tend to break down the classifications almost as soon as they are set up,” and “Partly because they are all much alike and partly because the influence of the sea tales on creative writing may be felt within a few years [...], there is little value in making the discussion of them fall into periods corresponding to those of literary history.”<sup>51</sup> These principles are reflected in the methodology of sea literature studies to this day, even if they are not explicitly stated. They begin with the diversity of terminology: the most common designation is “sea fiction” or “sea writing” if nonfictional texts are to be included; M. Cohen mentions “maritime fiction, [...] nautical fiction, ‘naval novels’, [and] ‘le roman maritime’” in the realm of fiction;<sup>52</sup> C. Casarino speaks of “nineteenth-century sea narratives” and “the modernist sea narrative,” while R. Foulke uses “sea voyage narratives,” focusing on fictional and nonfictional accounts of the experience of voyage. I use “sea narratives” throughout this dissertation as the broadest term which includes fiction and nonfiction, but distinguishes itself from forms such as poetry or drama.

Further diversity emerges in the area of literary history: Watson’s periodization of English sea-themed fiction and drama is deliberately primarily chronological and not stylistic, demarcated by years of politically significant events or processes such as the Commonwealth, the Protectorate or the Restoration; Thomas Philbrick’s approach in *James Fenimore Cooper and the Development of American Sea Fiction* is to follow individual authors in terms of their contributions to the development of sea fiction, with emphasis on Anglo-American transatlantic crossings and influences; the literary history *America and the Sea*, edited by H. Springer, traces how American sea-themed literature (prose, poetry, drama) and even music intersect with the commonly accepted periodization of American literature (the Colonial Period; the National – Revolutionary and Federal periods; the “golden age of American sea fiction” 1815-1860; etc.); although not focusing on literary periodization per se, Blum’s study *The View from the Masthead* also follows this approach. For the most part, general literary periodization is used as an orientation tool, facilitating the study of sea narratives’ own

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 4; 6.

<sup>52</sup> M. Cohen, “Traveling Genres,” 483.

development: John Peck's *Maritime Fiction: Sailors and the Sea in British and American Novels, 1797-1917* and Bert Bender's *Sea-Brothers: The Tradition of American Sea Fiction from Moby-Dick to the Present* are good examples of studies that follow the inherent logic of sea-themed narratives.

As a result, there is an abundance of scholarly work about sea writing, but fairly few formalist classifications or taxonomies of sea narratives to speak of: most scholars simply accept the versatile, unstable, pigeon-hole-resistant nature of their material and study it accordingly. Although their placement within general literary periodization only goes so far, it is a feature of sea narratives to take on stylistic traits dominant in a certain period: in the nineteenth and early twentieth century it is the shifts along the romanticism-realism-modernism axis, acknowledged at least and examined in detail at most by, for instance, T. Philbrick, H. Springer's edited study, J. Peck, C. Casarino, H. Blum. A number of critics opt for describing content paradigms, (elements of) formulae, recurring motifs, or borrowings from and variations on other genres. Thus, although the main strand of Watson's research is the character of the sailor, his study actually traces a comparative history of nonfictional, fictional and dramatic sea-themed writing in English literature between 1550 and 1800. As mentioned above, T. Philbrick's axes of study are generic (poetry, prose, drama) and transatlantic, focusing on Anglo-American crossings. *America and the Sea* extrapolates patterns in American sea fiction from the Colonial Period onwards: the trope of the sea as a field of action and knowledge alike;<sup>53</sup> parallels and divergences in literary treatment of sea and land imagery;<sup>54</sup> the trope of the sea as feminine and boundless.<sup>55</sup> The study also provides a detailed overview of dominant forms of fictional and nonfictional American sea literature, their dominant epistemology, imagery, literary conventions, and issues addressed for the Colonial, Revolutionary and Federal periods.<sup>56</sup> Blum and Kazanjian analyze overlaps between captivity narratives, Barbary captivity narratives, sea narratives and black mariner narratives.<sup>57</sup> Foulke's study *The Sea Voyage Narrative* offers more of a free-form exploration of narrative/structural paradigms, which include the exploration/discovery/return and the

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<sup>53</sup> Springer, "The Sea, the Land, the Literature," 16. The epistemology of maritime narratives is also a major focus of H. Blum's *The View from the Masthead*, addressing the theme of the sea as a site of labor and of meditation, the "interpenetration of the spheres of manual and intellectual labor" on board ship, and the concept of the "sea eye" – "the type of vision that encompasses both labor and contemplation," a term derived from maritime narratives themselves (3; 19–45).

<sup>54</sup> Springer, "The Sea, the Land, the Literature," 17–21.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 19; 21.

<sup>56</sup> Wharton, "The Colonial Era" and "The Revolutionary and Federal Periods."

<sup>57</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 48; David Kazanjian, "Mercantile Exchanges, Mercantilist Enclosures: Racial Capitalism in the Black Mariner Narratives of Venture Smith and John Jea," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 147–178.

hunt/quest (which correspond to, for instance, Melville's *Moby-Dick* and *Mardi*, respectively); the anatomy of society, covering mutinies, revolutions, social entropy, utopias/dystopias; the initiation.<sup>58</sup> He also explores archetypes, Homeric and Biblical,<sup>59</sup> the descent as a form of "dark initiation;" immobilization or stranding as archetypal scenes, potential tests at sea.<sup>60</sup>

A distinct trait of sea writing in general is its formulaicity – relying on a finite number of elements and their combinations: "The number of patterns that can be called upon for a maritime tale is limited, and the same patterns inevitably reappear at various times in all seafaring cultures."<sup>61</sup> Earlier in this chapter I mentioned Blum's extraction of a model for the antebellum personal sailor narrative and extrapolated it to a more general pattern of sea narratives. Foulke lists a number of potential tests at sea, which in sea writing often take the form of archetypal scenes: storm, fire, stranding, collision, falling from aloft or overboard, disease, starvation, and sinking.<sup>62</sup>

In addition, Foulke provides some basic classification coordinates, situating sea literature within the broader body of travel writing dating back to Hebrew and ancient Greek sources,<sup>63</sup> and drawing up a minimal classification of the modern sea narrative, based on its borrowings from and intersections with other genres: picaresque romances about maritime wanderers, such as written by Defoe, Fielding, and Smollett; and the sea Bildungsroman, such as written by Scott, Marryat, Cooper, Dana Jr., Melville, and Conrad.<sup>64</sup> Developing his thesis of the nineteenth-century sea narrative as heterotopian discourse, Casarino builds on this minimal classification by Foulke and proposes a trilocular taxonomy of the exotic picaresque as the residual form, the Bildungsroman of the sea as the dominant form, and the modernist sea narrative as the emergent form in the period.<sup>65</sup> The exotic picaresque, drawing from Hakluyt and Camoëns, developed by Defoe, Smollett, and Captain Cook, was, according to Casarino, exemplified in the nineteenth century by Marryat's *Peter Simple*, Cooper's *The Red Rover*, Melville's *Typee* and *Omoo*, Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, and, to an extent, Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* and Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* The

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<sup>58</sup> Foulke, *Sea Voyage Narrative*, 11.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 11–12.

<sup>61</sup> Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, 89.

<sup>62</sup> Foulke, *Sea Voyage Narrative*, 11–12.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, xv. Margaret Cohen refers to novels produced during the 1720s–1740s in the fashion of *Robinson Crusoe*, written by William Rufus Chetwood, Alain René Le Sage, the Abbé Prévost and Tobias Smollett along with Defoe, as "the maritime picaresque" (*The Novel and the Sea*, 8).

<sup>65</sup> Casarino, *Modernity at Sea*, 7–10.

*Bildungsroman* of the sea found its expression in Melville's *Redburn*, Marryat's *Peter Simple*, Kingsley's *Westward Ho!*, Kipling's *Captains Courageous*, and Dana Jr.'s *Two Years Before the Mast*. Finally, the modernist sea narrative "is structured precisely around what remains marginal and underdeveloped in the exotic picaresque and in the *Bildungsroman* of the sea, namely, the sea voyage and the world of the ship;" "life aboard the ship becomes the central *telos* of the narrative and is revealed in all of its explosive economies of power."<sup>66</sup>

In addition to fact and fiction being inextricable from one another in sea narratives, Foulke gives another reason why sea literature "resists easy definition:" the sheer abundance of sea-related texts poses the question of how we choose what gets defined as sea literature? "Inclusiveness leads to amorphous definition, exclusiveness to a tighter one that might limit the range of sea literature more than we would like."<sup>67</sup>

As a final remark regarding the second problem cluster, a few words about the relationship between literary theory, specifically narrative theory, and sea narratives: the analytical apparatus of narratology stumbles before this body of literary work, in a way that might be illustrated by comparing it to medieval romance cycles, sharing a frame or thematic foundation but not necessarily a full plot structure and character development that would characterize an ideal-type complete narrative, with authorship elements often blurred as well. Coming in "Protean forms and guises,"<sup>68</sup> texts borrow from one another, more often than not without reference or in changed form, as is documented by every critical edition of virtually any sea author's work; fact is fictionalized, legendized (such as John Paul Jones in Cooper's *The Pilot* and Melville's *Israel Potter*, or James Cook being featured in a number of narratives, including Cooper's, Dana Jr.'s, and Melville's sea oeuvre) and/or woven into the story; narrative strands are intertwined (Conrad being the champion of such writing), introduced and dismissed without explanation (e.g. Melville's *Mardi*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*); one narrative picks up where another ends, but without further relation (Melville's *Omoo* and *Typee*). As a result, certain sea-themed works are often chastised for formal and structural failures on the one hand, and rescued by others as being revolutionary or thinking outside conventional narrative (Melville's *Mardi* and *Moby-Dick* particularly come to mind in this context).

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 8–9.

<sup>67</sup> Foulke, *Sea Voyage Narrative*, xii.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

#### 1.4. Sea narratives and language: The argot of sea labor

A third answer to the question of what it means to study sea narratives and a third problem cluster informing the background of this dissertation, especially in terms of Deleuzian concepts which will be addressed below, is that the study of sea narratives means dealing with literature in which sea argot, the specialized technical language of naval architecture, navigation and maritime labor, is a defining trait, albeit not without caveats. It is important to foreground its relevance because it has a presence in scholarly studies, especially in analyses of technical accuracy tied to legitimacy and nautical realism, however it is rarely studied for itself and given the focus it deserves. Building on the work of scholars who have a developed awareness of the prominent role that sea argot should be given in studying this type of literature,<sup>69</sup> I would like to provide some preliminary remarks towards a germinating theory of sea argot as featured in literary texts.

Sea argot is introduced into the language of literature as a prominent effect of the voyage and the ship taking center stage and of the consequent requirement for technical accuracy in nineteenth-century sea narratives onwards. This technical sub-language is used by a minority group within society, in labor and storytelling alike: sea narration includes official narratives, such as ship manifests, logs, or reports, as much as textual forms that take on more literary properties. To a sea-initiated reader it might be a place of recognition and/or identification, whereas a nonspecialist reader might see it as a locus of estrangement within the otherwise understood narrative. Technical argot is a foreign body within the language of literature that always points outside of the narrative itself, back to the specialized discourse of seafaring, which in turn creates an obligation for the literary work to fulfill more than just literary criteria. At the same time, from the standpoint of narratives of actual voyages lying at the heart of the development of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Anglo-American sea narratives, it could also be said that the language of literature encroaches upon the specialized language of seafaring.

How does sea argot function within the body of sea narratives at the focus of this dissertation? Or, more precisely, what are possible angles from which to read it? I have already mentioned some of them: sea argot could be a factor toward narrative plausibility:

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<sup>69</sup> In addition to Watson's, Foulke's and Blum's studies mentioned above, I will use Foulke's "Conrad and the Power of Seamanship," *The Great Circle* 11, no. 1 (1989): 14–27, and three articles by William W. Bonney: "Joseph Conrad and the Betrayal of Language," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 34, no. 2 (Sep 1979): 127–153; "Semantic and Structural Indeterminacy in the Nigger of the 'Narcissus': An Experiment in Reading," *ELH* 40, no. 4 (Winter 1973): 564–583; and "The Circle and the Line: Terminal Metaphor in Conrad," *The Journal of the Joseph Conrad Society (U.K.)* 3, no. 4 (May 1978): 7–12.

technically correct use of specialized sea language is an indicator of nautical expertise, contributing to the credibility of the narrative and legitimacy of the author. Incorporating prose, poetry, and drama by authors of different backgrounds in his study, Watson nonetheless noted which authors had personal seafaring experience. Focusing her analyses on “sailors’ literary culture and the epistemology of maritime narratives,”<sup>70</sup> Blum makes several notes of the (de)legitimizing role of sea argot in sea authorship, linking on to T. Philbrick’s comments regarding Ames’ and Briggs’ criticism of Cooper for what they deemed his inadequate use of sea language,<sup>71</sup> but she also notes Dana Jr.’s self-legitimizing gesture of citing Cooper’s *Pilot* in the Preface to *Two Years Before the Mast* in order “to justify his own use of specialized nautical vocabulary” as he dispenses with romance and sides with literary realism in his account.<sup>72</sup>

Further, sea argot can also be studied for the kind of literary politics it serves within the narrative at hand. The use of sea argot can be as transparent or as opaque as an author decides it to be: it can be exclusive, employed as a form of succinct shorthand that only specialists will recognize and understand, or it can be used more inclusively, with explanations of nautical terminology or even symbolic sea initiation gestures addressed at readers. In this respect, Melville is declaratively more inclusive, addressing nonspecialist readers directly and even explaining certain aspects of sea language, but the inner logic of his sea writing and his metanarrative comments betray a de facto denial of (access to) a nautical “truth” behind the narrative. Conrad, on the other hand, uses sea argot sparingly and exclusively in his fiction, saving a more inclusive, explanatory approach for his autobiographical texts, such as *The Mirror of the Sea*; he is also more decisive in drawing a line between the understanding of sea life that comes from personal experience and one gained through the mediation of his texts; finally, Conrad also uses sea argot to subvert (and simultaneously obfuscate this subversion) the very same sea ethos that he so vehemently upholds.

Building on the idea that sea argot can be used to various degrees of inclusiveness, a third observation to be made in this respect is that it is, in effect, an excess of language, grafted onto narrative discourse. Even though nautical terminology comes to figure prominently in sea narratives of this period, it is not a necessary element in qualifying a text as sea literature. Any tale of the sea could be told in lay terms or in the most sophisticated

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<sup>70</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 2.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 79–87.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 86–87.

specialist vocabulary, and the basic plot and denouement (such as mutiny, stranding, sinking, ending the voyage in port, etc.) would still be understandable even to the nonspecialist reader. In this respect, sea argot is a dangerous supplement: its introduction in the service of a new nautical realism in literary texts initiates an irreversible shift in sea narratives as a genre.<sup>73</sup>

A final question to be asked from the study of sea argot in this corpus of narratives is: what does the employment of sea language in a literary text reveal about its sea ethics and politics? How does sea labor imagine, (re)produce, and/or criticize itself through the use of this language?

### 1.5. Geometry of sea, ship, sailor

A fourth issue cluster relevant for this dissertation is the geometry of sea – ship – sailor and the dynamic between them.<sup>74</sup> The geometry is useful in detecting structural and stylistic paradigms, i.e. uncovering which element in the triad is foregrounded and in what way, in different periods, genre variance, (trans)national literature, among different authors or even within a single author's oeuvre. Thus, Watson's study evidently focuses on the sailor element in English literature; T. Philbrick can make comparisons where Dana Jr. "had slighted the seaman in favor of the ship and the ocean," whereas "the whole trend of Cooper's nautical fiction after 1830 is to diminish the personality of the ship and to magnify that of the seaman."<sup>75</sup> Peck is able to draw transatlantic comparisons, where "The story of maritime Britain focuses principally on the sailors, both officers and men," meaning officers and ordinary seamen, while "The most obvious broad difference between British and American maritime novels is the fact that American novels focus far more, although not exclusively, on the challenge posed by the sea."<sup>76</sup> Bender can say that "no novelist before Melville had

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<sup>73</sup> This is not to say that specialized vocabulary of sea labor was not present to a significant degree in sea literature, narrative and otherwise, before the nineteenth century: referring to English voyage narratives 1550–1660, H. F. Watson quotes from the 1907–1921 *Cambridge History of English Literature*: "Seamen had begun to speak in literature, and the thoughts and language of the sea, by tongue and by writing, were being grafted into the conceptions and language of men who never knew the salt breath of the ocean" (*Sailor in English Fiction and Drama*, 7). Watson's own 1931 study uses sea argot as a marked/unmarked designation, and he does the same with the personal sailing experience of authors (5): he notes a lack of technical terminology in officer speech and virtual absence of speech by anyone below boatswain rank in Hakluyt (15-16); pinpoints Shakespeare's *Pericles* as containing the first scene, "except *Hyckescorner*, opening with technical commands," and compares it to the broader Elizabethan context (79); comments on nautical vocabulary in the work of Jonathan Swift (119), post-Shakespearean expansions of the nautical scene in the *Tempest* (138), Aphra Behn (141), John Davis (185), and elsewhere.

<sup>74</sup> The term "geometry of sea, ship, and sailor" is from Hugh Egan's contribution to *America and the Sea*, ed. H. Springer, "Cooper and His Contemporaries" (78).

<sup>75</sup> T. Philbrick, *Cooper and American Sea Fiction*, 121; 145.

<sup>76</sup> Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, 28; 90.

exploited the first of three elements of sea fiction – the sea, the ship, and the seaman – to the extent that he does [in *Moby-Dick*].”<sup>77</sup> Tony Tanner devotes his edited *The Oxford Book of Sea Stories* to the “men,” as opposed to Raban’s *The Oxford Book of the Sea*, which explicitly focused on the sea itself.<sup>78</sup> John Peck offers his own version of this geometry, where the elements of the sea and the ship are transformed into “the sea and the other shore as places of danger, where challenges have to be met” and “the social, economic and political dimension, that the ship is a product of technology, that it has been built for a purpose, and that there is a practical aspect to every sea voyage.”<sup>79</sup> Peck’s new geometry thus consists of three reformulated elements: “there is a sailor, a challenge, and this takes place in a context.”<sup>80</sup> The sailor and the challenge can be seen as fairly fixed elements, whereas the context always changes, and that is what Peck focuses on studying in his book.

Bearing in mind the formulaicity of sea narratives, a caveat might be in order against seeing the sea-ship-sailor geometry as their structural feature, as this would imply a normative poetics according to which sea-themed narratives would need to employ these three components in order to be understood as pertaining to sea literature. Since texts like Conrad’s “Youth” and “Amy Foster” or Melville’s *Encantadas* challenge this geometry in that they dispense with the ship or even the sailor to an extent, my approach is to use the geometry as an analytical device toward interpreting various combinations of these elements inasmuch as they are indeed featured in particular sea narratives. My own readings in the chapters that follow will not follow this geometry to the letter: I will, however, focus on territorialization and the space of the sea and the space of the ship, as well as offer my own concept of the ship as a machinic assemblage.

## **1.6. Sea narratives vs. grand narratives: Histories of nation, labor, literature**

A fifth and final problem cluster to be addressed is that of nation and its corollaries: the nation state (especially the correlation between sea narratives of this period and British, American, and Anglo-American identity); national literature; the inter- and trans-national character of sea labor; territoriality (in connection with Deleuze and Guattari). It is perhaps the most complex of the clusters described here, since its layers seep into the background (the nature of

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<sup>77</sup> Bender, *Sea Brothers*, 21.

<sup>78</sup> Tony Tanner, Introduction to *The Oxford Book of the Sea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), xii–xiii; Raban, Note on the Selection to *Oxford Book of the Sea*, xvii.

<sup>79</sup> Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, 14.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

sea labor as such), the content (sea labor as the stuff of sea literature), and the methodology of studying maritime history and sea narratives alike.

In his study *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Marcus Rediker wrote: “the history of seafaring people can and must be more than a chronicle of admirals, captains, and military battles at sea: It [sic] must be made to speak to larger historical problems and processes.”<sup>81</sup> A continuation of what was initially Jesse Lemisch’s radical turn in writing history “from the bottom up” (met with resistance upon being written in 1962, his Yale university dissertation *Jack Tar vs. John Bull: The Role of New York Seamen in Precipitating the Revolution* was only published in book form in 1997) and insistence that the stereotype of the sailor as social misfit was the result of marginalization by structures of power,<sup>82</sup> maritime history and maritime anthropology embarked to democratize their approach to their subject matter: from the stuff of grand narratives (such as nation-building, which is what admirals, captains, and naval battles essentially are), routes were opened toward studying labor history, working-class history (including its gendered dimension),<sup>83</sup> their revolutionary potential and contributions to political radicalism.<sup>84</sup> An interesting comparison can be drawn here between this development period in maritime cultural history and its subject matter: whereas the sea writing produced from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century started to include voices from before the mast and below deck instead of just the officer class, cultural historical disciplines which study these narratives took more than a century to catch on with a similar approach.

After Paul Gilroy’s pivotal reconceptualization of *The Black Atlantic* as a “counterculture of modernity,”<sup>85</sup> the study of which ought to be deliberately interdisciplinary and intercultural, maritime cultural history and literary studies were able to overstep the disciplinary boundaries of “nation” and study seafaring in a broader (regional, oceanic, hemispheric, or global) context of contact, exchange and interaction. “International by definition, sailors and their multinational crewmates would appear to be the perfect subjects

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<sup>81</sup> Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (1987, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7.

<sup>82</sup> Jesse Lemisch, “Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (July 1968), 379–80.

<sup>83</sup> For studies focusing on gender and the sea, see titles authored and/or edited by V. Burton (1999); D. A. Cohen (1997); M. S. Creighton and Lisa Norling (1996); L. Grant de Pauw (1982); B. Klein (2002); S. Stark (1998); M. Walsh (1999).

<sup>84</sup> In addition to the work of J. Lemisch (1968; 1997) and Rediker’s *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (1987), notable exemplary studies here include those by J. Bolster (1997); D. Chappell (1997); C. Howell and R. Twomey (1991); Linebaugh and Rediker (2000); E. W. Sager (1989).

<sup>85</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

for the study of the global political economy, and indeed, scholars in Atlantic and related studies have discussed their position as collective laborers in an international setting,” Blum says.<sup>86</sup> The period from the 1960s onwards saw the development of Atlantic, Black Atlantic, and Pacific Studies, while literary, cultural, and American studies responded with a “hemispheric or transnational turn.”<sup>87</sup> Finally, we are witnessing the emergence of oceanic studies, which, despite overlapping with above-mentioned fields in terms of a trans-national approach, insist on focusing on oceans in their own right, independent from broadening land-based perspectives or merely transcending the nation as an analytical category:

Oceanic studies [...] proposes that the sea should become central to critical conversations about global movements, relations, and histories. And central not just as a theme or organizing metaphor with which to widen a landlocked critical prospect: in its geophysical, historical, and imaginative properties, the sea instead provides a new epistemology – a new dimension – for thinking about surfaces, depths, and the extra-terrestrial dimensions of planetary resources and relations.<sup>88</sup>

The last half century has thus opened up space for studying the ocean as a dynamic, historicized space,<sup>89</sup> and sea labor and sea literature as circulating between geographical regions, political constellations and social groups. To narrow things further in terms of relevance for this dissertation, sailors were recognized in this process as the first genuinely global workforce,<sup>90</sup> the nature of whose labor surpassed the necessarily nationalized affiliations of ships on which they served. Their “freedom from national belonging”<sup>91</sup> was not “discovered” during this recent transnational turn in historical, cultural and literary studies that I describe; it had been discussed and debated since at least the nineteenth century. Blum writes:

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<sup>86</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 12.

<sup>87</sup> Hester Blum, “The Prospect of Oceanic Studies,” 670; Blum, “Introduction: Oceanic Studies,” *Atlantic Studies: Global Currents* 10, no. 2 (2013), 151. For instances of hemispheric and transnational scholarship, see R. Bauer (2003); A. Brickhouse (2004); D. Kazanjian (2003); C. F. Levander and R. S. Levine (2008).

<sup>88</sup> Blum, “Introduction: Oceanic Studies,” 151.

<sup>89</sup> The phrase “historicizing the ocean” comes from Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun’s edited study *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>90</sup> Bernhard Klein, ed., *Fictions of the Sea: Critical Perspectives on the Ocean in British Literature and Culture*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 4; Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 12.

<sup>91</sup> Blum, “Prospect of Oceanic Studies,” 671.

Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century merchant seamen indeed existed largely outside the bounds of national affiliation, and even those sailing in the United States Navy primarily performed the work of nationalism without benefitting from it [...]. The internationalism embodied by sailors abstracted them from participatory citizenship, even as they were central to its functioning.<sup>92</sup>

Therein lies the crux. Laboring on the margins of national affiliations, able to literally jump ship (willingly or by impressment) and switch to a different national tack, maritime industry or even personal history, sailors and seafaring are at the same time inextricable from the role they play in nation-building, on a political level as well as in the formation of national literatures.

### **1.7. The Anglo-American paradigm of sea narratives**

John Peck analyzes how maritime stories produced on either side of the Anglo-American Atlantic reflect national character:

[...] just as a story about the sea is, ultimately, a story about the anarchic power of nature, a story about sailors is always in some way a story about taking control of and dominating one's environment [...] a maritime story is, consequently, a story about enterprise, about seeing an opportunity and seizing it. This energetic, and money-making, spirit then comes to be seen as an expression of the national temperament. In fact, both in Britain and America, a two-way system is established: the maritime adventure becomes an expression of the national character, but the complement is that the risk-taking spirit of the naval or commercial enterprise also becomes an aspirational model for the nation.<sup>93</sup>

There are sea stories, Peck says, and then there is how certain countries see themselves as sea nations.<sup>94</sup> Although he lists several parallels between them, a major difference between British and American maritime perspective in sea narratives, according to Peck, is that the British paradigm remains tied to the ethos of the shore, and consequently to how maritime

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 671–72.

<sup>93</sup> Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, 5.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 27.

affairs affect familial and social structures, either on land or on board ship.<sup>95</sup> In the context of a forming nation, and in line with Peck's own version of the sea geometry of sailor-challenge-context, he locates the focus of American sea literature more in the challenge posed by the sea and the voyage itself; "isolated individuals" take precedence over social structures as dominant element.<sup>96</sup> An interesting note in this respect: apart from E. A. Poe, all American authors included in Peck's study did have some sort of experience of maritime labor, whereas the list of British authors is equally divided among professional seafarers and land-based writers, including Jane Austen and Charles Dickens alongside Captain Marryat and Joseph Conrad.

"It was inevitable that this wide and varied maritime activity should find expression in the literature of a people seeking to create a national identity, for, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the ocean seemed to be as much America's peculiar domain as it had been England's in the preceding century," T. Philbrick said in 1961.<sup>97</sup> Like Philbrick,<sup>98</sup> John Samson would also make the connection between national and individual legitimation in American literature:

National legitimacy, which the sea narratives of the Revolution had sought to establish and which the nautical narratives of the nineteenth century had developed, is in full evidence at the century's end.

Equally in evidence is the theme of individual development, which in many if not most of the narratives is the microcosmic accompaniment to the development of the nation and the national ideology. The growth of America – as Emerson and Whitman state – is commensurate with the growth of the American, and both are fostered by nautical experiences.<sup>99</sup>

The collective study *America and the Sea* also quotes James Russell Lowell's statement from 1871: "We were socially and intellectually moored to English thought, till Emerson cut the cable and gave us a chance at the dangers and glories of blue water."<sup>100</sup> As a final example, Blum notes that "The sea genre was marshaled to serve the ends of U.S. nationalism as well,

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 89–90.

<sup>97</sup> T. Philbrick, *Cooper and American Sea Fiction*, 3.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>99</sup> John Samson, "Personal Narratives, Journals, and Diaries," in *America and the Sea*, ed. H. Springer, 95.

<sup>100</sup> Springer, "The Sea, the Land, the Literature," 17.

when late-eighteenth-century dramatists such as Susanna Rowson and poets such as Philip Freneau used the Atlantic as a space for poetic and national self-definition.”<sup>101</sup>

From how the sea figured in individual maritime narratives on both sides of the Anglo-American Atlantic to the methodology chosen by authors of critical studies of these narratives, patterns are detectible: firstly, that of Margaret Cohen’s term “traveling genre,” the origin of which she expressly assigns to American sea literature, namely J. F. Cooper.<sup>102</sup> Parallels and differences are traceable between cis-and trans-produced sea literature, between British and American writing about the sea, and the nineteenth- to early twentieth-century period is transformative in this respect: firstly, British narratives tended to focus on the Royal Navy as an institution and the place of the individual in society (including the satirized, anti-sentimental sailor character type epitomized by Smollett and Marryat); American sea writing certainly paid homage to the growing U.S. Navy, especially in the wake of the War of 1812, but it also “centered on the daring exploits of heroic individuals rather than on the long history of an institution that had built and defended an empire.”<sup>103</sup> Secondly, whereas the novel form would remain dominant in British sea-themed literature, the American short story would take cue from Cooper and develop its own sea incarnation, which would sentimentalize and humanize the character of the sailor as well as “manifest[...] a growing interest in the contemporary nautical scene, an interest that presents a sharp contrast to Cooper’s efforts to discover and interpret the American maritime past.”<sup>104</sup> Finally, the first-person account of the sea experience which focuses on seamanship as labor is traceable to the personal nonfictional narratives written by American working sailors, starting with the Barbary captivity accounts produced at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.<sup>105</sup> Mutual influence travels back and forth across the Atlantic, derivation and innovation taking turns, and critical scholarship has recognized this Anglo-American, transatlantic body of work as a sphere of study in itself, separate from “models” extricable from other literary, linguistic, and geographical regions.

Secondly, with exceptions such as Watson or Cohen, who incorporate Francophone texts into their analyses,<sup>106</sup> and the emergent field of oceanic studies, most critical works relevant for the study of sea narratives still fit into what Klein and Mackenthun described in

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<sup>101</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 8–9.

<sup>102</sup> Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, 9.

<sup>103</sup> T. Philbrick, *Cooper and American Sea Fiction*, 4-8; 84–87; quotation on 4.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 84–85; 101–102; quotation on 102.

<sup>105</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 8.

<sup>106</sup> Examining sea adventure fiction within the history of the novel, Margaret Cohen brings together literary traditions of the United Kingdom, France, and the United States, arguing that “These three nations were where the poetics of sea adventure fiction was first forged and where the form flourished, before it spread to other traditions later in the nineteenth century” (*The Novel and the Sea*, 8).

the Introduction to *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean*: “the critical engagement with sea fiction, too, has frequently suffered from being conducted within conceptual frameworks far too narrow to match the global scale of their topic (structured, as they frequently are, around limiting themes such as genre, character, or region).”<sup>107</sup> Although conceptual frameworks might be limiting given the global thematic and authorial scope of sea narratives, they are by no means disposable: in addition to new paradigms trying to grasp spheres of interaction up to the global level, I believe that genre, character, region, or even nation and national literature cannot be surpassed as frames of reference, nor should they. For one, because, as Wendy Brown has said, “we have ceased to believe in many of the constitutive premises undergirding modern personhood, statehood, and constitutions, yet we continue to operate politically as if these premises still held, and as if the political-cultural narratives based on them were intact,”<sup>108</sup> and furthermore, because nation-building was such a prominent historical agent in this period that it needs to figure in studies of cultural history as well.

Finally, there is the question of Melville and Conrad themselves, since both their oeuvres exhibit a high degree of ambivalence in dealing with nation-related themes. Despite some longstanding scholarly interpretations,<sup>109</sup> Melville’s literary nationalism is tenuous at best, articulated through equal measures of patriotism and criticism of American slavery and treatment of sailors in the service of American ships; further, the American identity developed in Melville’s sea oeuvre is not formulated in isolation, but with reference to and in continuous dialogue with the British, and could thus better be described as Anglo-American. Conrad’s sea-related texts, fictional and nonfictional, tow a strong line of British affirmation on the surface (with maritime service contributing greatly to the affirmation), but reveal a more ambiguous stance when examined in more depth: not only do Conrad’s sea works cast doubt on and critique imperialism, British and otherwise, they also register emerging ruptures in the imperial ethos – dysfunctional agents and contact zones, as well as the breakdown of belief in this ethos by its own agents. Not to be forgotten in this respect is, obviously, Conrad’s own Polish identity: his legitimation into British literature was for the large part performed through

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<sup>107</sup> Klein and Mackenthun, *Sea Changes*, 6. Klein and Mackenthun point to several relevant titles in this respect, including those written and/or edited by R. Astro (1976); B. Bender (1988); P. A. Carlson (1986); B. Klein (2002); J. Peck (2001); T. Philbrick (1961); and H. Springer (1995).

<sup>108</sup> Quoted in Blum, “The Prospect of Oceanic Studies,” 671.

<sup>109</sup> For an overview, see Ida Rothschild’s essay “Reframing Melville’s ‘Manifesto’ ‘Hawthorne and His Mosses’ and the Culture of Reprinting,” as well as Section 3.3. of this dissertation.

his service in the British Merchant Navy and his subsequent foregrounding of this career in his writing, whilst maintaining his “Polishness” as an outlet on strategic occasion.<sup>110</sup>

### **1.8. Sea narratives and Deleuze and Guattari: Minor literature, smooth and striated (nomad and sedentary) space**

According to Deleuze and Guattari, “The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation.”<sup>111</sup> It is not a literature written in a minor language, but rather literature written through a minorization of a major language; a kind of foreignness, or delirium, within one’s own language, such as exemplified by Marcel Proust in French, Herman Melville in American, or Franz Kafka in German literature.<sup>112</sup> The concept appears throughout Deleuze’s oeuvre, with and without Guattari. It will be employed in this dissertation in several ways. Firstly, it will be used to explore the link between sea narratives and minor literature. Secondly, it will add a comparative-literary dimension by offering a common ground to (re-)examine both authors’ articulations of language, space of the sea, space of the ship, and sea ethos. Finally, Melville’s and Conrad’s works will be read alongside each other with the concept of minor literature to detect how they mutually transfigure one another. As a result of reading Melville and Conrad in dialogue with Deleuze and Guattari, potential space might emerge for a revision of the concept of minor literature itself.

Maritime narratives of the nineteenth and early twentieth century have a propensity towards being minoritarian: “What in great literature goes down below, constituting a not indispensable cellar of the infrastructure, here takes place in the full light of day, what is there a matter of passing interest for a few, here absorbs everyone no less than as a matter of life and death,” Deleuze and Guattari quote from Kafka’s diaries.<sup>113</sup> Accordingly, Melville says in

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<sup>110</sup> See Conrad’s 1914 statement that Polish readers can grasp in his writing that which an English audience cannot understand, quoted in Adam Gillon, “Some Polish Literary Motifs in the Works of Joseph Conrad,” *The Slavic and Eastern European Journal* 10, no. 4 (Winter 1966): 431, also mentioned in Section 4.1. of this dissertation; further, Keith Carabine’s reading of chapters II, III, and V of *A Personal Record* as Conrad’s construction of “a personal myth that absolves him from deserting Poland for motives of personal gain and self-advancement” (Introduction to *A Personal Record*, 187); Conrad’s Polish-themed essays written between 1915 and 1919 exhibit ambivalence between personally invested political commentary on contemporary Poland and keeping a discursive distance from his acquaintances who still reside in the country: “Being there as a stranger in that tense atmosphere, which was yet not unfamiliar to me [...]” (“The Crime of Partition,” *Notes on Life and Letters*, [Teddington: Echo Library, 2008], 71; additional instances in “A Note on the Polish Problem;” “Poland Revisited” in *Notes*).

<sup>111</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 18.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 18–19; 25–26.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

*White-Jacket*: “the living on board a man-of-war is like living in a market; where you dress on the door-steps, and sleep in the cellar. No privacy can you have; hardly one moment’s seclusion. It is almost a physical impossibility, that you can ever be alone.”<sup>114</sup> Sea narratives of this period see the voyage and the ship take center stage and witness a shift from the “admirals, captains, and military battles at sea” mentioned by Rediker to personal narratives told from, literally, “below deck” and “before the mast” – starting with American sailors’ Barbary captivity narratives, pivoting with Dana Jr., continuing with Melville, having even Cooper join in briefly,<sup>115</sup> all the way to Conrad’s *Narcissus*, despite his firmly quarterdeck-based optics.

Decks are peeled and the space of the ship is rendered from within, from below, in all its compartments, functions and micro-controls, from the quarterdeck to the forecastle: as in minor literature described by Deleuze and Guattari, “its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics,” since what was spatially off limits, literally under the surface – of the sea and of the deck – is brought to the light of day as the “central *telos*” of the narrative.<sup>116</sup> The social milieu of a ship is by no means “a mere environment or a background,” as would be the case with major literatures; instead, every command, obeyed or disobeyed, executed or floundered, has a bearing on the entire collective, unto the point of life and death, as Kafka says.<sup>117</sup> Every piece of personal property, display of idiosyncrasy, and various territorialities one brings to the ship (the “commercial, economic, bureaucratic, juridical” “triangles” Deleuze and Guattari mention<sup>118</sup>) is scrutinized and in constant danger of being seized and utilized toward some other end, as public property. Any individuated tale is tied to the territory of the ship, which is in turn tied to another territorialization, that of specific maritime industry or nation with which the vessel is affiliated. To every personal name and history, a tokenism is attached: any Jack Tar is taken to be a representative of their position on board ship, of their geographic origin, vernacular, and class, and yet, as was mentioned above, by virtue of the international nature of their work, sailors as a global workforce surpass delimitations of any territorialization.

Deliberate, impressed or unwitting agents of empire- and nation-building, sailors remain anonymous and dispensable in the unsavory work they perform in the service of these territorializations: therein lies their revolutionary potential. What does one do with the first-

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<sup>114</sup> Herman Melville, *Redburn, White-Jacket, Moby-Dick* (New York: Library of America, 1983), 384.

<sup>115</sup> Cooper’s self-legitimizing alignments with Dana Jr. and Ned Myers are analyzed by Blum in *The View from the Masthead*, 96; 98–99.

<sup>116</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 17; Casarino, *Modernity at Sea*, 9.

<sup>117</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 17.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

hand, privileged intimacy with the tectonic grinding that goes on at the limits of territories? Literature written by sailors has many masters to answer to: the English language as master; the technical sea argot as master, guardian of the code of sea conduct; national literature and politics as master; land-based literature as master. Yet, when we read Melville or Conrad, we find that all these masters can be fooled, rendered none the wiser in the process. A sailor always speaks from beyond the pale: this is why the question of sea initiation, of maritime legitimacy, is important. A sailing story told from within is not the same story if told from without, even if word for word, like Borges' "Pierre Menard." Kafka's texts, written by anyone other than a Prague Jew in German, would not be the same texts. The inside/outside binarism of seafaring experience, and consequently of sea writing, points toward absolute deterritorialization: there is, indeed, something irreversible in Dana Jr.'s "being a sailor for life," which is a dread shared by all Melville's first-person narrators up to *Moby-Dick*.<sup>119</sup> With Conrad, the relative deterritorialization of seafaring ethos secures relative freedom from land-based concerns as well as relative reterritorialization in legitimizing oneself as an agent of empire; however, absolute deterritorialization comes with pushing the imperial machine beyond the point of no return, as in the case of Kurtz.

Finally, to return to the question of sea argot as part and parcel of sea narratives: as the sea experience holds transformative potential for absolute deterritorialization, so sea argot points towards linguistic deterritorialization by default. Analyzing what Kafka does with German in his writing, Deleuze and Guattari say "Go always farther in the direction of deterritorialization, to the point of sobriety. Since the language is arid, make it vibrate with a new intensity. Oppose a purely intensive usage of language to all symbolic or even significant or simply signifying usages of it. Arrive at a perfect and unformed expression, a materially intense expression."<sup>120</sup> If we imagined a hypothetically pure state of sea argot as the language of maritime labor, as exemplified by any glossary of nautical terms and diagrams of naval architecture which so frequently accompany contemporary editions of sea narratives, it would most likely be a collection of predominantly nouns and verbs, some adjectives (e.g. *close-hauled*; *lee*; *port/starboard*) and adverbs (*abaft*; *adrift*; *aloft*; *amidships*, to employ only the letter A), and speech acts – assertives, directives, commissives, declaratives:<sup>121</sup> in a nutshell, it would be a collection of names for things and what to do with them. It would be a sober

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<sup>119</sup> Richard Henry Dana Jr., *Two Years before the Mast*, ed. Thomas Philbrick (1840; New York: Penguin Classics, 1981), 239.

<sup>120</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 19.

<sup>121</sup> John R. Searle, "A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts," in *Language, Mind, and Knowledge. Minneapolis Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Vol 7, ed. Keith Gunderson (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1975), 344–369.

language, striving to eliminate as much ambiguity as possible. It would strive for univocity of meaning, of a linguistic-ontic correspondence without remainder, minimizing the reach of figurative sense in order to maximize the survival of the collective behind the enunciation.<sup>122</sup>

In that sense, a pure sea argot could be described as “opposing a purely intensive usage of language to all symbolic” usages of language; however, due to its insistence on exclusively proper sense whilst reducing the figurative, it would not oppose the “significant or simply signifying” uses of language completely.<sup>123</sup> If we juxtapose sea argot as it is utilized in sea narratives of this period with Deleuze and Guattari’s reading of Kafka – “*Language stops being representative in order to now move toward its extremities or its limits*”<sup>124</sup> – we can, in contrast, describe the language of the sea as striving to be *nothing but representative*, finding its own reterritorialization in proper sense, and *thereby* extreme, its intensive utilization taking language as far away from metaphor as possible, in order for the sea, the vessel, and the crew to form a functional sea machine.

Our imagined, hypothetically pure sea argot would have no *sujet d’énonciation* nor a *sujet d’énoncé*, apart from the subjectless collective language of the sea machine speaking itself: yards are braced; sheets eased; tack changed; vessel on or off the wind, heaving to, heading down; the human element is flogged through the fleet, keel-hauled, brigged – even the disciplining is collective, putting to work all aspects of the assemblage. Deleuze and Guattari say after Kafka, “there is no longer a subject of the enunciation, nor a subject of the statement [...]. Rather, there is a circuit of states that forms a mutual becoming, in the heart of a necessarily multiple or collective assemblage.”<sup>125</sup>

In order for any form of sea narration to occur at all, even its minimalist, non-literary formulations of ship manifests and logs, the language of the sea needs to reach outside itself, for standard – major – language, and the language of literature. The names of things and commands of what to do with them need fillers, qualifiers; they need pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions; tenses, syntax, modifiers and deixis are called upon, all the *chevilles syntaxiques* which Derrida opposes to “big words,” and which “signify more than they can adequately be understood to be *expressing*.”<sup>126</sup> In that sense, nautical glossaries can be understood as counter-movements of negative relative deterritorialization, extracting sea argot

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<sup>122</sup> Conrad himself ostensibly subscribed to such a view of sea argot, seeing it as “perfected speech,” “extend[ing] this admiration for precision in sea language towards the ideal of perfect linkage between words and action sought by literary artists” (Foulke, “Conrad and the Power of Seamanship,” 16).

<sup>123</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 19.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>126</sup> Jacques Derrida, *La Dissémination* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972), 250; Edward Said, “The Problem of Textuality: Two Exemplary Positions,” *Critical Inquiry* 4, no. 4 (Summer 1978): 685.

back from literary discourse onto which it grafted itself. If sea argot is an infiltration, a blind spot, a rupture in the language of literature, it is because it is inadequate to tell its own story and has to find a host. How does one tell an individuated sea story, of a *certain* vessel, a *certain* voyage, a *certain* sailor, when all of the sea language at one's disposal is collective, comes from an arsenal of charged intensity, from *any and all* vessels, voyages, sailors? Always-already insufficient, less-than-a-language, bastardized thief from standard English (or American English, or French, or Spanish...), from science, from the novel, from travel narratives; or, to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari's programmatic call as regards Kafka, a baby without a crib; sea argot could be described as a collection of pure *intensives* or *tensors*, i.e. "the linguistic elements, however varied they might be, that express the 'internal tensions of a language',"<sup>127</sup> having to reach out to standard language if it is to be intelligible. Always "no longer or not yet"<sup>128</sup> in connection to subjectivity, sea argot straddles the always moving line of horizon between relative and absolute deterritorialization, located in both and neither at the same time. Sea narratives are produced at the intersection of the language of the sea and the language of literature, whereby both are deterritorialized, moved in some direction outside themselves, in order to produce a formulation that speaks from beyond the pale and from inside the familiar at the same time. In this sense, following Henri Gobard's tetralinguistic model employed by Deleuze and Guattari, my interpretation of the reason why sea argot draws attention to itself and renders itself opaque from within literary discourse is that it was meant to be vehicular ("a language of business, commercial exchange, bureaucratic transmission, and so on"), but turned out to point in the direction of the mythic – "on the horizon of cultures, caught up in a spiritual or religious reterritorialization"<sup>129</sup> – toward "a reversible beyond or before,"<sup>130</sup> in spite of what was meant for it, in spite of itself. Speaking sailors are, indeed, the "properly linguistic dogs, insects, or mice," who are, as they tell their tale, "finding [their] own point of underdevelopment, [their] own *patois*, [their] own third world, [their] own desert."<sup>131</sup>

Obviously, what I have just offered is an abstract reading of sea narratives with the concept of minor literature; it does not follow that sea narratives always follow their revolutionary, minoritarian potential but run the full gamut between major and minor

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<sup>127</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 22, taking cue from Vidal Sephiha and Jean-François Lyotard.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 22; 18.

literature in their coefficients of linguistic deterritorialization, collectivity and politicality of enunciation. Deleuze and Guattari note of Chomsky and beyond,

[...] a dialect, ghetto language, or minor language is not immune to the kind of treatment that draws a homogeneous system from it or extracts constants [...]. Even politically, especially politically, it is difficult to see how the upholders of a minor language can operate if not by giving it (if only by writing in it) a constancy and homogeneity making it a locally major language capable of forcing official recognition [...].<sup>132</sup>

Inasmuch as working sailors reterritorialize with the highly regimented world of the ship after being initially deterritorialized from land upon the outset of any voyage, the language of sea labor acts as a dominant, authoritative, homogenous system during shipboard activity. Sea narratives can trace various lines of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, including the reproduction and perpetuation of nationalism and capitalism as points of subjectification. Anglo-American sea narratives were complicit in British and American nation-building, which was connected to these nations' entrepreneurial, commercial, and colonial activities as well as to the subjectification of their citizens. "What is it which tells us that, on a line of flight, we will not rediscover everything we were fleeing? In fleeing the eternal mother-father, will we not rediscover all the Oedipal structures on the line of flight?"<sup>133</sup> We can therefore speak of different degrees of majoritarian or minoritarian tendencies within sea narratives themselves. Some voices from within sea narratives will shape themselves as more minor than others: perspectives from "before the mast" and "below deck" (Barbary captivity narratives; partially Dana Jr. and H. Melville), as opposed to those of the quarterdeck (Captain Marryat; J.F. Cooper; some Melville; J. Conrad); those coming from lower social status (personal nonfictional accounts of sailors) versus authors from more genteel backgrounds (N. Ames; Dana Jr.; J. F. Cooper; H. Melville).

A distinction should be made between how different modes of seafaring, i.e. different sailing industries, are employed in sea writing as regards the concept of minor literature: a narrative about the navy is not the same as a narrative about whaling, exploration, or commercial enterprise. Studying similarities and differences between sailing industries could

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<sup>132</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (1980; London and New York: Continuum, 2008), 113.

<sup>133</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, "On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature," in *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (1977; New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 38.

provide even better insight into the variations of sea literature and the myriad angles from which it views maritime activity in connection with issues of space/geography, class, race, nation, capitalism, and/or subjectification. In this respect, certain sea industries are more conducive to exploring certain ideas in terms of both deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Cooper's *The Pilot*, for instance, employs privateering to demonstrate its double role of, and divided loyalty between, nation-building and private enterprise.<sup>134</sup> Whaling – the least striated of seafaring industries – enables Melville to push subjectivity to its limits in *Typee*, *Mardi*, and *Moby-Dick* and explore the possibilities of returning from the brink of absolute deterritorialization. He uses the navy in *White-Jacket* not towards national endorsement, but to criticize how the project of nation-building takes its toll on the bodies and minds of serving sailors, and how their collective bonds come from shared labor and plight rather than from national loyalty. It is not surprising that his most individuated sea story, the anti-Bildungsroman *Redburn*, takes place on a merchant vessel, exploring connections between commercial enterprise, class, and the legitimation of an individual in society. Conrad, in his own right, will also take up the merchant marine, towards a different purpose: building his own legitimation as an English author by drawing on his merchant navy service and finding a way to articulate the anomic state of (British) imperial politics at the same time.

Seeing that Melville is discussed in many readings by Deleuze (alone and in collaboration with other authors), my analyses will be conducted in interaction with several existing theses, namely how Melville utilizes “the ruins of the paternal function”<sup>135</sup> to reimagine ancestry, nation, labor, and subjectification. Deleuzian conceptualizations of the contract, institution, incest and the bachelor will be employed in examining variations in the dynamic of Melville's ship collectives, ranging from failed attempts to re-establish the paternalistic principle after it has been lost (*Redburn*), to subversive form of communities of two – temporary assemblages of protagonists pairing with other characters in opposition to the oppressive collectives of ship crews (*Typee*; *Omoo*; *Mardi*; *Moby-Dick*), to the delirium of the bachelor (*Mardi*). The exceptional literary value of Melville's sea protagonist-narrators lies in that they are in pursuit of an individuated enunciation, of telling their own “individual concern,”<sup>136</sup> yet they find their discourse hampered and distilled by collective membranes: those of family, of nation, of ship crews (which is, in fact, the tension inherent to minor

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<sup>134</sup> See Louis Iglesias' paper “The ‘keen-eyed critic of the ocean’: James Fenimore Cooper's Invention of the Sea Novel” for a discussion of what he calls “bifurcated nationality” in Cooper's sea novels.

<sup>135</sup> Gilles Deleuze, “Bartleby; or, The Formula,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (1993; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 78.

<sup>136</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 71.

literature). The result of this struggle is, apart from several breaks or lines of flight exemplified in *Bartleby* or *Ahab* (noted by Deleuze and other authors), a vibration of language, where the neurotic, hyper-controlling (first-person) narration and hegemonic tendencies in discourse point towards breaks, opening up interstices for an undercurrent of narration to come through (*Typee*; *Omoo*; *Mardi*).

Unlike Melville, Conrad cannot be described as a Deleuzian author par excellence in terms of how frequently his writing is addressed in Deleuze's texts, with or without co-authors; nevertheless, Deleuzian readings of Conrad by other authors continue to emerge in increasing numbers, such as those by S. M. Islam (1996), N. Israel (1997), J. Hughes (1997), and G. Z. Gasyana (2011). Similar to Melville, Conrad's sea narratives enact a kind of betrayal of sea ethos in their own right: contrary to the "fellowship of the craft" ostensibly espoused in Conrad's personal, nonfictional writing and accepted at face value by a large number of scholars, Conrad's novels and short stories effectively compromise the "fellowship" by featuring characters and/or scenes which are instances of nautical neglect, blunder or blatant disregard for good seamanship. Robert Foulke says: "Nearly every one of Conrad's fictional voyages contains either a mistake in seamanship or an abnegation of responsibility on the part of a seaman."<sup>137</sup> This issue is analyzed in Chapter 4 in conjunction with W. Bonney's readings of language in Conrad and my Deleuze-based conceptualization of sea argot: the result is a revision of how the redemptiveness of sea labor is read in Conrad and what the language of seamanship does to the Conradian sea narrative.

Performativity enabled Conrad to occupy a position of complicity with and simultaneous ambivalence regarding (British) imperialism. Unlike Melville, whose sea writing irrupted with occasional lines of flight but who, save for Ishmael, allowed his protagonists only instances of relative deterritorialization, and who reached back to Britain to unravel America's faults, Conrad firmly held the line of territorialization, imperial agency, the gentlemanly maritime code of conduct and the corresponding genre of imperial/maritime romance, only to expose this territory layer by layer as brittle and crumbling, capturing agents and empire in a state of anomie from within. With Melville, the confined space of the ship provides a pressure cooker from which narration emerges in struggle; with Conrad, it is the open space of a hyper-striated colonial world in undoing that is threatening: confined spaces – of the ship, of hotel rooms, of remote islands like Patusan – in fact provide comfort for agents who can never go home again, physically or mentally. The routine of empire keeps being

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<sup>137</sup> Foulke, "Conrad and the Power of Seamanship," 18.

enacted – agents are sent upriver, ivory is collected, voyages keep being undertaken, court processes take place – yet the redeeming idea can only be presented in the form of doubting its existence, but believing in its belief.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari develop the concepts of smooth (nomad) and striated (sedentary) space, where smooth space would be “vectorial, projective, or topological” and “occupied without being counted,” while striated space is “metric” and “counted in order to be occupied;”<sup>138</sup> sedentary space is “striated, by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures, while nomad space is smooth, marked only by ‘traits’ that are effaced and displaced within the trajectory.”<sup>139</sup> Striated, or sedentary, space is exemplified by the forest, the field and the city, while smooth space is exemplified by the desert, steppe, air, and the sea.<sup>140</sup> In the maritime model, the opposition between the two is described as follows:

The smooth and the striated are distinguished first of all by an inverse relation between the point and the line (in the case of the striated, the line is between two points, while in the smooth, the point is between two lines); and second, by the nature of the line (smooth-directional, open intervals; dimensional-striated, closed intervals). Finally, there is a third difference, concerning the surface of space. In striated space, one closes off a surface and “allocates” it according to determinate intervals, assigned breaks; in the smooth, one “distributes” oneself in an open space, according to frequencies and in the course of one’s crossings (*logos* and *nomos*).<sup>141</sup>

In addition, smooth and striated space are not fixed categories but tendencies, constantly being translated or reversed into one another: the sea is singled out by Deleuze and Guattari as the smooth space par excellence, yet described as “the first to encounter the demands of increasingly strict striation,” thus becoming “the archetype of all striations of smooth space: the striation of the desert, the air, the stratosphere.”<sup>142</sup> The city, on the other hand, is a factor of striation of farming space (“*it is the town that invents agriculture*”), yet, at the same time, it is “a force of striation that reimports smooth space, puts it back into operation everywhere, on

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<sup>138</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 399.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 420.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 424; 531; 427.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 530.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 529.

earth and in the other elements, outside but also inside itself.”<sup>143</sup> It is possible to live striated at sea, just like it is possible to live smooth in the city.<sup>144</sup>

For all its straightforwardness, the maritime model of smooth and striated space is still an underutilized reading framework in studies of sea literature. For one, it offers a way of thinking about spatiality beyond binaries such as urban-rural, land-sea or sea-frontier, all of which have saturated modes of thinking about the sea in literature:<sup>145</sup> instead of studying how these function as opposites or which dominates over the other in a given literary period, the smooth/striated paradigm does not deny the difference in element, but brings them together so as to allow for a more fluid view of how different modes of spatialization enable, interact, overlap, or transform into one another. In this respect, for instance, Melville and Conrad are both authors of the city as much as of the sea, which is a potentially useful paradigm in tracing yet another line of comparative study between them beyond this dissertation. Further, Deleuze and Guattari’s approach is a valuable tool for observing the space of the sea, as well as the contact zones related to it – coastal areas, ports, ships – diachronically, in terms of the increasing striation of sea space (development of cartography, navigation methods and devices, global positioning systems; international maritime law) and the transformed global geography which ensued; the subsequent emergence of smooth spaces (the heterotopias of docklands areas, prisons, sailors’ houses, “booble alleys” in ports; beachcombing; flânerie) apart from, as well as within, striated zones; and the continuous flow from one into the other.

Inasmuch as this chapter will allow for generalizations, the biggest distinction between Melville’s and Conrad’s maritime spatiality is that the uncharted spaces on maps that mystified and attracted Conrad were the reality of Melville’s time: in other words, from a Western perspective, Melville’s globe was less striated than Conrad’s – less mapped out, less interconnected, less saturated with competing territorializations. Melville’s Typee village, merely embarking on its first contact with Westerners, or his Tahiti, already captured and

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 531.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 532.

<sup>145</sup> Back in 1931, Watson discussed the “literary convention” of the sailor “established ashore” versus the “practically unchanging mariner of fact” (*Sailor in English Fiction and Drama*, 203). In 1961, T. Philbrick’s opposition of the frontier and the sea in how they both figure in Cooper’s oeuvre (166–202; 260–266) is in line with his time – my point is that the opposition could benefit from an analytical model such as the smooth/striated in order to bring the sea and frontier together instead of separating them, especially since Peck follows the same line of separation in his 2001 analyses of *The Odyssey*, Britain’s sea story, and Cooper (*Maritime Fiction*, 5; 11–16; 27–29; 89–96). More recently, Bender examines the respective roles of the frontier and the sea in American literature (*Sea Brothers*, 16–17); Springer’s edited study opposes sea and land in its discussion of paradigms of voyage literature in the sense of land being more pliable to human influence and the sea serving as a repository of concepts of “eternal motion, boundlessness, and obscuring depth” (18; 20–21); Foulke speaks of the contrast between the sea experience and the land experience and the ensuing “odi et amo” attitude toward the sea evident in sea literature (*The Sea Voyage Narrative*, 2; the expression “*Odi et amo*” was used by Conrad in “Initiation,” *The Mirror of the Sea & A Personal Record* [London: Wordsworth, 2008], 133).

shifting from British to French rule, an emerging contact zone overrun with white flâneurs, beachcombers and renegades, would no longer be accessible to Conrad, his Malaya being a highly developed, complex network of individual enterprise, commerce and settlement by natives and foreigners of different ethnicities and religions, and his Africa resisting to become a contact zone, turning instead into a monument of futility of Western colonialism. While the subjectival stability of Melville's protagonists is correlated with degrees of striation,<sup>146</sup> Conrad's heroes seem to be dealing with a hyper-striated world which is failing Westerners, prompting them to seek out (remaining or new) smooth spaces at sea that could still serve their interests (*Lord Jim*; *Victory*): the space of the ship, which comprises its own heterotopias (such as in "The Secret Sharer"), is one such place.<sup>147</sup> In relation to this, collective territorializations (of nation, family, the ship, sailing as occupation) appear to carry the threat of dissolution for Melville's subjects, who strive for their narratives to be individuated enunciations, which is in line with Samson's note of a link between national and individual legitimation quoted in Section 1.7. Melville's answer to this threatening actualization of the principle of fraternity is to pair his narrators with companions (Toby in *Typee*; Doctor Long John in *Omoo*; Jarl in *Mardi*; Queequeg in *Moby-Dick*), thus positing a minimal community of two against the larger mass collective. Conrad's protagonists are highly individuated, however, unlike Melville's, they espouse loyalty to the "fellowship of the craft" of seafaring, which is a Conradian point of subjectification par excellence. In addition to this, another form of collective identification and point of subjectification emerges in Conrad – that of imperial agency, whereby individuals can perform the often unpalatable work of the empire with the "disinterested self-effacement" that characterizes the bureaucratic ethos of imperial management<sup>148</sup> whilst not wholly subscribing to the ethos of imperialism. While Melville captures his protagonists as not (yet) having reached a degree of subjectification that would formulate an individuated enunciation, Conrad's characters appear to be grappling with a form of post-subjectival threat to the established stability of their enunciation, and this threat is often formulated in terms of spatiality: a colonial home and business headquarters failing to fulfill the dream of a Dutch expat, with Europe as an imagined space of retrograde escape (*Almayer's Folly*); a continent refusing to yield to imperial enterprise (*Heart of Darkness*); the

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<sup>146</sup> Increased Western striation of the space initially inhabited by the other brings more comfort to the Westerner/American, as in *Typee*; *Omoo*; *Mardi*; increased striation of the space of the ship brings forth discomfort and escape tendencies, as in *Typee*; *Omoo*; *Mardi*; *White-Jacket*.

<sup>147</sup> Cesare Casarino uses "The Secret Sharer" as an illustration of the shift in paradigm from a (residual) "heterotopia of the ship" to "the fully emergent heterotopia of the closet" (*Modernity at Sea*, 187).

<sup>148</sup> Daniel Bivona, *British Imperial Literature, 1870–1940: Writing and the Administration of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 29.

panoptic threat of what was formerly a comfortable (sea, coastal) space for Western commerce and private enterprise (*Lord Jim*; “The Secret Sharer”), to name a few.

Different modes of sea voyage exhibit different degrees of inclination towards smooth/striated configurations, and studying their tendencies offers a more layered interpretation of sea narratives. Merchant marine voyages approach striated space, as their mission is to transport goods from one location to another in the shortest time possible, i.e. the line is subjected to points. Navy voyages may have a mission or simply act as a fleet-in-being, thus running the gamut between smooth and striated. Whaling was a mode of a residual, premodern industry, where the ship was also transformed into a factory and the lay system of crew wages distributed earnings across the board, not just among investors.<sup>149</sup> Governed by migration patterns of whales, with provisional departures and returns, and virtually unlimited in duration,<sup>150</sup> aptly named whaling cruises come closest to smooth space – points lie in between the lines, keeping in mind that all navigation is, in fact, striation. Both Melville and Conrad include virtually every type of sailing and sea vessel in their oeuvres, which makes them a rich source of maritime history as well as literature: navy; merchant marine; exploration; whaling; passenger travel; piracy; coastal traffic (postal; cargo; passenger; piloting; tugging); from ocean-going tall ships and steamships to pleasure boats and native canoes. Individually, patterns are detectible in both writers, unsurprisingly correlated with their respective sailing careers: with Melville, the most common, and most central, form of sailing industry is whaling; with Conrad, it is the merchant navy. As a result of choosing these particular sailing industries as dominant in their sea oeuvres, as well as of their respective historical contexts of global striations and territorializations mentioned above, Melville’s sea world registers transitions from smooth into striated, while Conrad’s traces vectors of transformations from (hyper)striated to smooth.

Analyzing the space of the ship in Melville and Conrad will be carried out using the frameworks of M. Foucault (the ship as heterotopia par excellence), C. Casarino – after G. W. von Leibniz (the ship as monad and as fragment of land), and Deleuze and Guattari: in addition to the maritime model of spatiality, my readings will be based in a theory of the ship as machine (of war, of commerce, of individuation, etc.) and the ship as assemblage in its own right – a reterritorialization of previously deterritorialized human and nonhuman bodies and affects into a new compound, which can replace its constituents and/or dissolve them at will.

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<sup>149</sup> See Margaret Creighton, *Rites and Passages: The Experience of American Whaling, 1830–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 16–40.

<sup>150</sup> Whaling voyages could last for up to four years or until the ship’s whale oil capacities were full, according to Creighton, *Rites and Passages*, 6.

In this respect, Melville's sea oeuvre devotes much more narrative volume to describing the actual space of ships featured, including the corresponding distribution of power on board; leaning toward whaling and whalers as the dominant form to begin with, his protagonists seek out a mode of sailing that approaches smooth space, the space of the ship as monad, and as assemblage. Conrad's narratives, on the other hand, tend to treat ships as machines – of war, imperial agency, private enterprise, personal reclusion/escape, even aesthetics; with the exception of *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, they also allocate less narrative volume to detailed descriptions of ship space and power distribution – a distinction that could, among other reasons, be attributed to Melville and other sea authors who already mapped out that space before Conrad.

### **1.9. Conclusion: Towards a specific textuality and narrativity of sea narratives**

For the large part, the narrativity of nineteenth- to early twentieth sea narratives is consistent with that of literary discourse, particularly fiction (this dissertation engages with mostly, though not exclusively, writing of this kind, as exemplified in Melville's and Conrad's work); in addition, it overlaps with the discourse of technical nautical reporting, travel writing, journalism, historiography, and many others: being a minor linguistic system, unlike what we could call standard English, German, Spanish or Croatian, which are open to being utilized along majoritarian as well as minoritarian lines, it is a requirement of sea argot to seek out hosts – modes of enunciation to complement and compensate what it cannot do on its own, as much as it is its service to provide these other types of discourse with nautical terminology. At the same time, Taji's statement in *Mardi* that "One can not relate every thing at once,"<sup>151</sup> placed at the beginning of the Parki episode, is symptomatic of another property of this corpus of texts: I take this sentence to be a simultaneous formulation and frustration of Taji's narrative program, of wanting to narrate all at once, but knowing he cannot, since language is a linear medium, where elements are arranged in succession. The non-linear, hypertextual, encyclopedic aspects of Melville's narration in other texts contribute to this view. In *Lord Jim*, Marlow asks a rhetorical question, "Are not all our lives too short for that full utterance which through all our stammerings is of course our only and abiding intention?"<sup>152</sup> Taken together with the cinematic approach in *The Narcissus*, and Marlow's use of the concept of

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<sup>151</sup> Melville, *Typee, Omoo, Mardi*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and Thomas Tanselle (New York: Library of America, 1982), 723. Incidentally, the chapter's title is "Noises and Portents."

<sup>152</sup> Conrad, *Lord Jim*, ed. Thomas C. Moser (1900; New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1996), 136.

“dream” to describe the frustration of his own narration to his audience in *Heart of Darkness*, since “it is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one’s existence—that which makes its truth, its meaning—its subtle and penetrating essence,”<sup>153</sup> a striving for a totality of narration emerges in the tracing of its obstacles in both authors.

The textuality of sea narratives is equally Protean: narration stops to give way to philosophical meditation, historical chronicle, biological taxonomy, personal journal, navigational tables, geographical statistics, even visual enunciation, such as the hand-drawn diagram of the Round Robin statement produced by the mutinous crew of the *Julia* in Melville’s *Omoo*. At sea, labor and leisure take place in the same space: there is time for everything and escape from nothing. The circle of the horizon moves with the ship and can bring anything into its focus. To explain, convey, and translate the transformative character of the experience of seafaring, which churns out its servicemen and women as “socially and morally unrecognizable,”<sup>154</sup> often requires more than one kind of language, discourse or register. Even more often, it requires a kind of language not yet in existence: both Melville and Conrad are striking examples of this, their texts saying one thing on the surface but another below, hiding their lines of flight in nooks and crannies of ship space and nautical blunders, dutifully performing loyalties of territorialization whilst eliding them at one and the same instant. The narrative expectations and structural templates that they betray in the process, for which they are often chastised, are evidence of this struggle to fit into what is recognizable as genre, yet being highly aware that they are unable to do so. Reading these texts complicitly instead of antagonistically would require a number of things: dissolving certain conventional narrative demands – allowing for multiple focalization and perspectival jumps even in first-person narratives, and recognizing that seemingly incongruous temporal stretches in narration mimic the actual experience of time on board ship; seeing discursive play with preceding textual sources (inexact quotation, obfuscation or fabrication of authority) as productive instead of counterfactual; relinquishing the need to reach a final “truth,” the “dirty little secret” behind the narrative, and letting the astute self-reflexiveness of these texts speak out instead; most importantly, it would require seeing sea narratives not as isolated linear accounts of individual events, but mapping them out as a collective of texts that speak to one another – illuminate, combat, build upon, deny, lie to and steal from one another. Hester Blum suggests thinking along similar lines: “I propose that we consider *Moby-Dick* as

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<sup>153</sup> Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Paul B. Armstrong (1902; New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), 27.

<sup>154</sup> Creighton, *Rites and Passages*, 3.

a commonplace book, an accretion of fragments of sailor experience, which in turn identifies all sea narratives as commonplace books testifying to sailors' collective labor and literary knowledge."<sup>155</sup> Her approach is developed within her framework of reading sea narratives for their materialist vision, but the concept of a commonplace book illustrates the kind of thinking that these narratives invite: reading them as a corpus of exemplarity and catalogue, always-already a multiple, in the sense that "the" concrete ship, voyage, and crew, are at the same time "a" ship, voyage, and crew, permanently torn between their quiddity and their haecceity.

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<sup>155</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 116.

## 2. SPACE OF THE SEA, SPACE OF THE SHIP: SUBJECTIFICATION AND TERRITORY

### 2.1. Introduction: Seamanship as a point of subjectification

This chapter is divided into two broad sections: the first section explores subjectification and territory in Melville and Conrad on the basis of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of smooth and striated space and of S. M. Islam's understanding of the concept of "boundary;" the second section narrows the focus of maritime spatiality on shipboard space as it is articulated in Melville's and Conrad's writing.

Three major theses should be highlighted for this chapter: first, that in Melville's sea oeuvre, seamanship itself is articulated as a threat to subjectivity, as his protagonists avoid identification with collective aspects of its territorialization; in Conrad, seamanship is articulated as a safe-haven subjectification that is also part of the identity game he weaves into his narratives. Second, contrary to Islam's observations on how the concept of "boundary" appears in other travel narratives, sea narratives actually foreground the boundary between the self-same and the other – the nature of the boundary, the crossing of it, the anxiety it causes in terms of subjectification (past experiences, initiations) are elaborated in sea writing by both Melville and Conrad. Finally, when it comes to the gamut between nomadic and sedentary subjectification, Melville's and Conrad's sea writing moves away from traditional literary portrayals of sailors that preceded them: instead of presenting sailors as socially disruptive, marginal, vice-indulging creatures,<sup>156</sup> both authors opt for a more palatable version of seafarers as largely sedentary characters.

### 2.2. Seamanship as deterritorialization and reterritorialization

Every voyage is a deterritorialization, a line of flight and potential dissolution of the subject. In sea narratives, factual or fictional, first-person narration is shorthand for survival. In sea

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<sup>156</sup> It should be emphasized that the shift discussed here is pertinent to literary representations of sailors, and not a reflection of radical social change; for an outline of the latter, see Howell and Twomey's *Jack Tar in History: Essays in the History of Maritime Life and Labour*, as well as Valerie Burton's essay "Whoring, Drinking Sailors': Reflections on Masculinity from the Labour History of Nineteenth-Century British Shipping." As regards the literary representation of sailors, we should remember Watson's remark: "My general conclusion is that the English sailor, and possibly any sailor from Socrates' jurymen to Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, is *much the same sort of person in all ages*; and that differing presentations in literature are chiefly due to changing views as to which of his characteristics are virtues, and which vices. The literary figure in each age represents a more or less *unconscious compromise between the practically unchanging mariner of fact and the literary convention already established ashore*" (*English Sailor in Fiction and Drama*, 203, emphasis mine).

ethos, to be the subject of enunciation means to have lived. Even a deserted or shipwrecked voyage is completed if survived, and text is testimony.

As he prepares to leave the *Pilgrim* for the *Alert* in order to return to Boston sooner, Richard Henry Dana Jr. writes:

One year more or less might be of small consequence to others, but it was everything to me. It was now just a year since we sailed from Boston, and at the shortest, no vessel could expect to get away under eight or nine months, which would make our absence two years in all. This would be pretty long, but would not be fatal. It would not necessarily be decisive of my future life. *But one year more would settle the matter. I should be a sailor for life*; and although I had made up my mind to it before I had my letters from home, and was, as I thought, quite satisfied; yet, as soon as an opportunity was held out to me of returning, and the prospect of another kind of life was opened to me, my anxiety to return, and, at least, to have the chance of deciding upon my course for myself, was beyond measure. Beside that, I wished to be “equal to either fortune,” and to qualify myself for an officer’s berth, and *a hide-house was no place to learn seamanship in*.<sup>157</sup>

Dana captures his own state of mind on the brink of a twofold irreversibility: *one more year* of a voyage that is not homeward-bound would somehow permanently sever his ties with land and he *should be a sailor for life*; secondly, it would thwart his prospects of becoming an officer, because officers are somehow more attached to the realm of land (read: power) than that of the sea.<sup>158</sup>

That is the first deterritorialization. Before the vast sea and distant shores, before the zones of contact that serve as sites of nomadic subjectification, there is the deterritorialization of the space of the ship and the collective of the crew. However, there is also the potential (or, more accurately, the need, if the voyage is to be successful) for reterritorialization, whether in the destination, the voyage, or the ship collective: “There is always a way of reterritorializing oneself in the voyage: it is always one’s father or mother (or worse) that one finds again on

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<sup>157</sup> Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast*, 139–140 (emphasis mine).

<sup>158</sup> Despite T. Philbrick’s assertion that in *Two Years Before the Mast* we hear “the tones of Dana Jr.’s ‘voice from the forecandle’ before they were modified by the accents and emphases appropriate to the courtroom, the lecture hall, and the dining table of the Saturday Club, the sounding boards of his subsequent career” (Introduction to *Two Years Before the Mast*, 8), Dana’s narrative voice was never truly “from the forecandle” any more than Cooper’s was before him or Melville’s after him – each for different reasons, which are discussed in sections 1.2 and 3.4.

the voyage.”<sup>159</sup> As Blum states in her study of American antebellum personal sea narratives: “The tyro’s response to this ‘trackless’ vastness is to turn his eye inward in order to focus on the behavioral codes and internal workings of the ship: its rigging, its routines, its special language [...]. Only after his comfortable mastery of the mechanics of sail is the novice able to manage his fears and to see more than blankness in the sea around him.”<sup>160</sup>

In other words, the novice sailor’s response to the deterritorialization from land and the estrangement of the space of the ship is to reterritorialize himself (fully or only to a certain degree, as is the case with Dana Jr. and some of Melville’s most prominent characters) within the labor and language of seamanship, and within the collective that now makes up his social world. This principle goes beyond first-time seafaring: every time a ship leaves port (navy ships included), land ethos is left behind and a new dynamic of a seafaring collective is formed under the auspices of maritime law (or admiralty law, in navy vessels), running the potential gamut between monadic and nomadic. This is related to my theory of the ship as assemblage, which will be outlined in section 2.7. Return from a journey, according to J. Samson, could be seen as a form of reacculturation, which completes the process of the sailor’s self-definition, especially if it results in a narrative, such as R. H. Dana Jr.’s.<sup>161</sup>

At the same time, the sailor participates in machines, assemblages and territorializations beyond the space of the ship. The ship is caught eternally, and paradoxically, between becoming monad and becoming fragment,<sup>162</sup> between being a self-sufficient entity and an instrument in, and of, larger territorializations: capitalism (in its axiomatic aspect, as harnessing previously deterritorialized flows), nationalism, foreign policy and private enterprise,<sup>163</sup> to name the most relevant ones for this dissertation. As David Kazanjian summarized, between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century European powers consolidated mercantilist policies that solidified territorially-specific economies and contributed to the formation of national bourgeoisie and nation states. Global hegemony was “achieved by the new synthesis of capitalism and territorialism brought into being by French and British mercantilism in the eighteenth century. The U.S. followed suit, vigorously practicing mercantilist measures in a bid to forge a national economy that could compete on a

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<sup>159</sup> Deleuze and Parnet, “On the Superiority,” 38.

<sup>160</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 117.

<sup>161</sup> Samson, “Personal Narratives, Journals, and Diaries,” 96–97.

<sup>162</sup> Casarino, *Modernity at Sea*, 20–21, after G. W. von Leibniz.

<sup>163</sup> As he looks over the map of London before applying for his mission in *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow thinks to himself, “they must need a craft” (8), illustrating the assumption that the business of empire cannot be conducted without sailing vessels.

global scale with the European powers,”<sup>164</sup> especially after the War of 1812, which eliminated some of the remaining British maritime domination, such as impressment and restrictive shipping policies and blockades,<sup>165</sup> and helped consolidate American naval independence.

### 2.3. Space and subjectification in Melville and Conrad

As was discussed in sections 1.6. and 1.7., sailors and different modes of seamanship were a major factor in both British and American nation-building, albeit rooted in different historical backgrounds and perspectives: in the case of Britain, the role of the navy and merchant marine was more organic and incremental, whereas the U.S. seems to have more consciously established its identity around the sea, from the transformational effect of the initial sea experience of reaching the American continent, resulting in the exceptionalism of those who managed to cross the ocean barrier and featured in earliest American sea writings, to the role of the sea during the American Revolution and the War of 1812.<sup>166</sup> Performing the work of empire, nation, and commercial enterprise yet possessing “freedom from national belonging” and gaining little benefit from laboring in the service of these territorializations,<sup>167</sup> sailors were a labor group that was able to develop a literary presence that was self-legitimized and self-reflexive to a striking degree: “Seamen’s access to and participation in a transoceanic literary circulation positioned them as crucial although historically marginalized figures in a world that was witnessing democratic revolution, industrial revolution, the next great age of exploration, and the expansion of the print public sphere.”<sup>168</sup> To this, shifts in navigation and the technology of seamanship should be added, as the nineteenth century saw the gradual and inevitable transition from sail to steam, innovations in naval architecture towards building sturdier, quicker ships, and developments in chronometry (most notably, those by John Harrison) that would lead to a more accurate determining of longitude, the establishment of the Prime Meridian in 1871 and Greenwich as the beginning of the Universal Day in 1884.<sup>169</sup>

With roughly half a century between their active sailing careers and several decades between their most notable literary publications, Melville’s and Conrad’s literary maritime worlds obviously register different amplitudes in terms of geopolitical and shipboard space,

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<sup>164</sup> David Kazanjian, “Mercantile Exchanges,” 151–52, after Arrighi, Braudel, and Wallerstein.

<sup>165</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 48.

<sup>166</sup> Wharton, “The Colonial Era,” 45; Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, 1–9.

<sup>167</sup> Blum, “The Prospect of Oceanic Studies,” 671–72.

<sup>168</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 13.

<sup>169</sup> Robert Hampson, *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad’s Malay Fiction* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 20–21.

but also similarities in that they share a Western, Anglo-American perspective. The greatest difference between Melville's and Conrad's literary maritime spatiality is that Melville's sea world exhibits a lesser degree of striation and competing territorializations – global communications and trade, Western colonization and/or trade domination. His narrator in *Omoo* describes the unease of the whaling crew as they cruise the Pacific:

From obvious prudential considerations the Pacific has been principally sailed over in known tracts, and this is the reason why new islands are still occasionally discovered, by exploring ships and adventurous whalers, notwithstanding the great number of vessels of all kinds of late navigating this vast ocean. Indeed, considerable portions still remain wholly unexplored; and there is doubt as to the actual existence of certain shoals, and reefs, and small clusters of islands vaguely laid down in the charts.<sup>170</sup>

Conrad will have to reach back to the past to capture this last leg of the age of exploration, describing his Dare-devil Harry Whalley's famous background as clipper-captain and explorer during the 1850s as a living relic of a then virtually extinct maritime world in "The End of the Tether." Captain Whalley has fifty years of service under his belt, as well as a Whalley Island and a Condor Reef in the Pacific named after him and his former ship, yet his feats are stated in the past perfect tense;<sup>171</sup> if Melville's Redburn was the new American generation getting lost in the unfamiliar old world of England, then Conrad's Whalley, as well as several others, is a representative of the previous generation of English merchant officers redefining their place in a world of new imperial relations. In "The End of the Tether," and often elsewhere,<sup>172</sup> Conrad registers a rift between old and new generations of sailors: "The piercing of the Isthmus of Suez, like the breaking of a dam, had let in upon the East a flood of new ships, new men, new methods of trade. It had changed the face of the Eastern seas and the very spirit of their life; so that his early experiences meant nothing whatever to the new

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<sup>170</sup> Herman Melville, *Omoo*, 362.

<sup>171</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Youth. Heart of Darkness. The End of the Tether*, Intr. and Notes John Lyon (London: Penguin, 1995), 102–3.

<sup>172</sup> *Lord Jim*, for instance, describes the two kinds of sailors that were Jim's and Marlow's contemporaries: the first one could be summarized as "buccaneers" and "dreamers" or residual adventurers, but the second one – the majority, in fact – is a new generation of weaker sailors who "like [Jim], thrown there by some accident, had remained as officers of country ships. They had now a horror of the home service, with its harder conditions, severer view of duty, and the hazard of stormy oceans. They were attuned to the eternal peace of Eastern sky and sea. They loved short passages, good deck-chairs, large native crews, and the distinction of being white. They shuddered at the thought of hard work, and led precariously easy lives, always on the verge of dismissal, always on the verge of engagement, serving Chinamen, Arabs, half-castes – would have served the devil himself had he made it easy enough" (*Lord Jim*, 12–13).

generation of seamen.”<sup>173</sup> When Melville reaches into the past, he finds slavers (“Benito Cereno”) and British navy mutinies of the late eighteenth century (*Billy Budd*).

It could be said that Melville chronicles different stages of the transition of maritime space from smooth into striated, and that Conrad, in turn, captures reversions from (hyper)striated into smooth on at least two levels: first, the imperial system unraveling as striated contact zones of colonial possession and/or trade push back with resistance;<sup>174</sup> and second, the repercussions of this dissipation on the matrix – Europeans, some of whom are imperial agents, doubting or abandoning their code of conduct, noticing “the changes [that] take place inside,”<sup>175</sup> finding refuge in closed-off spaces still supportive of Western ethos, such as Patusan, a locked hotel room, or the captain’s cabin (*Lord Jim*; “The Secret Sharer”). *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Mardi* and *The Encantadas* are good examples of the treatment of contact zones in the making that is prevalent in Melville’s sea writing, as well as of the archipelago perspectivism that was singled out by Deleuze as characteristic of Melville’s pragmatism: “the affirmation of a world in *process*, an *archipelago*. Not even a puzzle, whose pieces when fitted together would constitute a whole, but rather a wall of loose, uncemented stones, where every element has a value in itself but also in relation to others: isolated and floating relations, islands and straits, immobile points and sinuous lines [...]”<sup>176</sup> Melville himself summarized his archipelago logic in *Mardi*: “But there seemed no danger in the balmy sea; the assured vicinity of land imparting a sense of security,”<sup>177</sup> as well as later in *Moby-Dick*, describing Queequeg’s native island of Kokovoko: “an island far away to the West and South. It is not down in any map; true places never are.”<sup>178</sup> Thus, the most advantageous kind of seafaring for Melville’s protagonists turns out to be that between islands (not coastal continental, or transoceanic), where land and sea make up a zone of infinite potential lines of flight, which is what they crave more than anything: the knowledge that they will be able to indulge their desire to jump from ships to islands and back again, alternately experiencing both as captivity

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<sup>173</sup> Conrad, “End of the Tether,” 103.

<sup>174</sup> Christopher GoGwilt says: “Conrad’s narratives are deeply informed by a vexed response to an emerging European reaction against anticolonialist nationalism” (*The Invention of the West: Joseph Conrad and the Double-Mapping of Europe and Empire* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995], 9).

<sup>175</sup> Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 11.

<sup>176</sup> Gilles Deleuze, “Bartleby,” 86. Compare Deleuze’s earlier essay, “Desert Islands,” in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953–1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina (2002; Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2004), 8–14.

<sup>177</sup> Melville, *Mardi*, 806.

<sup>178</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*, ed. Hershel Parker and Harrison Hayford (1851; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), 59.

should they last too long.<sup>179</sup> Desertion of ships, mutiny, breaking through the wall – without repercussions in terms of the Law, if possible – emerges as the *modus operandi* of Melvillean heroes.

Unlike Melville's island hoppers, and with the exception of Charlie Marlow, Conrad articulates his heroes as dwellers in established contact zones of international trade, placing them in high-pressured situations perceived as containing virtually no escape: Almayer's commercial and private failure in Borneo (*Almayer's Folly*); the failing colonial mission and Kurtz's rescue in Africa (*Heart of Darkness*); Jim's inability to outrun his sin against the code of (British) seamanship (*Lord Jim*); Whalley having to provide for his daughter despite going blind ("The End of the Tether"); Yanko Goorall meeting his death in the English village of his crash landing, as if there were no option of moving elsewhere ("Amy Foster"); the Judea being besieged by virtually every possible crisis at sea, preventing it from reaching Bangkok ("Youth"), to name a few. If the staple response of Melville's characters is flight, Conrad's characters respond by fixating on a single vector, goal, or purpose to an almost obsessive level, taking the form of redemption or damage control, and often including keeping "dirty little secrets:" Almayer's secret plan to escape Borneo and establish himself in Europe with his daughter Nina (*Almayer's Folly*); Willems' hiding from the Macassar scandal in a native village (*An Outcast of the Islands*); James Wait's mysterious illness and previous seamanship conduct (*The Nigger of the Narcissus*); Marlow's rescue of Kurtz and controlling the aftermath of his writing and last words (*Heart of Darkness*); Whalley's blindness kept secret so that he could provide for his daughter Ivy ("The End of the Tether"); arriving in Bangkok at any cost ("Youth"); Marlow keeping Jim's betrayal of sea code from his subsequent employers (*Lord Jim*); the fugitive Leggatt and homoerotic desire hidden in the captain's cabin ("The Secret Sharer").

Insofar as generalizations can be made, both Melville's and Conrad's major characters strive for self-sameness: whether on board ship, voyaging, or dwelling in contact zones, they want the same to return to the same. Contact with the other is articulated as a threat and

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<sup>179</sup> *Typee* begins with an escape from (whaling) ship to island, after perceived captivity on board by the narrator Tommo; it ends with Tommo's escape from the island back to sea, after captivity on the island. *Omoo* picks up where *Typee* left off, with the narrator's escape from the island to a new ship that rescues him, only to leave that ship having been arrested for collective mutiny and engaging in flânerie for the rest of the narrative, before signing up for another whaling cruise. The initial narrative impulse in *Mardi* is given by the narrator's desertion from yet another whaler, and the novel ends in his continuing roving/escape, further pursued by his avengers. The longing to see green blades of grass described in Chapter 1 of *Typee* (11–17) and "the first symptoms of that bitter impatience of our monotonous craft, which ultimately led to the adventures herein encountered" described by the narrator of *Mardi* (664) are endemic of Melvillean narrators and occur in almost all his sea-themed narratives.

potential dissolution for Western subjectivity, and with the exception of Ishmael, which is addressed below, those characters that do “break through the wall” of otherness, like Ahab or Kurtz, serve to reinforce anxiety from the other. As a result, Melville’s heroes strive to articulate their desired subjectification by modifying territorializations (folding the inside back out), while the experience of Conrad’s heroes is that keeping their desired territorializations in place affects their subjectification in turn.

### 2.3.1. Melville: Originals and prophets amended

In “Bartleby; or, The Formula,” Deleuze classifies Melville’s “great characters” into monstrous monomaniacs (Ahab, Claggart, Babo) and saintly hypochondriacs (Cereno, Billy Budd, Bartleby), which he then groups together as “originals” (representatives of “Primary Nature,” seemingly opposed but “perhaps the same creature”), after Melville’s own remarks in Chapter 44 of *The Confidence-Man*.<sup>180</sup> To the originals, Deleuze adds a third type of Melville character, “the prophet:” exemplified by Ishmael, Captain Vere, and the attorney in “Bartleby the Scrivener,” the prophet is “the one on the side of the Law, the guardian of the divine and human laws of secondary nature.”<sup>181</sup> Prophets identify with both poles of the originals, and betray both: “Torn between the two Natures, with all their contradictions, these characters are extremely important, but do not have the stature of the two others. Rather, they are Witnesses, narrators, interpreters.”<sup>182</sup> Their role is “to be the only ones who can recognize the wake that originals leave in the world, and the unspeakable confusion and trouble they cause in it.”<sup>183</sup>

While this holds up for much of Melville’s oeuvre in broad terms, Deleuze’s statements require some qualification, particularly when it comes to Melville’s sea narratives. Not all of Melville’s sea narratives feature originals as characters: up to and including *Moby-Dick*, the narrators tell their own story in the first person. Moreover, these narratorial refractors<sup>184</sup> resist dissolution, or rather, they do not dissolve in the same way that originals

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<sup>180</sup> Deleuze, “Bartleby,” 79–80. Deleuze had already analyzed the concepts of Primary and Secondary Nature as expounded upon by de Sade in *Coldness and Cruelty*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 27 et pass.

<sup>181</sup> Deleuze, “Bartleby,” 80.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>184</sup> I am using the term “narrative refractors” to include the first-person narrators (Tommo in *Typee*; Typee in *Omoo*; Taji in *Mardi*; Redburn and White-Jacket in their respective narratives; Ishmael in *Moby-Dick*), as well as major focalizers or interpretive agents who might not be narrators but drive or direct the course of narrative events (such as Amasa Delano in “Benito Cereno” or Captain Vere in *Billy Budd*). All of these are consistent with Deleuze’s classification of “the prophet” (“Bartleby,” 80). It should also be noted that I use the term

do: to dissolve in becoming one with one's fellow crewmates is an unacceptable form of reterritorialization. If anything, they can be said to dissolve in the act of narration.<sup>185</sup> Finally, there is one pivotal exception to the separation between the prophets and the originals: *Mardi*, which is addressed below.

Without conflating all of Melville's narratorial refractors into a single type, there are striking parallels between them. Their usual post is before the mast (with exceptions such as Amasa Delano being a captain, of course), but they stand out from the rest of the crew by virtue of their education and class, which is the main obstacle to their reterritorialization with the collective. They are acutely sensitive to structures of power, aboard ship as well as on land: when encountering a new social microcosm, they scan the distribution of power within the community at hand. They then either side with the power structures to elevate their status or take over the group; if that fails, they literally jump ship. With the exception of Ishmael, they desert companions as easily as they desert voyages. They are extremely controlling, self-aware narrators, with different degrees of reliability. Melville's sea prophets are constantly looking over their shoulder, evaluating possible threats, garnering as much information as possible and revealing very little (most notably their real names),<sup>186</sup> running away from something rather than pursuing a goal (like Conrad's protagonists do). They are tenuous storytelling authorities at best, which has significant narrative impact and requires an engaged reader to collect what seeps through the cracks of narration, as well as to fill in the gaps of what is (not) said.

In his sermon at the Whaleman's Chapel, Father Mapple describes Jonah:

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differently from Brooks and Warren, who use it in the sense of "point-of-view"/"focalizer" (*Understanding Fiction*, [1943; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959], 663).

<sup>185</sup> Note, for instance, the dissolution in *Redburn*: the title of the novel and the titles of individual chapters are consistently in the third person ("Redburn – His First Voyage;" "He Arrives in Town;" "He Gets to Sea, and Feels Very Bad" et pass.); the narration, however, is rendered entirely in the first person; finally, the very first sentence of the novel is written in the second person, as the address to Redburn by his brother before leaving for New York City and sea life ("Wellingborough, as you are going to sea, suppose you take this shooting-jacket of mine along," 7).

<sup>186</sup> The narrator of *Typee* introduces himself to Typee natives as "Tom," however they dub him "Tommo" upon being unable to pronounce his real name (90–91). The narrator of *Omoo* (a word meaning "rover" in Marquesan, according to Melville's Preface, 326) is the same character as in *Typee*, but he does not go by "Tom" or "Tommo" anymore; he signs his pseudonym as "Typee" in the Round Robin (403) and is dubbed "Paul" by Doctor Long Ghost (573 et pass.). The narrator of *Mardi* never gives his real name but calls himself "Taji" in an effort at apotheosis to save his life from the vengeance of Aleema's sons (826 et pass.). "Call me Ishmael" and "White-Jacket" are self-explanatory and do not require commentary. Wellingborough Redburn of *Redburn* is a poignant exception, providing his full name and family history to an extent unmatched by other Melvillean sea protagonists; this candor will prove ironic as Melville turns Redburn's confessional narrative into an anti-Bildungsroman. Also, see H. Blum's "Melville and Oceanic Studies" in *The New Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville* for a discussion of the "performance of naming" in Melville's writing (23).

[...] with slouched hat and guilty eye, skulking from his God; prowling among the shipping like a vile burglar hastening to cross the seas. So disordered, self-condemning in his look, that had there been policemen in those days, Jonah, on the mere suspicion of something wrong, had been arrested ere he touched a deck. How plainly he's a fugitive! no baggage, not a hat-box, valise, or carpet-bag, – no friends accompany him to the wharf with their adieux.<sup>187</sup>

Taking into account and making adjustments for the specificities of each, Father Mapple's description of Jonah as a fugitive could be applied to virtually all Melville's sea narrators to a substantial degree. Deleuze's classification should be amended in the sense of the generic potential of sea narratives as such, and also as a specificity of Melville's writing: they are not merely prophets, but prophet-fugitives. According to Father Mapple, Jonah was a fugitive from the mission ordained to him by God. Melville's sea fugitives run from their maritime missions, from their families' and their own past, from crimes they have committed, and from most forms of collective reterritorialization – family, ship crew, nationality – without a clear articulation of what it is they are running *to*, except that it is their next island, next whaling cruise, next hiding place.

Melville's sea fugitives also include several characters beyond his narrators, who hide or fabricate their background in order to travel light in terms of subjectification and territory: Toby, Doctor Long Ghost, Harry Bolton.<sup>188</sup> In Chapter 61 of *Mardi*, the newly self-proclaimed Taji asks King Media to “take means to fix” the mysterious robed figure lurking about the island of Odo, because he feels threatened by its presence, as if it were “a spirit, forever prying into my soul.”<sup>189</sup> King Media informs Taji that “by courtesy, incognitoes [sic] were sacred.”<sup>190</sup> This is a minor chapter in the intricate fabric of *Mardi* as well as in Melville's sea oeuvre, however this “sacredness of incognitos” appears to be a frequent, if not prevalent, desired state of Melvillean sea fugitives:<sup>191</sup> to craft one's own self-same subjectification, whose main output will be an individuated enunciation, forged by eliding the territorializations that one perceives as threatening.

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<sup>187</sup> Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 49.

<sup>188</sup> Melville, *Typee*, 44; *Omoo*, 336; *Redburn* 237–245; 260–266, respectively.

<sup>189</sup> Melville, *Mardi*, 848.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Redburn says: “But even sailors are not blind to the sacredness that hallows a stranger; and for a time, abstaining from rudeness, they only maintained toward my friend a cold and unsympathizing civility” (Redburn, 278).

### 2.3.2. Conrad: Agency, seamanship as points of subjectification

Conrad's sea protagonists also engage in a process of simultaneous crafting and elision, however, these subjectival maneuvers are governed by different vectors. Two main points of subjectification emerge from Conrad's sea narratives: first, that of (Western, imperial, commercial) agency, and second, that of the labor of seamanship – Conradian characters are defined by their mission, and by their profession. Obviously, a major issue in scoping out Conrad's oeuvre for connections between subjectification and territory is going to be the overlap between the two: good agents clearly need to be good sailors, but to what extent is it possible to keep the labor of sailing intact from the tainted business of empire – and why would one want or need to? How does this overlap enable Conrad to articulate ideological ambivalence, and what are its implications for individual agency, including individuated enunciations?

In *British Imperial Literature, 1870-1940: Writing and the Administration of Empire* Daniel Bivona provides a remarkable account of the rise of an ideology of bureaucracy in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Europe, specifically Britain. After the Victorian era had celebrated laissez-faire individualism and exhibited distrust of “large-scale organization in the public sphere,”<sup>192</sup> it also came to recognize that growing industrialism and expansion of empire required more efficient management and administration, as well as diminishing individual autonomy.<sup>193</sup> As imperial competition with other European powers accelerated toward the end of the century,<sup>194</sup> so did the establishment of a “professional managerial elite” of imperial service.<sup>195</sup> Tracing complex historical factors which contributed to the emergence of this ideology, Bivona discusses, among others, Lord Cromer's concept of “Indirect Rule:” “an archetype of colonial rule which lays stress on secret manipulation, indirect suggestion, and the exercise of power in such a way as to make it invisible in its effects: power no one has exercised can be seen as power exercised, somehow, by the victim of power.”<sup>196</sup> Cromer's ideal administrator is “the agent who conceptualizes the goals of imperial expansion while portraying himself as mere instrument of historical forces larger

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<sup>192</sup> Bivona, *British Imperial Literature*, 11.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–39.

<sup>194</sup> By “European/British imperialism,” I mean to include the fluctuation in Conrad's discourse between these two in *Lord Jim*, as described by GoGwilt: *Lord Jim* contains “a powerful connection between the decline of the British Empire and the rise of the West. With the failure to consolidate a coherent ideology of the British Empire, the idea of ‘the West’ emerged to replace and resituate a range of assumptions about race, nation, class, and gender” (*The Invention of the West*, 88).

<sup>195</sup> Bivona, *British Imperial Literature*, 4.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

than himself,” as “Central to this emerging bureaucratic ethos is the principle that disinterested self-effacement is its own reward, even if the evidence of actual rule makes imperial administrators seem anything but self-effacing background figures.”<sup>197</sup>

Bivona’s insistence on recognizing the contradictory subjectivity of the imperial agent is highly informative in reading Conrad with Deleuze and Guattari; the European bureaucrat, Bivona notes, holds several dual subject positions: that of agent and instrument; author and character; perpetrator and victim; and master and slave.<sup>198</sup> Cromer’s concept of invisible management demanded a self-sacrificial, self-abnegating ethos of its agents, thus playing into the traditional renunciatory ethos of middle-class Victorians yet allowed for celebration of individual enterprise and heroism to continue, because it took form as “the bureaucratization of charisma, the systematization of personalized rule.”<sup>199</sup>

In addition to Bivona’s reading of Charlie Marlow as a “bureaucratic functionary”<sup>200</sup> or member of this professional managerial elite, Captain Ford in *Almayer’s Folly*, Kurtz and all the operatives at the three African stations in *Heart of Darkness*, Tom Lingard in the Lingard trilogy (*Almayer’s Folly*; *The Rescue*; *An Outcast of the Islands*), Captain Brierly, Jim, Stein, and the lieutenant of the Avondale in *Lord Jim*, can all be identified as performing imperial work in the field in different capacities as administrators, traders, sailors, explorers, treasure seekers, ship-chandlers, and possessing a self-awareness of the privileges this brings them, as well as of their accountability to this territorialization. The business of agency, then, enabled its operatives to nominally elide their subjectivity by placing it under the auspices of empire, commerce, or “enlightenment” (such as insisted upon by Marlow’s aunt), but effectively allowed them free reign in the periphery, as long as the effects of their work contributed to maintaining the self-sameness of the metropolis.<sup>201</sup> Agency as a point of subjectification is territorialization within an empty signifier, which is, in effect, an identity game: agency in the name of something/someone else, be it empire, the fellowship of the craft, spying, or anarchy.

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 27; 29.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 7; 33.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>201</sup> The stuff of imperial romance, this is exemplified in Conrad by the arrogance of Western officers manning the three African stations, as well as by the headquarters not caring about Kurtz’s methods as long as ivory keeps being harvested, in *Heart of Darkness*; by the ease with which European men escape responsibility in *Lord Jim*: the simple disappearance of the skipper of the Patna after the incident with no accountability, the fact that Jim’s is a show trial and that the paternal care of Marlow and Stein can procure him an entire playground such as Patusan to bury his secret; the deus-ex-machina appearance and disappearance of Tom Lingard throughout the Lingard trilogy, to name a few.

Conrad's explicit insistence, in fiction and in personal writing, on adhering to seamanship as identity might seem rather obvious, or unproblematic. The idea of sea labor as redemptive or leading to salvation is longstanding in Conradian scholarship: it is featured in Jerry Allen's and Jean-Aubry's biographies; C. F. Burgess identifies "the therapeutic and redeeming nature of work" as a central theme in Conrad; P. Bruss holds that it saves Conrad from the metaphysical paralysis experienced by many of his contemporaries.<sup>202</sup> For M. Cohen, work at sea is even "The fundamental subject matter at issue in sea fiction's travels" in general.<sup>203</sup> However, we need only remember Dana Jr.'s dread of "becoming a sailor for life" and the staunch resistance against identifying with their fellow crewmates felt by Melville's sea fugitives: seamanship does not articulate itself easily or naturally as a point of subjectification, and should not be presumed unquestionable even in sea-themed narratives.

In Conrad's writing, seamanship is articulated as a point of subjectification on its own, as well as in conjunction with the agency of empire, without unambiguous separations. In his reading of *Lord Jim*, Bivona maintains a distinction between what he calls "the seaman's code" and "the white man's code" which governs the behavior of European men in the non-European world,<sup>204</sup> but he also suggests that there is a relationship between the two, indicated by the parallelism between Jim's conduct on board the *Patna* and on the island of Patusan: "the novel suggests not only that ship and island are metaphorically equivalent, but that an analogous equivalence holds between the rules meant to govern white behavior in both places – the marine officer's code and the code of the 'white leader.'"<sup>205</sup> Robert Hampson also speaks of "professional" concerns held by Marlow and Captain Brierly versus the European position of authority in the larger colonial sphere.<sup>206</sup> When Marlow embarks on rescuing Jim, he will want to rescue him both as a British merchant marine officer and as a white man in an Eastern contact zone.

At the same time, it is clear that in Conrad's maritime oeuvre, including its documentation with pathos in *The Mirror of the Sea* and *A Personal Record*, fidelity to the sea takes precedence over any other identity. It is an instrument of sanity in a world threatening to dissolve the subjectification of "white leaders:" focusing on the technical aspects of sailing

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<sup>202</sup> Jerry Allen, *The Sea Years of Joseph Conrad*, (New York: Doubleday, 1965); Gérard Jean-Aubry, *The Sea Dreamer: A Definitive Biography of Joseph Conrad*, trans. Helen Sebba (New York: Doubleday, 1957); C. F. Burgess, *The Fellowship of the Craft: Conrad on Ships and Seamen and the Sea* (Port Washington, NY, and London: Kennikat Press, 1976), 32; Paul Bruss, *Conrad's Early Sea Fiction: The Novelist as Navigator* (London: Associated University Press, 1979), 27.

<sup>203</sup> M. Cohen, "Traveling Genres," 486.

<sup>204</sup> Bivona, *British Imperial Literature*, 113; 115; 118–19.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>206</sup> Hampson, *Cross-Cultural Encounters*, 131.

helps Marlow in Africa and the crew of the *Narcissus* survive hostile environments; it is a true, honest point of identification for characters like Singleton and Allistoun, Captain Whalley, and even Marlow, due to the uniquely nomadic nature of his seamanship; most importantly, sailing is a haven from the moral and metaphysical implications of imperial agency, which might be verbalized in vague terms like the “sordid inspiration of [the] pilgrimage” of the *Narcissus* but is nonetheless pervasive throughout Conrad’s writing. In the face of metaphysical paralysis mentioned by Bruss or the unpalatable context of performing the work of imperialism, one can always focus on being “merely” a sailor. Thus, Captain Whalley is able to use seamanship as a moral loophole, scorning commercial capitalism whilst serving as a merchant navy officer:

In his rank of life he had that truly aristocratic temperament characterized by a scorn of vulgar gentility and by prejudiced views as to the derogatory nature of certain occupations. For his own part he had always preferred sailing merchant ships (which is a straightforward occupation) to buying and selling merchandise, of which the essence is to get the better of somebody in a bargain – an undignified trial of wits at best.<sup>207</sup>

The routine of daily labor, rigorous discipline and strict distribution of power on board ship are structured in such a way as to eliminate, or at least significantly reduce, the necessity of moral choice and thereby the potential risk of the human element at sea. Seamanship is thus particularly fitting to be absorbed within the striations of imperial administration, for both are articulated as a form of selfless service, agency divested of the subjectivity of the agent, protocol in lieu of responsibility. What kind of action remains, then, after subjectivity is nominally erased? Sailors and servicemen roam Conrad’s seas, Manichean cities, and *loci horridi* in evidence that Conradian protocol is anything but comforting, streamlined salvation. Bivona says: “Conrad was aware, to an unusual extent, of how bureaucracies institutionalize historical metanarratives which then, in circular fashion, come to serve their own professional interests. Conrad’s novels are thus about how professionals justify what they do by casting themselves in heroic roles in self-serving historical narratives.”<sup>208</sup> Or rather, this is the premise with which Conrad’s novels start, only to have this ethos turned inside out: his characters’ commitment to different vectors of action, be it their obsessions, their political or

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<sup>207</sup> Conrad, “End of the Tether,” 112.

<sup>208</sup> Bivona, *British Imperial Literature*, 6.

rescue missions or their voyages, is an attempt to deflect metaphysical paralysis and render truth performative. Empire and seamanship are, then, in one and the same instant, narrative lines of flight available to Europeans in eschewing accountability to non-European territorializations, as well as the space for individuated enunciation of Conrad's characters.

#### **2.4. Crossing boundaries in sea narratives: Tests of the sea, encounters with the other**

Studying textual examples from Dante to Lévi-Strauss, S. M. Islam analyzes how crossing boundaries between the same and the other is treated in Western discourse. He notes how, in the prologue to *The Divine Comedy*, Dante describes himself before going into the forest, followed by his emergence on the other side, in the circle of hell; the actual passage through the forest, the threshold, is omitted and given only in the trace of the experience of disorientation.<sup>209</sup> The crossing of the boundary, Islam then notes reading Lévi-Strauss, is indicated only by announcing the discrepancy between the same and the other that the traveler encounters: "Since a traveller cannot really move from point to point except through ellipsis, s/he creates her/his passage by means of the discourse of difference. Hence, a traveller who moves in gridded space can only move in a discursive space by articulating difference."<sup>210</sup>

Bearing in mind that difference is constitutive of meaning and identity in structuralist thought, it is illustrative to read travel literature, and specifically sea narratives, with (and against) this paradigm. Firstly, difference is what makes up the narrative capital of travel literature as such: not only does registering difference from the known and the self-same constitute evidence that travel has taken place, but travel cannot be said to have occurred at all *unless* difference has been registered; it is also desirable to present difference discursively in such a way that will generate a more substantial narrative effect – travel narratives live and die by the quantity and quality of difference produced.<sup>211</sup> From this follows the question of how this difference is presented, depending on the extent to which the *sujet d'énonciation* is willing to have their self-sameness dismantled.

Secondly, sea narratives exhibit a specificity when it comes to the discursive treatment of boundaries: counter to the model extracted by Islam, instead of being omitted and only

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<sup>209</sup> Sayed Manzurul Islam, *The Ethics of Travel: From Marco Polo to Kafka* (Manchester and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 67.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>211</sup> Compare Bakhtin: "Exoticism presupposes a deliberate *opposition of what is alien to what is one's own*, the otherness of what is foreign is emphasized, savored, as it were, and elaborately depicted against an implied background of one's ordinary and familiar world," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 101.

registered after the fact, crossing thresholds is in fact foregrounded in sea narratives, as various rites of passage and subsequent tests – ethical, social, those of technical skill, to name just a few – make up the very stuff of the genre. Points and lines, to use Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, are markers of movement – of becoming, of territorialization or deterritorialization, of survival – if one makes it to the next harbor: sea narratives make a point of defining boundaries, of describing in detail what they consist of and how the process of going through them looks and feels like, and of narrating their crossing repeatedly, in multiple texts; there are never enough first-time sailors and first commands; leaving one ocean for the next, usually through the gauntlet of one of the Capes, is never the same experience. I will address two such boundaries as they are featured in Melville’s and Conrad’s sea oeuvres briefly in this chapter, and two others in greater detail: the first two are initiations and geographical crossings, and the latter two are articulations of limits of anthropomorphic minimum and of contact zones. The first two are related to the sphere of seafaring as such – the spatiality and labor of sailing, while the latter two are related to how Melville’s and Conrad’s sea narratives treat the encounter with the other.

The narrative paradigm of sea initiation is a commonplace: R. Foulke provides an outline in his *The Sea Voyage*, with examples from Apollonius of Rhodes through Melville and Conrad to Jack London and Stephen Crane. He also discusses different levels of complexity of the initiation pattern, from young tyros reaching seamanship adulthood by being tested at sea, to what Foulke calls the “dark initiation,” the common archetype of which is the descent (or “death journey” as Leo Gurko refers to it in his study of *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, or “night journey” as Albert Guerard calls it in his reading of “The Secret Sharer”).<sup>212</sup> In addition to Foulke, maritime initiations could also be said to include advances in rank, which is a model that Conrad exploited very well, as exemplified in “Youth,” where Marlow is not a novice sailor but taking on his first second-command, as well as in “The Secret Sharer” and *The Shadow-Line*, both narratives of their protagonists’ first command. Finally, as was suggested above, being an initiated sailor does not necessarily mean internalizing the ethos of seamanship: despite building his characters into seasoned sailors, Melville also invested many of them with resistance to “becoming a sailor for life” in the sense of reterritorializing with their crews. In Deleuzian terms, it could be said that with Conrad’s sea writing, seamanship as ethos was expanded to the level of subjectification,

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<sup>212</sup> Foulke, *Sea Voyage Narrative*, 11–12; Leo Gurko, “Death Journey in The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus,’” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 15, no. 4 (Mar 1961): 301–311; Albert J. Guerard, “The Journey Within,” *Conrad the Novelist* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958): 14–53.

whereas Melville (with the rare exception of Ishmael) tended to articulate it as a territorialization to be resisted. The trope of initiation is, finally and paradoxically, formulated as a boundary, a clear demarcation that one can only be on the inside or outside of, despite the fact that it is evidently a process of gradual accrual of maritime expertise.

Part and parcel of being initiated and/or tested at sea is, obviously, the variety of geographical crossings that have transformative effects on the individual and the collective: landfalls and departures, which mark the perceived passages between land and sea; weathering the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn; passing through the Torres strait or the Strait of Macassar; circumnavigating the world; “discovering” new territories. One dimension of these crossings is quite literal, involving actual, completed movement through space or between points; it enables the charting of maps, territories and voyages. Another, simultaneous dimension is related to the discursive nature of movement, where space becomes spatiality. As Islam notes, Conrad had an expert understanding of the discursive nature of movement: in *The Mirror of the Sea*, Conrad discusses “landfalls” and “departures” not as simple spatial arrivals or goings away of a ship, but as designations of intricate human-governed processes combining navigation, sea argot and mapping as observations are taken of land and the ship’s noon position at sea, and then recorded with pencil-crosses on the ship’s track-chart. Conrad also explains the deep significance that weathering the most challenging capes has for sailors – marking the crossing between oceans/continents and usually involving exertions that earn sailors badges of seamanship honor, as well as the implicit hierarchy among these crossings in sea ethos:

It was somewhere near the Cape – *the* Cape being, of course, the Cape of Good Hope, the Cape of Storms of its Portuguese discoverer. And whether it is that the word ‘storm’ should not be pronounced upon the sea where the storms dwell thickly, or because men are shy of confessing their good hopes, it has become the nameless cape – the Cape *tout court*. The other great cape of the world, strangely enough, is seldom if ever called a cape. We say, ‘a voyage round the Horn’; ‘we rounded the Horn’; ‘we got a frightful battering off the Horn’; but rarely ‘Cape Horn’, and, indeed, with some reason, for Cape Horn is as much an island as a cape. The third stormy cape of the world, which is the Leeuwin, receives generally its full name, as if to console its second-rate dignity. These are the capes that look upon the gales.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Conrad, *Mirror of the Sea*, 90.

Conrad's description of weathering *the Cape* in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* could be described as a classic scene of the test of seamanship in the genre, against which all others could well be measured, as well as an ideal-type illustration of the kind of sailing ethos upheld in Conrad's sea narratives.<sup>214</sup> In summary, the *Narcissus* undergoes three days of heavy squalls, which cause the ship to topple over on its side; the crew have no choice but to tie themselves to the bulwarks, weather the storm and wait for wind to put sail back on the ship; as soon as the wind picks up, Captain Allistoun and Mr. Baker, the chief mate, get the crew to work and the ship pulls through.<sup>215</sup> There are several aspects of this episode that I want to highlight: firstly, weathering the Cape, like any of the transformative geographical crossings mentioned above, is a crisis of seamanship. It is a deflection from the norm of sea labor, discipline and the distribution of power on board ship and a threat to the cohesiveness of the crew. In *The Narcissus*, as well as elsewhere, this is evident in sanctioned breakdowns of spatial organization, as well as sanctioned disruptions of discipline and hierarchy: Belfast, a fore-castle-man, will be rescued by the chief mate and not by one of his equals, as might be expected (39); the chief mate will also crawl the main deck on all fours to check if the crew are fastened well – and to discipline/motivate Knowles for stealing a piece of tackle (46–47); instead of merely issuing orders, the captain will untie himself from safety and perform one of the first maneuvers to wear ship after the storm: “He could be seen casting the lee main braces off the pins while the backwash of waves splashed over him” (53); having already been moved from the fore-castle into the sick bay improvised for him in the waist of the ship – a breach of spatial etiquette – James Wait will be rescued from drowning in the closed-off sick bay by his fellow crewmates and moved further aft, on the poop where it was safest, but which is also the seat of command and where common sailors are usually not allowed access (44–45).

Secondly, what saves the ship is the precise insistence on surface labor and loyalty to the craft of seamanship that was mentioned above as typical of Conrad: no one leaves the deck during the harsh weather, including Captain Allistoun and the off-duty watch when they are told to go below (30; 33–35); the chief mate, Mr. Baker, makes several rounds of checking up on his men and encouraging them (46–48); Singleton remains at the helm for over thirty

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<sup>214</sup> Conrad, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus,"* ed. Robert Kimbrough (1897; New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979), 16–84. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

<sup>215</sup> Denis Murphy has provided a remarkable explanation for nonspecialist readers, which is in effect a translation of Conrad's technical argot, of what happens to the *Narcissus* in Chapter 3 of the novel, and what maneuvers are undertaken to right the ship after the squall, in his essay “Seamanship in Chapter Three of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*,” written for the 1979 Norton Critical Edition.

hours, forgotten by everyone and steering in silence (55); the cook brings rounds of water to everyone, and even coffee later, which is deemed a small miracle and great team-builder in the harsh weather (38; 51). As the wind picks up, the captain commands the chief mate to drive the crew to work immediately: “Get sail on her as soon as you can. This is a fair wind. At once, sir – don’t give the men time to feel themselves. They will get done up and stiff, and we will never . . . We must get her along now” (55). The entire Cape scene is, in fact, presented as a narrative interstice where the depiction of the social microcosm of the *Narcissus* – crew dynamic, interaction and power play – gives way to technical descriptions of ship maneuvers, contracting the horizon quite literally (“The horizon seemed to have come on all sides within arm’s length of the ship,” 34) to an immediacy of action.

Finally, in an ideal-type episode like this, the crisis of seamanship serves to reinforce the fragment-territorialization of the ship, binding it to land-based interests and forming/maintaining docile bodies: Chapter 4 of the novel will see the crew settle back into their old positions, with a reinforced sense of self-discipline and comradeship as the fore-castle is cleaned up (58–59); if Wait and Donkin were able to stir up their crewmates and agitate them against the officers before the Cape, after the transformative crossing Donkin’s provocations to refuse duty are met with a collective dismissal, as sailors do not wish to engage in mutiny and focus on returning to London and getting paid instead (65–67); the Captain will have Wait ordered off deck until the end of the voyage (73–74), and the belaying pin incident, instigated by Donkin after Wait’s punishment, will provide Allistoun with an opportunity to finally quell the incipient mutiny with a disciplinarian speech (76; 83–84). It is evident that the averted threat has strengthened the authority of the Captain and that the initially disruptive elements – Wait and Donkin – turn out to have a unifying effect on the crew.

This kind of attention to shipboard immediacy is not typical of Conrad, including detailed sea argot, technical maneuvering and crew dynamic. It could be said that most of his other sea narratives tend to develop their stories as individuated enunciations, without much technical background or explanation, but that *The Mirror of the Sea* serves as a palimpsest or codebook of sea ethos for Conrad’s readers. In comparison, Melville’s sea narratives have a higher tendency to be proper anatomies of shipboard space.

Chapters 24–28 of Melville’s *White-Jacket*, published 47 years before Conrad’s *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, offer an interesting comparison: the cape is Cape Horn, and the vessel is not a twenty-odd-manned English merchant ship but the 500-manned U.S. navy frigate, the *Neversink*; the voyage is likewise homeward-bound, and the ship undergoes forty-eight hours of calm at sea, as well as a dangerous lean to one side similar to that of the

Narcissus. Instantly, a difference between the two episodes is evident in the immediacy of perspective of Conrad's novel versus the more distant, encyclopedic, *ab-ovo* approach by Melville: in Chapter 24, titled "Introductory to Cape Horn,"<sup>216</sup> Melville's narrator provides background information as to how the Cape was named after Schouten's seventeenth-century sailing vessel; hypothetical scenarios of rounding the Horn, commanded by inexperienced to more experienced captains; a list of historical and travel narratives describing the passage, including a recommendation of Dana Jr.'s *Two Years Before the Mast* as a must-read on the subject. He also provides commentary on the current degree of striation of the space of the sea: "At the present day the horrors of the Cape have somewhat abated. This is owing to a growing familiarity with it; but, more than all, to the improved condition of ships in all respects, and the means now generally in use of preserving the health of the crews in times of severe and prolonged exposure,"<sup>217</sup> followed by a prediction of the future of the Panama Canal (the building of which did not start until 1881).

The difference in perspective in the Horn episode is consistent with Melville's insistence on the vastness of the frigate and its increased division of ship space and time as compared to his descriptions of whalers and merchant ships in other narratives: despite the fact that this is the largest, most populated vessel in Melville's sea oeuvre (the narrator compares it to Noah's Ark, considering all the animals taken on board for provisions, 464), the experience of rounding the Horn is still narrowed to the first-person narration of White-Jacket, and reads like an individual experience, not a collective one, underscoring White-Jacket's isolation from the crew. Unlike Conrad's sailors being scattered all over the main deck in the storm and clinging to the ship with all their might, to Melville's man-of-war'smen, orders to man their assigned posts in the severe cold after rounding the Horn feel like incarceration, even in the open space aloft in the ship: "For some of us, however, it was like pacing in a dungeon; for, as we had to keep at our stations – some at the halyards, some at the braces, and elsewhere – and were not allowed to stroll about indefinitely, and fairly take the measure of the ship's entire keel, we were fain to confine ourselves to the space of a very few feet" (475). Furthermore, the experience of a man-of-war'sman is such that he is alienated from his labor (as *Moby-Dick* demonstrates, the opposite is the case with whaling): while Conrad's merchantmen are immersed in every physical aspect of their Cape episode, White-

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<sup>216</sup> As an illustration of Melville's approach in describing the boundary of Cape Horn as a deliberate process and not a singular event, chapters 24 through 28 are entitled: "Introductory to Cape Horn;" "The Dog-Days Off Cape Horn;" "The Pitch of the Cape;" "Some Thoughts Growing Out of Mad Jack's Countermanding His Superior's Order;" and "Edging Away."

<sup>217</sup> Melville, *White-Jacket*, 452. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

Jacket's crewmates are described as removed from the observational (which would also be conducive to metageographical<sup>218</sup>) aspect of this complex maneuver and have to be told when they actually round the Horn: "Though we had seen no land since leaving Callao, Cape Horn was said to be somewhere to the West of us; and though there was no positive evidence of the fact, the weather encountered might be accounted pretty good presumptive proof" (469).

A compelling predecessor to Conrad's *Narcissus* episode in terms of shipboard discipline as well, rounding the Horn in *White-Jacket* also serves to reinforce the authority of commanding officers: firstly, an incident involving a belaying pin used as a weapon among the fore-top-men (thus not against the captain, as in *The Narcissus*, but still using the same tool) during the Horn episode is an occasion for disciplining culprits, strengthening the power of officers. Secondly, similarly to *The Narcissus*, there is a sanctioned breakdown of the chain of command as Mad Jack, a beloved junior lieutenant and natural-born sailor contrasted with the genteel and unreliable Selvagee in Chapter 8, takes command during the dangerous gale that almost tips the ship over in Chapter 26. Melville's narrator provides elaborate technical details of maneuvers and the protocol in such situations: instead of the First Lieutenant taking the trumpet from Mad Jack, Mad Jack remains in charge of the main deck, issues orders (described in detail by *White-Jacket*) contrary to those given by Captain Claret, and the crew willingly follow, saving the ship in the end.

In a novel where every breach of protocol is immediately met with officers donning their disciplinarian "quarterdeck faces," where administering discipline is not just punishment but a biopolitical ritual aimed at producing docile bodies, a crisis geographical crossing like rounding the Horn is one occasion where order is allowed to be disrupted – and the disruption is still perpetrated by an officer, not by a lower-ranking sailor. *White-Jacket*, who speaks from "below deck" and does not share Conrad's ethos of quarterdeck complacency, will use this to emphasize that Mad Jack is never reprimanded for his trespass – without criticizing Mad Jack, but criticizing the commanding officers for their arbitrary enforcement of the Articles of War (464). Finally, *White-Jacket*'s commentary on the universal and relatable quality of Cape Horn, including its metaphorical resonance as an obstacle in life, explains why geographical crossings are such an important element in sea narratives, translatable to other walks of life as well:

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<sup>218</sup> Martin W. Lewis and Kären Wigen define metageography as "the set of spatial structures through which people order their knowledge of the world: the often unconscious frameworks that organize studies of history, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, or even natural history" (*The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997], ix). I use the term throughout this dissertation to emphasize the foregrounding of the process of spatial conceptualization, as opposed to spatial organization as its product/result, that occurs in both Melville's and Conrad's sea-themed narratives.

But, sailor or landsman, there is some sort of a Cape Horn for all. Boys! beware of it; prepare for it in time. Gray-beards! thank God it is passed. And ye lucky livers, to whom, by some rare fatality, your Cape Horns are placid as Lake Lemans, flatter not yourselves that good luck is judgment and discretion; for all the yolk in your eggs, you might have foundered and gone down, had the Spirit of the Cape said the word. (462)

Circumnavigations, capes, straits and their variations are important because they are not one-time initiations; there is a fatalism to these crossings because every encounter with them might as well be the first, or the last, regardless of experience or expertise: this is the specific coexistence of formulaicity and haecceity of sea narratives.

As we move beyond the labor of seafaring and its locus of the ship at sea, we expand the horizon of reading to include interactions between the world of sailing and different territories: newly discovered islands or regions, established or establishing contact zones<sup>219</sup> (which may even include shipboard space as an area where different cultures meet and network, as in *Mardi* or *White-Jacket*), territorializations of commerce, nations, religions. Sea narratives are specific in that every voyage is a potential line of flight, a potential dissolution of the subject, with multiple potential vectors: as described earlier, the first one is the dissolution and reterritorialization in the collective of the ship crew – a stable and firm point of subjectification for the majority of Conrad’s main characters, but a point of subjectification resistance for a number of Melville’s protagonists. A second, rather obvious, dissolution is that of going native – a Western anxiety par excellence because it entails absolute deterritorialization from the white man code, featured in both Melville and Conrad, for instance in *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Mardi*, *Heart of Darkness* and “Falk.” A third potential dissolution, which could be described more as a creation of smooth movement within a strictly striated space of different, often conflicting, territorializations is the liminal subjectification of taboo kanakas, flâneurs, beachcombers, buccaneers, pilots, brothel-keepers etc. – characters who find or forge a middle ground where they do not belong to a strict identity (anymore) but are able to navigate multiple codes of competing territorializations, or, in other words, who are able to cross boundaries between different semantic fields. Melville and Conrad differ greatly in this respect, as these varieties of smooth subjectification appear more often in Melville’s

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<sup>219</sup> The term “contact zone” was coined by Mary Louise Pratt, and defined as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (“Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession* 91 [New York: MLA, 1991]: 34).

narrative worlds-in-striation (*Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Mardi* abound with them), while Conradian contact zones tend to approach Frantz Fanon's "Manichean" towns<sup>220</sup> – spaces of organized coexistence/business/dwelling, subdivided by identity (good examples would be *Almayer's Folly*; *Lord Jim*; "The End of the Tether;" with *Heart of Darkness* as an antithesis in the sense of representing a failed/failing attempt at building a Manichean colonial space).

Next, I will discuss how Melville's and Conrad's sea narratives treat contact with the other, focusing on two aspects: the exploration of anthropomorphic minimum, and the functioning of contact zones in both writers. Nowhere in Melville's sea oeuvre is the anxiety of going native explored as in his first sea-themed narrative, *Typee* (1846). Based on Melville's own experience of deserting a whaler and spending time on the South Pacific island of Nuku Hiva in 1842, its plot is that of the first-person narrator Tommo deserting the American whaler the *Dolly* with his crewmate Toby, reaching the native village of Typee on Nukuheva island, being held captive by the villagers and being rescued from the island by the *Julia*, an Australian whaler.

*Typee* could be read as a poignant illustration of the paradigm of post-Enlightenment European travelers seeking not to encounter the other, but to capture him/her in representation, described in Islam's *Ethics of Travel*:

The knowledge through anonymous vision, the diffusion of power through light, is the passion of the en-light-en-ment. The subjects of the panopticonic regime, grown normal in the saturation of light, become the very eye-machine themselves when they cross the frontier of the state into the spaces of other states, nations, or cultures. Driven by a scopic mania, the cross-cultural 'travellers' of post-Enlightenment Europe simply frequent other places to shed light: to record, to represent, and to produce knowledge.<sup>221</sup>

This statement should be qualified when it comes to Melville's Tommo as narrator and focalizer: Tommo is not a European traveler, explorer or marine officer on a mission to investigate faraway places and claim them, as territory or in discourse, for his mother/

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<sup>220</sup> Frantz Fanon writes: "The colonial world is a world cut in two" (*The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington [1961; New York: Grove Press, 1963], 38); he then comments on the differences between the settlers' town and the town belonging to the colonized: "The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for of the two terms, one is superfluous" (38–39).

<sup>221</sup> Islam, *Ethics of Travel*, 29.

fatherland, but an American whaleman deserter looking for escape, who happens to be little more educated than the average sailor. This will open up space for a twofold, and conflicting, articulation of the encounter with the other in *Typee*, however, Melville will not take it far enough to formulate a travel account that would escape the Western paradigm described by Islam.

The Typee village is as untouched by Western striation as Pacific locales in Melville get: it has had some contact with white explorers, but its reputation of practicing cannibalism (obviously mistaken for that of the neighboring rival village of Happar, as Tommo and Toby find out) helps keep further interaction at bay. Tommo's account of the Typee experience could best be described as paroxysmal, jumping from a deliberate defense of Typee culture and countering existing accounts of Polynesian islands by Westerners,<sup>222</sup> in conjunction with an explicit condemnation of Western influence (commercial or territorial) as irreparably damaging (Chap. 4 et pass.), to an unabashedly stereotypical, Rousseauian description of the natives as noble savages (chaps. 2; 8; 12; 19; 27) and a fever-pitched anxiety of their customs. This paroxysmal pattern is reflected in Tommo's experience of spatiality as well: from the space of the ship (the Dolly) being experienced first as captivity, then as salvation (when rescued by the Julia), to the island changing faces from *locus horridus* to *locus amoenus* and back again in reflection of the changes in Tommo's psychological state (*locus horridus*: chaps. 7–11; 30–32 et pass.; *locus amoenus*: chaps. 13; 17; 20 et pass.).

The primary barrier to Tommo's desire to understand and capture the other in representation is, of course, language: Tommo possesses only minimal knowledge of the local idiom and interpreters are scarce, save for the tabooed Marnoo. In Tommo's Rousseauian view of natives, especially with the orality of their culture, there ought to be an immediacy, a presence of experience; instead, the experience of foreignness imposes delayed comprehension, which infuses the native culture with qualities of a *text*, an absence of two-way communication and request for interpretation, which is constantly renegotiated as Tommo learns bits of the language. Tommo wants to *read* the natives, but instead feels like he is being read: "Never before had I been subjected to so strange and steady a glance; it revealed nothing of the mind of the savage, but it appeared to be reading my own," he says of chief Mehevi (89).

Unable to read so that he can represent in narrative, Tommo resorts to overcoding the Typees – "translating" his perceptions of their culture into terms more understandable to a

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<sup>222</sup> Melville, *Typee*, chaps. 24; 26 et pass. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

Westerner, himself included. One layer of overcoding is using expressions from archaic European languages to describe the natives and his experience, thus likening them to a pastoral archetype: “phillipics” and “panegyrics” (90); “a savage Æsculapius” (95); “cornucopias” (97), and the like. A second layer is the comparison between Typee and what Tommo considers civilized countries versus Typee and what Tommo describes as “barbarized” countries, both of which again involve a translation of local objects or customs into something more recognizable to Melville’s readers: “the lounging place of the natives, answering the purpose of a divan in Oriental countries” (102); the process of making fire involves comparisons with “lucifer matches in the corner of a kitchen cupboard at home” (135) and a suggestion to introduce a vestal order in the valley for keeping fire (136); the beauty of island girls is said to outshine “a gallery of coronation beauties at Westminster Abbey” and likened to “the Venus de’ Medici placed beside a milliner’s doll” (191); wedlock among Typees is described as “of a more distinct and enduring nature than is usually the case with barbarous people” (226). A third layer of overcoding, or claiming the native village for Western discourse, would be Tommo’s pervasive Rousseauian idiom. The result is a description of the Typees as a tribe without script or concept of foreign language (170–171), without history (178–179), without heterotopias, and without cultural memory. It is clear from slippages in Tommo’s narrative that the Typees do have a developed cultural memory, only Tommo chooses to dismiss it as unscientific, in favor of his devices of reading the foreign culture as text and overcoding it with Western discourse.<sup>223</sup>

No other Melville narrative goes as far to the limits of anthropomorphic minimum, as perceived through Tommo’s Western eyes, as *Typee* does. As first-person narrator and main focalizer, Tommo refracts this boundary between nature and culture through at least three registers: cannibalism – a frequent trope of travel narratives, which Tommo sieves through both the Rousseauian/anxiety register and the register of denouncing white influence upon natives, which is addressed below; the taboo as the main organizing principle of social,

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<sup>223</sup> In Chapter 21, Kory-Kory explains to Tommo the background of native cosmology behind monumental remains in the village which remind Tommo of Stonehenge, however the narrator decides to disregard Kory-Kory’s explanation and provide his own: “These structures bear every indication of a very high antiquity, and Kory-Kory, who was my authority in all matters of scientific research, gave me to understand that they were coeval with the creation of the world; that the great gods themselves were the builders; and that they would endure until time shall be no more. Kory-Kory’s prompt explanation, and his attributing work to a divine origin, at once convinced me that neither he nor the rest of his countrymen knew anything about them.

As I gazed upon this monument, doubtless the work of an extinct and forgotten race, thus buried in the green nook of an island at the ends of the earth, the existence of which was yesterday unknown, a stronger feeling of awe came over me than if I had stood musing at the mighty base of the Pyramid of Cheops. *There are no inscriptions, no sculpture, no clue, by which to conjecture its history: nothing but the dumb stones*” (*Typee*, 185, emphasis mine).

political, and religious life in Typee; thirdly, and this is the boundary that I want to focus on, Tommo addresses the custom of native tattooing as a boundary of absolute deterritorialization.

The first mention of tattooing in *Typee* is analeptic in the sense that the event happened two or three years after Tommo's stay in Typee village, which means that it should be read as recurring trauma; it is also proleptic in the diegetic sense of foreshadowing the decisive role tattooing will play in Tommo's anxiety of going native during his stay in the village. It refers to the face tattoos of king Mowanna of Nukuheva, who visited the U.S. frigate on which Tommo was serving at the time, which Tommo describes as a "blemish:"

His majesty was arrayed in a magnificent military uniform, stiff with gold lace and embroidery, while his shaven crown was concealed by a huge chapeau bras, waving with ostrich plumes. There was one slight blemish, however, in his appearance. A broad patch of tattooing stretched completely across his face, in a line with his eyes, making him look as if he wore a huge pair of goggles; and royalty in goggles suggested some ludicrous ideas. (16)

The second mention of tattoos happens during the speech given by the captain of the *Dolly* to his whalemens in an attempt to intimidate them against deserting while on shore leave. He tells them the story of the *Dido*, a ship that anchored at Nukuheva two years earlier and lost an entire watch of her men to capture by natives: "[...] and only three of them ever got back to the ship again, and one with his face damaged for life, for the cursed heathens tattooed a broad patch clean across his figure-head" (47). As Tommo makes his way into the Typee community, he meets tattooed tribal members (Mehevi, 97; Kory-Kory, 102–103; Marnoo, 162–163) and is acquainted with the custom of matrimonial tattooing of women (224–225); he also meets tribal elders in the tabooed building, the *Ti*, where his verdict upon tattoos as dehumanizing becomes most evident: he describes the elders as "four or five hideous old wretches, *on whose decrepit forms time and tattooing seemed to have obliterated every trace of humanity*" (114, emphasis mine), essentially degrading them to a rung between animals and minerals on his subjective evolutionary ladder.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Tommo's full description is as follows: "Their skin had a frightful *scaly* appearance, which, united with its singular colour, made their limbs not a little resemble *dusty specimens of verde-antique*. Their flesh, in parts, hung upon them in huge folds, like the overlapping plaits on the flank of a *rhinoceros*. Their heads were completely bald, whilst their faces were puckered into a thousand wrinkles, and they presented no vestige of a beard" (*Typee*, 114, emphasis mine).

By Chapter 31, Tommo's stay in Typee will have become more controlled by natives, heightening his anxiety: his friend Toby is gone; his manservant Kory-Kory is turning out to be his guard, watching and limiting his movement across the village territory; he feels a growing sense of entrapment and foreignness; and what he initially perceived as the Typees' state of nature, enviable by white people, he now reads as increasingly sinister and "savage."<sup>225</sup> Furthermore, a turning point occurs in Chapter 30: Tommo witnesses, and provides a detailed description of, the process of tattooing of an elder's eyelids. Fascinated by his white skin, Karky the artist expresses a wish to tattoo Tommo's face immediately. Horrified, Tommo offers his arm(s) instead – twice, but the artist and the natives refuse, insisting that the first tattoo be on his face, and the village chiefs follow suit by pressuring Tommo to proceed with getting tattooed. Tommo comments: "This incident opened my eyes to a new danger; and I now felt convinced that in some luckless hour I should be disfigured in such a manner as never more to have the *face* to return to my countrymen even should an opportunity offer" (255). It is clear that Tommo sees tattooing as a point of absolute deterritorialization, a rigid, irreversible boundary that can only be crossed once.

The reason I am focusing on tattooing in *Typee*, and elsewhere in Melville, as a telling exploration of the anthropomorphic minimum is that it illustrates Islam's thesis of the post-Enlightenment European paradigm of knowledge through vision, understanding through illumination, in order to capture in representation: Melville modifies this pattern, but utilizes it nonetheless. Highly alarmed by the pressure to get tattooed, Tommo researches further: "Although convinced that tattooing was a religious observance, still the nature of the connection between it and the superstitious idolatry of the people was a point upon which *I could never obtain any information*. Like the still more important system of the 'Taboo,' *it always appeared inexplicable to me*" (257, emphasis mine). Tommo wants to *understand* so that he can *represent*, whereas the natives want him to *become*.

Tattooing appears again in *Omoo*, a narrative which begins as a deliberate tethering on to *Typee*, thus allowing for interpretive conflation of Tommo and Typee/Paul as one and the same character. Similarly to Marnoo in *Typee*, the handsome and popular tabooed native allowed to cross boundaries between native villages as well as between white and native settlements, *Omoo* introduces a white character as an example of a nomadic individual, a crossover between cultures in contact zones: Lem Hardy, an English merchant marine deserter

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<sup>225</sup> For instance, the title of Chapter 32 is "Apprehensions of Evil – Frightful Discovery – Some Remarks on Cannibalism – Second Battle with the Happers – Savage Spectacle – Mysterious Feast – Subsequent Disclosures" (268–277).

turned warlord by taking advantage of native strife. A good example of Melvillean incognito fugitives,<sup>226</sup> he is “a stranger, a renegade from Christendom and humanity – a white man, in the South Sea girdle, and tattooed in the face. A broad blue band stretched across his face from ear to ear, and on his forehead was the taper figure of a blue shark nothing but fins from head to tail.”<sup>227</sup> Evocative of what Conrad’s Kurtz would become and what Jim would aspire to and fail at, Lem Hardy is everything that Tommo had feared of becoming in *Typee*, and that the narrator of *Omoo* still fears (he describes Hardy’s face tattoo as “Far worse than Cain’s,”<sup>228</sup>), albeit with less horror as he is no longer threatened by it, as is evident from Chapter 8 in which the narrator of *Omoo* provides another account of the process of native tattooing, this time as a class-coded custom, where only the richest get the finest masters and the poor are used as practice bodies and scorned by the rest of the community.<sup>229</sup>

There is one variety of tattoos about which Melville’s narrators refrain from moralizing: sailors’ tattoos, exemplified by Jermin, the mate of the Julia in *Omoo*, and Jarl the Skyeman in *Mardi*. Jermin’s tattoo is described without judgment as “nervous arm embossed with pugilistic bruises, and quaint with many a device in India ink,”<sup>230</sup> where tattoos are juxtaposed with a sailor’s bruises – part and parcel of the seaman’s way of life. Jarl’s tattoo in *Mardi* will be even closer to the Western code: it is a tattoo of the crucifixion on his arm, which Jarl displays proudly and which the innocuous Yillah will want to possess, as if it were detachable from his skin.<sup>231</sup> Redburn will encounter the body of a dead sailor with his name and date of birth tattooed on his arm, without telling whether the tattoo was done before the sailor’s death or upon his identification at the morgue.<sup>232</sup>

Finally, tattooing is a poignant motif in demonstrating why *Moby-Dick* is among Melville’s narratives that most approach the formation of smooth space and nomadic movement. Not only does Ishmael cross a line that no other Melville narrator has before in forming a relationship akin to marriage with Queequeg, who is a tattooed native from the South Pacific, there is also a distinction in focalization between the young Ishmael who has just met Queequeg at the Spouter-Inn in New Bedford and the older Ishmael narrating the

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<sup>226</sup> Lem Hardy is described thus: “Thrown upon the world a foundling, his paternal origin was as much a mystery to him as the genealogy of Odin [...]. And, for the most part, it is just this sort of men – so many of whom are found among sailors – uncared for by a single soul, without ties, reckless, and impatient of the restraints of civilization, who are occasionally found quite at home upon the savage islands of the Pacific. And, glancing at their hard lot in their own country, what marvel at their choice?” (*Omoo*, 354).

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 353.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 356–357.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>231</sup> Melville, *Mardi*, 808–809.

<sup>232</sup> Melville, *Redburn*, 196–198.

story: while the young Ishmael is only vaguely familiar with tattoos,<sup>233</sup> the old Ishmael-narrator is tattooed himself. His tattoos are neither of the native nor of the sailor kind featured in Melville's earlier narratives: they are the purposefully unexact measurements of the skeleton of a stranded sperm whale he saw visiting the king of Tranque at Pupella:

The skeleton dimensions I shall now proceed to set down are copied verbatim from my right arm, where I had them tattooed; as in my wild wanderings at that period, there was no other secure way of preserving such valuable statistics. But as I was crowded for space, and wished the other parts of my body to remain a blank page for a poem I was then composing – at least, what untattooed parts might remain – I did not trouble myself with the odd inches; nor, indeed, should inches at all enter into a congenial admeasurement of the whale.<sup>234</sup>

After the paroxysmal, neurotic Tommo in *Typee*, the flâneur Typee/Paul making full use of white privilege in *Omoo*, the borderline neurotic-schizophrenic Taji in *Mardi* and the Oedipal Redburn, Melville produces a nomadic first-person narrator who, although not without neuroses and amplitudes, and retaining the same vocabulary of an overeducated Westerner, nevertheless speaks from beyond the pale of rigid boundaries, from a smoother existence than any of his predecessors:

How I snuffed that Tartar air! – how I spurned that turnpike earth! – that common highway all over dented with the marks of slavish heels and hoofs; and turned me to admire the magnanimity of the sea which will *permit no records*.<sup>235</sup>

But in landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God [...].<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> The young Ishmael as focalizer is also far less intimidated by the prospect of tattoos than the narrator(s) of *Typee* and *Omoo*: “But at that moment he chanced to turn his face so towards the light, that I plainly saw they could not be sticking-plasters at all, those black squares on his cheeks. They were stains of some sort or other. At first I knew not what to make of this; but soon an inkling of the truth occurred to me. I remembered the story of a white man – a whaleman too – who, falling among the cannibals, had been tattooed by them. I concluded that this harpooner, in the course of his distant voyages, must have met with a similar adventure. *And what is it, thought I, after all! It's only his outside; a man can be honest in any sort of skin*” (*Moby-Dick*, 33–34, emphasis mine).

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 346–347.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 62 (emphasis mine).

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

Long exile from Christendom and civilization inevitably restores a man to that condition in which God placed him, i.e. what is called savagery. Your true whale-hunter is as much a savage as an Iroquois. I myself am a savage, owning no allegiance but to the King of the Cannibals; and ready at any moment to rebel against him.<sup>237</sup>

The older Ishmael is irked by the striation of land with human and animal marks and prefers the unstriatable sea; he is no longer threatened by what is perceived as “savagery” because he has shed whatever identity he had had and adopted no other; his discourse is productive of cultural inversions;<sup>238</sup> he has become a true incognito fugitive, able to form alliances as he sees fit, unique in that his is a nomadic existence without being a Melville original, but a prophet. For Ishmael, smooth space is the prerequisite for intellectual independence.

It could be said that anthropophagy is for Conrad what tattoos are for Melville. A recurring motif in Conrad’s explorations of the anthropomorphic minimum with differing degrees of smoothness and striation, it is described by David Gill as follows: “Cannibalism is central to only two novellas, marginal in three novels, and receives passing mention in a handful of short stories. Nevertheless it does belong to one of Conrad’s major preoccupations, namely the kind of physical situation that tests a man to the utmost, and to which he succumbs with consequences that isolate him from the rest of humanity.”<sup>239</sup> Gill highlights the distinction that anthropologists make between cultural cannibalism, “accepted as normal and necessary by a given social group” and survival cannibalism, which “has no social sanction but happens among castaways in extreme situations,” and Conrad’s interest in both throughout his oeuvre.<sup>240</sup>

For the most part, Conrad’s forays into anthropophagy do not offer revolutionary or subversive experimentation with smoothness. As Gill’s essay traces, Conrad’s use of the motif usually distributes the division between cultural and survival cannibalism along racial/cultural lines: cultural cannibalism is a trait of non-European natives (as in *Victory*, or

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>238</sup> In addition to the tongue-in-cheek commentary on savagery and cannibalism quoted above: European captains violating the customs of native islanders (*Moby-Dick*, 62); the word “cannibalism” being used to describe humans carving/eating whale meat on deck, as well of sharks waiting for “every killed man” to be tossed to them to eat (237); comparing the whale brain with the human brain, which is clearly a provocation aimed at stating that he has seen a human brain (275).

<sup>239</sup> David Gill, “The Fascination of the Abomination: Conrad and Cannibalism,” *The Conradian* 24, no. 2 (Autumn 1999): 26. The works in question include: *Heart of Darkness*; *Victory*; “Falk;” *The Secret Agent*; *Freya of the Seven Isles*; *Lord Jim*.

<sup>240</sup> Gill, “Conrad and Cannibalism,” 1. Also, see Tony Tanner’s “‘Gnawed Bones’ and ‘Artless Tales’ – Eating and Narrative in Conrad” and Paul Vlitos’ “Conrad’s Ideas of Gastronomy: Dining in ‘Falk’” for further analysis.

in *Heart of Darkness*, in which Marlow does make a distinction between the natives he sees hiding on the shore, whom he fears, and his native crew, whom he admires for self-restraint in not consuming their white officers), whilst white Europeans engage in survival cannibalism in extreme circumstances and are exonerated or not called to task (as in “Falk” or with Captain Robinson in *Lord Jim*). As in Melville, there is one exception – obviously, Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*. According to Gill,

He is neither a born (or rather socialized) cannibal, nor a crass fortune-hunter. He belongs to a third category: the highly “civilized” white idealist who loses all the inhibitions of his European upbringing to adopt . . . the extreme practice of the so-called “savages” he had originally set out to enlighten. If Conrad detests the first category and has qualified respect for the second, he is fascinated by the third.<sup>241</sup>

Melville makes passing references to cannibalism in virtually all of his sea narratives, but he makes it most prominent in *Typee*. If the native custom of tattooing raises Tommo’s anxiety of absolute deterritorialization by being forced to *become* one of the natives, the fear of being *consumed* by Typee natives is the absolute turning point for Tommo, upon which he decides that he must escape the village. Cannibalism is the narrative framework of *Typee*: it is an integral part of Tommo’s preconceptions of South Pacific natives, gathered from the traditional travel narratives he had read before his voyage and presented at the beginning of his narrative,<sup>242</sup> and it triggers the denouement of Tommo’s final escape from the island. The discursive difference which will translate into the difference between life and death for Tommo is the difference between Western perceptions of the villages of Typee and Happar, where the Typees are reputed for being cannibals, while the Happar tribe are supposedly friendly to outsiders and on good terms with the Nukuhevas. The narrative is punctuated with amplitudes: Tommo and Toby’s initial frenzy of hoping that it is the Happers that they make contact with, followed by disappointment and fear when they discover that it is in fact the

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<sup>241</sup> Gill, “Conrad and Cannibalism,” 14.

<sup>242</sup> Before facing an actual threat of being eaten in a cannibal feast, Tommo’s preconceived notion of Marquesan natives is explicitly textual in origin and congruous with the travel literature that was its source: “‘Hurra, my lads! It’s a settled thing; next week we shape our course to the Marquesas!’ The Marquesas! What strange visions of outlandish things does the very name spirit up! Naked houris – *cannibal banquets* – groves of cocoa-nut – coral reefs – *tattooed chiefs* – and bamboo temples; sunny valleys planted with bread-fruit-trees – carved canoes dancing on the flashing blue waters – savage woodlands guarded by horrible idols – *heathenish rites and human sacrifices*.”

Such were the strangely jumbled anticipations that haunted me during our passage from the cruising ground. I felt an irresistible curiosity to see those islands which the olden voyagers had so glowingly described” (*Typee*, 13, emphasis mine).

Typees that have crossed their path, then relief upon learning about the Typees' peaceful and harmonious state of nature, followed again by a frenzy of anxiety upon learning that ritual anthropophagy is practiced after battles with enemy tribes. It is unfortunate that Melville did not attempt to forge a different language for speaking of the other in *Typee*, that episodes of affirmative discourse regarding the natives (i.e. those where the Rousseauian idiom is suppressed for a genuine appreciation for native culture and denouncing the destructive nature of Western influence upon the islands) were not enough for Tommo to cross any of the lines of absolute deterritorialization that were offered to him, so that his story could be told from beyond Western striations; however, inadvertently or not, *Typee* was successful in one thing: by insisting on these amplitudes, on the frenzy between *wanting* to speak differently about the other (and succeeding to do so on rare occasion) yet resorting to the noble savage stereotype and utter fear of the other, the narrative foregrounds the very lack of a non-othering language of speaking of the other. *Typee* lays bare the structure of the Western discourse of othering.

Conrad does not engage with the complex nature of cannibalism to the degree that Melville does. There are several possible reasons: first, cannibalism would have been a more common feature of earlier travel narratives and more of a residual literary motif by the time of Conrad's writing – again, this is connected to the comparatively increased striation of global maritime space between Melville's and Conrad's writing periods and the maritime literary history that took place between them. Further, it serves a different purpose in Conrad: he uses it to reinforce white supremacy – anthropophagy is undoubtedly defined as a transgression, but it is a transgression which receives every effort to be justified if perpetrated by white men. In that respect, it is not presented as a boundary of absolute deterritorialization, as it is in Melville: Falk is able to reintegrate in society by marrying the woman he desires upon his confession of having engaged in survival cannibalism; even the absolutely deterritorialized Kurtz is justified by capitalism (his actions are sanctioned as long as the ivory influx is steady) and discursively reclaimed in the name of the metropolis by Marlow, who seizes his documents and controls his legacy.

Accordingly, Melville's contact zones are smoother and feature a wider array of liminal or crossover characters, whereas Conrad is, save for *Heart of Darkness*, more prone to building Manichean cities. In that respect, Melville's *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Mardi* could very well be described as a trilocular study of Western subjectification in the South Pacific. In *Typee*, Melville paired the least striated native space (the island of Nukuheva is barely touched by Western influence) with the highest anxiety among his white subjects. An exploration of Tahiti and the surrounding archipelago, symbolically beginning on the day it

changes hands between England and France, *Omoo* is a step forward in terms of striation: Melville's white subjects, Typee/Paul and Doctor Long Ghost engage in what could be summed up in one word – flânerie.<sup>243</sup> Unlike Nukuheva in *Typee*, Tahiti has already been claimed by Western powers and is developing as a contact zone: in Chapter 32, the narrator presents a detailed description of the process of striation through the set-up of indirect power structures beginning with missionaries, followed by the more official consuls, the navy, then a Protectorate and military, the final result being that the ruler Pomaree flees the archipelago. Pre-existing forms of local economy have been destroyed and replaced with bartering or seizure of resources by local chiefs to supply Western shipping;<sup>244</sup> Papeete, “the village metropolis of Tahiti,” is a mature contact zone described as a Manichean city;<sup>245</sup> the narrative brims with examples of failure to convert natives to Western forms of commerce, custom, or religion,<sup>246</sup> evocative of what Conrad will do half a century later in *Heart of Darkness*: the destruction is absolute, genocidal. In the midst of this destruction, the free roving mode of whiteness and ease of narration is most certainly out of place, and definitely at odds with the white anxiety that had permeated *Typee*;<sup>247</sup> it is most certainly correlated with the degree of safety and comfort sanctioned to white men by the increasing Western striation of the archipelago.

In *Mardi*, Melville takes Western subjectification even further, to a point where, running from its crimes and demons, it silences its conscience by recreating the world in its desired/projected image. Starting out as a sea yarn/factual travel narrative (circa chaps. 1–38), *Mardi* transforms into an allegorical romance (ca. chaps. 39–144) and then into political and geographical allegory/satire (ca. chaps. 145–169). The world with which it begins, which seems analogous to the globe sailed by Melville, transforms into an archipelago of two groups of islands: the first is clearly a collection of archetypes of human nature, but the second is an allegorical/satirical derivation of individual countries and contemporary political situations in

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<sup>243</sup> Kevin J. Hayes' 2007 *Cambridge Introduction to Melville* article on *Omoo* provides an excellent reading of this narrative as a study of rovers, beachcombers, and flâneurs, explaining the differences between these categories (33–39). The article also notes that Melville essentially transposed an urban sensibility to the South Pacific experience, serving as a good starting point for examining how city space and island space interact in Melville's oeuvre.

<sup>244</sup> Melville, *Omoo*, chaps. 17; 34 et pass.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 396; Chap. 27 (pp. 235–241).

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, chaps. 37; 49; 54; 55; 58 et pass.

<sup>247</sup> The narrator and the Doctor participate in mutiny and go unpunished (chaps. 2–38) as the legal status of mutineers diffuses into becoming a non-issue (Chap. 40); throughout the narrative, the labor of white men is deemed more valuable and they are assigned less manual work, while natives are forced into hard labor (chaps. 53; 59–60; 65); the narrator and the Doctor are threatened with arrest for vagrancy, but the threat never becomes an actual possibility (chaps. 65–66); they are virtually effortlessly able to meet the very Queen Pomaree herself, even if they do not establish contact (chaps. 80–81).

Europe, North America, and Africa. In terms of subjectification, Taji is the closest that Melville gets to having an original tell his own story: Ahab, Bartleby, Billy Budd, Claggart have their stories told by other narrators. This points to a correlation between nomadism and intelligibility: for a narrative to resonate, to be recognized, it cannot be too unfamiliar; a successful crafting of a non-othering language to speak of the other might result in something not recognizable as literature, or as narrative.

Similar to Melville's *Typee*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* imagines a contact zone in the making – or rather, a contact zone in resistance. Both these narratives imagine the journey into the world of natives as a path towards the limit of anthropomorphic minimum, exhibiting a colonial attitude that rapprochement to the other is identical with dehumanization. Ironically, it will lead Marlow to experience a vague and uncomfortable sense of kinship with natives (both his native crew aboard the steamer, and the unidentified crowd roaring and shooting at him from the shore,<sup>248</sup> while the Melville hero will flee. Both authors present opportunities for becoming-other and characters who have done so (taboo kanakas and rovers in Melville's case, and Kurtz in Conrad's), however, the boundary is not presented as supple, but rigid: a line of absolute deterritorialization seen as a path towards nomadism, towards the different, which requires that self-sameness be relinquished irreversibly. More importantly, an inference to be drawn from this is that becoming-other, even if its possibility is acknowledged, is *unnarratable* and remains only hinted at.

Beyond *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad's "Eastern World," as Norman Sherry called it, paints developed contact zones where Westerners are no longer mere voyagers, traders or explorers, but have become dwellers: traders, pilots, entrepreneurs, business owners.<sup>249</sup> Chapter 3 of "The End of the Tether" is an exemplary depiction of Fanon's "Manichean" city, a location of divided dwelling, of coexistence without mutual understanding: feeling lost after selling his ship *The Fair Maid*, Captain Whalley roams the streets of an unnamed Eastern port, most likely Singapore, as Norman Sherry states in *Conrad's Eastern World*.<sup>250</sup> The colonial part of the city is the locus of government and business, only populated in daytime and desolate at night, and saturated with markings like the gates of the "new" Consolidated Docks Company, the "new" Government buildings, the neighborhood of the "New Waterworks," the

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<sup>248</sup> Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 35–36; 51.

<sup>249</sup> In addition to Norman Sherry's *Conrad's Eastern World*, for a more comprehensive analysis of urban spaces in Conrad, see *Conrad's Cities: Essays for Hans van Marle*; although it does not use the term "Manichean" to describe Conrad's portrayal of Singapore, J. H. Stape's article "Conrad's 'Unreal City': Singapore in 'The End of the Tether'" nonetheless notes the "structural duality" of the city, where "a native quarter [is] contingent to but divorced completely from 'official' Singapore" (*Conrad's Cities*, ed. Gene M. Moore [Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1992]: 87).

<sup>250</sup> Norman Sherry, *Conrad's Eastern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 75.

“new” Courts of Justice and the “new” Colonial Treasury.<sup>251</sup> In sharp contrast, Whalley takes a turn and “bec[omes] lost like a straw in the eddy of a brook amongst the swarm of brown and yellow humanity filling a thoroughfare, that by contrast with the vast and empty avenue he had left seemed as narrow as a lane and absolutely riotous with life.”<sup>252</sup> Native lives are not presented, but imagined, in an existence entirely separate from that of Europeans:

Their bodies stalked brown and emaciated as if dried up in the sunshine; their lives ran out silently; the homes where they were born, went to rest, and died – flimsy sheds of rushes and coarse grass eked out with a few ragged mats – were hidden out of sight from the open sea. No glow of their household fires ever kindled for a seaman a red spark upon the blind night of the group: and the calms of the coast, the flaming long calms of the equator, the unbreathing, concentrated calms like the deep introspection of a passionate nature, brooded awfully for days and weeks together over the unchangeable inheritance of their children [...].<sup>253</sup>

In terms of space, *Lord Jim* offers another elaborate anatomy of an archipelago contact zone, encompassing the court house in another unnamed Eastern port,<sup>254</sup> various harbor locations, sites of Jim’s exile, hotels, post offices and islands exploited by European entrepreneurs. Conrad also traces the heterotopias which white men have carved within these spaces in order to formulate their own, privileged albeit limited, hideaway smoothness: their ships (as in “The Secret Sharer” and “The End of the Tether”); distant islands (Patusan, but also the guano island of Chester and Robinson in *Lord Jim*); segregated urban spaces (hotels, restaurants, commercial offices such as those in *Lord Jim* or *The Shadow-Line*).

Robert Hampson’s study *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad’s Malay Fiction* traces the complex articulation of the interaction between Westerners and locals in Conrad’s Malaysian contact zones, dividing it into two phases – early and late, and situating it in the diachronic context of European discourse on history and geography from the fourteenth century onwards. Most importantly, Hampson points out instances of criticism that Conrad received for his Eurocentric approach in describing non-whites in his fiction. As much as Conrad perceived the complexity of fictionalizing the inter-cultural web in Malaysia and tried

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<sup>251</sup> Conrad, “The End of the Tether,” 111.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 155–156.

<sup>254</sup> The Eastern port was first identified as Singapore by Sherry, and subsequently as Bombay was by Hans van Marle and Pierre Lefranc in “Ashore and Afloat: New Perspectives on Topography and Geography in *Lord Jim*.”

to give narrative voices and/or assign focalization to native characters, his literary representations came up short and limited.<sup>255</sup> In his analysis of *Lord Jim*, Hampson describes Marlow's discourse as what Islam would refer to as a discourse of the othered-other:<sup>256</sup> "his account of the non-Europeans colonises and then empties out the category of the Other;"<sup>257</sup> the local narrators in the Patusan section of the novel provide information that is "non-problematic," as they "present mutually supportive narratives – not competing narratives. This suggests again the novel's incomplete realisation of the Malays: either they are not given a complex subjectivity, or the reader is not trusted sufficiently to engage with the complex subjectivity of non-Europeans."<sup>258</sup>

It is not my aim here to reconfirm instances of Conrad's Eurocentrism and reductive treatment of native characters that scholars have already traced, but to explore, without exonerating Conrad from his own discursive practices, whether, when read with Deleuze and Guattari's theories of spatiality of the smooth and the striated, Conrad's sea narratives might offer new connections between subjectification and territory, especially in terms of building smooth spaces in his hyperstriated maritime literary worlds. At least two Conrad's narratives, *Almayer's Folly* and "The End of the Tether," offer potential for this kind of reading.

Conrad's first novel, *Almayer's Folly* (1895), registers the turning of a hyperstriated imperial world back into the smooth after the failure of European enterprise. Beginning in the narrative present, on the eve of Kaspar Almayer's planned escape from Macassar with his daughter Nina, the first three chapters trace a temporal loop, taking the narrative back twenty years, when Tom Lingard's expeditions were promising great earnings for adventurous businessmen. The narrative is then brought up to the present, in which Almayer has failed at mastering local intrigues and has to be protected from Arab traders in Sambir by the Old Rajah, predecessor of Lakamba. In the meantime, his personal redemptive dream of making a fortune has been thwarted by Lingard's death, as well as by large-scale geopolitics of the kind Melville described upon Tahiti changing hands from British to French in *Omoo*: London has

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<sup>255</sup> Hampson writes: "in his first two novels, Conrad attempts to represent a Malay world and to give voice to his Malay participants. With 'Karain,' he comes up against the irreducible Otherness of the Malay reality. Subsequently, he explores European attempts to represent that Otherness – through his self-conscious engagement with the conventions of adventure romance in *Lord Jim*; by constructing his narrative through the discourses circulating among the expatriate European communities in *Lord Jim* and *Victory*; and, finally, by exploring the aestheticising of Otherness in *The Rescue*. From the outset, he asserts the heterogeneity of the culture of the archipelago: he does not produce Otherness as 'a thing,' but rather as a strategy or a process. As he proceeds through these fictions, European culture comes more and more to be explored through the complex cross-cultural encounters of the archipelago, and class and gender become at least as important as 'race'" (*Conrad's Malay Fiction*, 29–30).

<sup>256</sup> Islam, *Ethics of Travel*, 80.

<sup>257</sup> Hampson, *Conrad's Malay Fiction*, 142.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

decided to abandon the Borneo prospects, leaving the Dutch in charge and Almayer's business plans stranded. The novel could be described as an anti-imperial romance, the flipside of tales of European wealth being made on colonial exploitation.

How is spatiality articulated in *Almayer's Folly*, and how does it correlate with the set-up of racial relations in the novel? Almayer lives at the intersection of two rivers, thirty miles from the sea. He lives across from Rajah Lakamba, the Old Rajah's successor, who lives on the main stream, and downstream from the Sambir reach, where Abdulla bin Selim, "the great trader of Sambir," resides.<sup>259</sup> The topography of the novel could best be described as *meandering*: the coast of Borneo serves as the main geographical frame; up the river Pantai, the settlements, which are in fact called "compounds" and not "houses," serve as places of public activity (official meetings, trade agreements, military visits), while the riverbed itself, with its windings and creeks, navigable only in small vessels and to insiders who possess adequate local knowledge, is the site of spying, secret romance and murder plots. Striation is relative here: official business is conducted in official places by all ethnic groups as participants (e.g. Almayer's meeting with the Dutch officers, 33–34; Dain's meeting with Lakamba at his compound, 52), whereas familiarity with the meanders of the riverbed only belongs to locals – Nina, Babalatchi, Taminah. In metaphorical protection of Nina and Dain's romance, the canoe and the river are described as "obedient" (47); Babalatchi sends Dain down the river in secret, "in a canoe, by the hidden channels, on board the prau" (89); as they make their escape, Nina and Dain will have to follow the small channels if the moon is bright – otherwise, they can stay on the main stream and be quicker down to the mouth of the river (120). Perhaps the best summary of spatial division along racial lines, Babalatchi focalizes thus near Bulangi's house: "In the network of crooked channels no white man could find his way. White men were strong, but very foolish. It was undesirable to fight them, but deception was easy. They were like silly women – they did not know the use of reason, and he was a match for any of them" (58).

Clearly, *Almayer's Folly* features another Manichean location, however it would be better described as an assemblage than a city. Instead of a hyperstriated spatialization serving colonial dominance, this Manichean assemblage is made up of burrows of riparian smoothness where the human element is complicit with the natural, which exist underneath and around the main channels of politics, business, and military dominance. At the very beginning of his writing career, Conrad also portrays not only a failed imperialist, but a

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<sup>259</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Almayer's Folly & Tales of Unrest* (1895; Ware: Wordsworth, 1996), 8–9. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

second-generation Dutchman in Borneo who has never been to Europe,<sup>260</sup> and who is a foreigner in the eyes of his own heritage: “Old as I am I wished to seek a strange land, a civilization to which I am a stranger, so as to find a new life in the contemplation of your high fortunes, of your triumphs, of your happiness” (70). He is “bent upon forgetting the hated reality of the present by absorbing himself in his work, or else by letting his imagination soar far above the tree-tops into the great white clouds away to the westward, where *the paradise of Europe was awaiting the future Eastern millionaire*” (43, emphasis mine). Europe is no longer a “home” to remember, but a projection, a reward for toiling somewhere in the Orient; the coast of Borneo is not a place where a European man makes his fortune to write triumphantly home about, but a prison (1); whiteness is not a mark of power but of mediation, as Almayer negotiates his own position by balancing the information on Lingard’s treasure between the Malays and the up-river Dyak tribes (25–26).

Almayer’s final psychological breakdown after Nina leaves for Bali with Dain is as much an individuated enunciation about a specific character in Western fiction as it is a commentary on European subjectification at a time of colonial recoil. Nina is a beloved daughter, but she is also the product of Almayer’s failed commercial schemes: he had married her mother, Lingard’s Malay protégée rescued/abducted from pirates, in order to ingratiate himself with Lingard and improve his business prospects. Going to Europe without Nina would mean going to the metropolis as a failed businessman. At the same time, Nina is the product of Almayer’s projection of a white Europe: she received Western education in Singapore, under the auspices of Tom Lingard again (17), and as she is about to leave, Almayer pleads with her on the basis of her cultivated white race, which she rejects (122). As Nina and Dain are about to set out for Bali, Almayer sees them off, despondent. The sea landscape is dazzling: the islets are shiny and golden, and the sunrise is “a hurried messenger of light and life to the gloomy forests of the coast” (128). However, Almayer does not see it as such – although he lives a mere thirty miles up the river, he has not been to the coast in a long time: “It was a very, very long time since he had seen the sea – that sea that leads everywhere, brings everything, and takes away so much. He had almost forgotten why he was there, and dreamily he could see all his past life on the smooth and boundless surface that glittered before his eyes” (129); Almayer as focalizer sees the sea as “the limitless sheet of blue that shone limpid, unwavering, and steady like heaven itself” (130). There is no multiplicity of vectors here as there is in Melville – a continuous wind rose of potential escape

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<sup>260</sup> Almayer’s parents had moved from Amsterdam (2).

routes between ships, between sea and land, between different kinds of sailing; the entire novel could be described as one single line of flight folded back in upon itself.

In “The End of the Tether,” Conrad offers a rather surprising literary experiment of smoothness in seamanship: a seasoned explorer-turned-coastal captain, Captain Whalley is going blind at the end of his career, but needs to keep sailing in order to support his daughter’s plan of keeping a boarding-house in Australia. He therefore keeps his blindness secret from everyone save for the Malay Serang sailor, who has followed him from his last ship. As regards subjectification, Whalley is a true Conradian sailor par excellence – a sort of quarterdeck parallel to the forecastle-based Singleton in *The Nigger of the Narcissus*: he comes from navy stock – his father had been Colonel Whalley of the H. E. I. Company’s service<sup>261</sup> and has been in the merchant marine for his entire working career. His plans for a comfortable retirement on his barque, the Fair Maid, are – similarly to Almayer’s – thwarted as his daughter Ivy sends him a letter that she is in need of financial assistance. Whalley sells the Fair Maid and invests his money into a three-year contract as captain of the Sofala, a coastal trade steamer owned by George Massy, its chief engineer. The narrative begins as the three-year contract is about to expire and Whalley can finally get his money to send to his daughter.

Firstly, Whalley identifies with the sailing profession so deeply that, as the narrative captures him between ships – having sold the Fair Maid and not yet entered into the Sofala agreement – he is lost without a vessel:

The ship, once his own, was anchored out there. It was staggering to think that it was open to him no longer to take a boat at the jetty and get himself pulled off to her when the evening came. *To no ship. Perhaps never more.* Before the sale was concluded, and till the purchase-money had been paid, he had spent daily some time on board the *Fair Maid*. The money had been paid this very morning, and now, all at once, *there was positively no ship that he could go on board of when he liked; no ship that would need his presence in order to do her work – to live.* It seemed an incredible state of affairs, something too bizarre to last [...]. Captain Whalley reflected that if a ship without a man was like a body without a soul, *a sailor without a ship was of not much more account in this world than an aimless log adrift upon the sea.* (118, emphasis mine)

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<sup>261</sup> Conrad, “End of the Tether,” 112. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

This is indicative of Conrad's tendency to use seamanship as an identity refuge, because it allows for clearing of the slate of potential ethical issues: as I mentioned earlier, Whalley is able to keep his inner moral soundness by thinking of sailing merchant ships as "a straightforward occupation," whereas the essence of commerce "is to get the better of somebody in a bargain – an undignified trial of wits at best" (112). Having to return to coastal trading after retirement takes Whalley back into the mouth of commercial capitalism, and he struggles to balance the morally sound decision to help his daughter (with keeping a boarding house, which he considers a morally unsound business for her) and the morally ambiguous participation in what he sees as an "undignified trial of wits at best." There are other aspects that taint Whalley's (and Conrad's) need to keep seamanship uncontaminated: the fact that the *Sofala* is a steamer – a lower rank of vessel in Conrad's book, and that it is owned by an engineer – a lower rank of sea officer in Conrad's book.<sup>262</sup> As the crew dynamic in Conrad's *Lord Jim* and *Typhoon* demonstrates, the entirely different training background of engineers and their rise as labor competition for the ordinary sailors shifted the traditional division between the forecastle and the poop to a tension between the engine-room and the bridge, introducing a new social dynamic on the ship.

Most importantly in terms of spatiality, Captain Whalley's fictional maritime career in "The End of the Tether" illustrates an important concept: a connection between striated and smooth space – more specifically, that hyperstriation can in fact catalyze the emergence of smooth space. Whalley was an explorer in his heyday, turning the smooth space of the sea into striated, or, in effect, serving as an instrument of striation: he "had made famous passages, had been the pioneer of new routes and new trades; [...] had steered across the unsurveyed tracts of the South Seas, and had seen the sun rise on uncharted islands" (102); there is a Whalley Island and a Condor Reef named after him and his famous clipper in the sea between China and Australia, as well as a Malotu or Whalley Passage discovered by him in 1850 (103). At the end of his career, however, he finds himself sailing coastal waters of the Malacca Strait in a trading steamer: at first sight, this seems as the exact opposite of his former glory days of clipper exploration on high seas – and in many ways, it is. However, after three years of running the same monthly route, Whalley is so familiar with the landscape

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<sup>262</sup> According to Conrad Dixon, a "neglected category in maritime history," engineers aboard steamers "were the first class of seafarer to appear on board fully trained, and they were the only class able to secure alternative employment ashore easily" (Dixon 233). As steam developed and slowly overpowered sail in terms of ship propulsion, so did the engineers rise in status in the navy and the merchant marine alike; however, the Selbourne-Fischer scheme of 1902 made certain that they could receive naval rank, but never command a ship, and the merchant navy followed suit ("The Rise of the Engineer in the Nineteenth Century," in *Shipping, Technology and Imperialism*, ed. Gordon Jackson and David W. Williams [Aldershot, England, and Brookfield, VT: Scolar/Ashgate, 1996], 233; 238).

– surface and underwater – that he is essentially able to run it despite detrimentally failing eyesight, albeit with help from the Serang. He has conducted a personal striation of these local waters to such a degree of predictability that Conrad allows his experiment to last longer than realistic motivation would allow. The following passages illustrate the complex striating mechanisms that Whalley sets in place throughout the narrative: the first refers to sea space, and the second to the river that is part of the route:

He could not hope to see anything new upon this lane of the sea. He had been on these coasts for the last three years. From Low Cape to Malantan the distance was fifty miles, six hours' steaming for the old ship with the tide, or seven against. Then you steered straight for the land, and by-and-by three palms would appear on the sky, tall and slim, and with their disheveled heads in a bunch, as if in confidential criticism of the dark mangroves. The *Sofala* would be headed towards the somber strip of the coast, which at a given moment, as the ship closed with it obliquely, would show several clean shining fractures – the brimful estuary of a river. Then on through a brown liquid, three parts water and one part black earth, on and on between the low shores, three parts black earth and one part brackish water, the *Sofala* would plow her way up-stream, *as she had done once every month for these seven years or more [...]* *She could always be depended upon to make her courses.* Her compasses were never out. She was no trouble at all to take about, as if her great age had given her knowledge, wisdom, and steadiness. She made her landfalls to a degree of the bearing, and almost to a minute of her allowed time. *At any moment, as he sat on the bridge without looking up, or lay sleepless in his bed, simply by reckoning the days and the hours he could tell where he was – the precise spot of the beat.* (101–102, emphasis mine)

The descriptions are habitual, punctuated with markers of time and space, which, repeated over and over again, make up the memory of seamanship; secondly, they contain compensations and makeshift solutions in the presence of weather contingencies or in the absence of conventional orientation devices; finally, the precise route is presented as if lodged in the personified ship itself, as if it could run its own course if it had to. It is the kind of knowledge Marlow would have appreciated on his upriver mission in Africa.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> “You lost your way on that river as you would in a desert and butted all day long against shoals trying to find the channel till you thought yourself bewitched and cut off for ever from everything you had known once –

The fact that Conrad is probing deeper than a mere surface tale of physical blindness encroaching on what used to be brilliant seamanship is evidenced in Chapter 10, when Sterne, the mate of the *Sofala*, discovers the secret that Captain Whalley has been keeping. Whalley has been making the *Serang* perform tasks which he, as commander, ought to have done himself; to Sterne, the captain had just seemed lazy and entitled. Watching the Malay always follow at the captain's footsteps reminds Sterne of how small pilot-fish always accompany old whales because they feed off their scraps, and the discursive association of "pilot" as a trusted guide in the maritime context makes him realize that the Malay is, in fact, Whalley's personal pilot. The discovery itself is not empirical: Whalley has not been seen to trip over, or bump into things; he has been careful to keep up appearances. Sterne's discovery is discursive and epistemological: linguistic association triggers cognitive connection, and Sterne starts to notice proof of Whalley's blindness only after making the connection.

Realistic motivation, the importance of which is heightened in sea narratives, allows that a blind captain can only command a ship for so long, and Conrad respected that requirement. Nonetheless, Conrad drew a clear line in "The End of the Tether" from smooth space par excellence (i.e. exploration of undiscovered sea space, or more specifically, the striation of smooth space, territorializing the sea by mapping and naming) to the transformation of striated space back into smooth: sea meets land in the most unpredictable ways in local, coastal waters, and the seamanship required to traverse them is different from that required on the high seas. Sterne's thought process revolves around the concept of the *pilot*:

[...] *the word pilot awakened the idea of trust, of dependence, the idea of welcome, clear-eyed help brought to the seaman groping for the land in the dark [...]. A pilot sees better than a stranger, because his local knowledge, like a sharper vision, completes the shapes of things hurriedly glimpsed; penetrates the veils of mist spread over the land by the storms of the sea; defines with certitude the outlines of a coast lying under the pall of fog, the forms of landmarks half buried in a starless night as in a shallow grave. He recognizes because he already knows. It is not to his far-reaching eye but to his more extensive knowledge that the pilot looks for certitude [...].* (159, emphasis mine)

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somewhere – far away – in another existence perhaps [...]. I got used to it afterwards, I did not see it any more. I had no time. I had to keep guessing at the channel; I had to discern, mostly by inspiration, the signs of hidden banks; I watched for sunken stones [...]" (*Heart of Darkness*, 33–34).

This is a more detailed contemplation of the function of the pilot than Conrad gave even in *The Mirror of the Sea*. Taken together with my analysis of *Heart of Darkness* and *Almayer's Folly*, it would also indicate that, similarly to Melville's archipelago spatiality, albeit carried out with different mechanisms, Conrad also writes at his most deterritorialized when he writes of muggy liminal zones between sea and land and of gloomy riparian space, rather than of the dazzling high seas, which is what might have been expected of two prime maritime authors. Coastal areas are the territory of the ship as fragment, where ships are in danger of being reclaimed by land more than anywhere else: Conrad allows his ships to make that transition, whether it is an up-river rescue mission (*Heart of Darkness*) or delivery of goods ("The End of the Tether"), or, however unwillingly, the docking of a trader after a transoceanic return (*The Nigger of the Narcissus*). More often than not, Melville denies his ships to land, preferring the monad paradigm: he insists on limiting narration in *White-Jacket* to shipboard events only ("ay, though much might be said of all this, yet must I forbear, if I may, and adhere to my one proper object, the *world in a man-of war*," 515); unlike Conrad, who relinquishes the *Narcissus* to land, Melville's narrator refuses to dock the *Neversink* within the narrative ("Let us leave the ship on the sea – still with the land out of sight – still with brooding darkness on the face of the deep," 766); the description of the Highlander's docking in *Redburn* is minimal, not rendered in technical terms but emotional ones as the crew disbands;<sup>264</sup> in an ultimate gesture of narrative denial, the *Pequod* is sunk.

## 2.5. Literary shipboard geographies: The basic anatomy

This section will focus on three points: first, a general outline of literary shipboard geography; second, a reading of Melville's *Redburn* and *White-Jacket* as instances of how this general outline is worked out in literary texts; third, a commentary on the ship as heterotopia and my theory of the ship as assemblage. The spatiality of ships, in literature and perhaps even beyond it, cannot be examined without reference to language (sea argot) and power. Taking into account differences pertaining to specific sailing industries, ship space is highly striated by definition: the ship can be described as a hierarchical architecture where the cardinal divisions are above/below the main deck and before/after the mainmast. The main axes run from bow to stern (horizontal), from bilge to the highest point on the mainmast, which could

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<sup>264</sup> Melville, *Redburn*, 327.

go as high as the moon-mast (vertical), and across the beams (lateral). Within this gridiron distribution, every section of the ship has a technical name, a function and/or labor position attached to it, and a corresponding level of authority or power.

The bow-to-stern (horizontal) axis is organized as follows: officers' cabins are aft, and the seat of authority is on the quarterdeck or poop deck; common sailors' quarters are located in the forecabin, in the bow of the ship, or below decks on navy vessels. Communication between these spaces, as well as between officers and sailors of lower rank, is deliberately minimized to the level of issuing orders and/or confirming their execution, with a rigid chain of command governing it. The mainmast serves as a point of separation between the two spaces; on navy vessels, it also serves as the locus of disciplinary performatives, such as sanctioned communication between sailors and officers or executions of corporal punishment. The waist of the ship houses unranked shipboard staff and their labor: the galley, carpenters, sailmakers, and so on, depending on the type of vessel. Subsections have their own subdivisions of power: from landlubbers to old salts in the forecabin to different ranks of officers aft.

The mast-to-keel (vertical) axis is split by the bow-to-stern (horizontal) axis, which divides vertical ship space into above-deck and below-deck. The space below deck could be described as containing the heterotopias, the "other spaces" within the ship: steerage, the sick-bay, the brig, storage space, and so on, again depending on the type of vessel. The space above deck does not play a great role in steamships since the engine room is located aft inside the hull of the ship, however it is of great importance in sailing ships since that is where the labor of ship propulsion takes place. Above deck, work in the rigging takes skill, and there is a hierarchy of prestige among sailors for being assigned to certain stations (in navy ships) or performing certain duties (in other types of vessels). Furthermore, and this is especially important for sea narratives, lofty positions in the rigging are also places of meditation, rare spots of solitude that sailors can find away from the collective.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> As is evident from the title of her book, *The View from the Masthead*, Hester Blum analyzes the connection between elevated shipboard spatiality (e.g. the well-known "fall" scenes in Chapter 92 of *White-Jacket*, or Chapter 35 of *Moby-Dick*), labor, and contemplation in personal antebellum sea narratives as well as Herman Melville's sea writing (esp. 1–15; 109–57). Her thesis is that "sailors developed a materialist epistemology by which the practices of mechanical labor become the empirical basis for both applied and imaginative knowledge. Their narratives insist on a recognition of the physical work that enables moments of reflection and speculation. Sailors were not unconscious mechanics; they accumulated knowledge through physical and mental work, yielding a generalized form of nautical expertise" (109).

### 2.5.1. Melville's shipboard anatomies: The Highlander, the Neversink

If he exoticized South Pacific islands in *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Mardi*, in *Redburn* Melville exoticized Europe from the viewpoint of a young American; he also exoticized the labor of sailing from the viewpoint of a novice sailor – a useful narrative device, inviting and inclusive of nonspecialist readers because their understanding of shipboard geography can expand in parallel with that of the protagonist. The first thing that Melville's novice sailor Wellingborough Redburn learns on board the Highlander is that the labor of seamanship is filtered through language – the technical sea argot is the membrane through which a sailor gains access to the ship as territory:

People who have never gone to sea for the first time as sailors, can not imagine how puzzling and confounding it is. It must be like going into a barbarous country, where they speak a strange dialect, and dress in strange clothes, and live in strange houses. For sailors have their own names, even for things that are familiar ashore; and if you call a thing by its shore name, you are laughed at for an ignoramus and a landlubber.<sup>266</sup>

Redburn cannot participate in shipboard labor properly because he does not yet understand its language: as his sea competence accumulates, his first-person narration explains the language and customs of merchantman life on board the Highlander so that it is easily understood by readers unacquainted with the sea. He describes his observations on watches, address on board ship, supper (Chap. 8 et pass.), the role of chanteys in sea labor and tales/reading in sea leisure (Chap. 9 et pass.); he gets seasick and is assigned simple tasks to get him started, such as washing decks (Chap. 11) and cleaning out the chicken coops and pig pen (Chap. 13). Redburn's gradual initiation is evinced by his conquest of vertical ship space as his main-deck duties are replaced by tasks in the rigging: after loosing the main-skysail (the highest sail on the ship) at night as his first daunting task (Chap. 16), Redburn sheds his initial perception of mastheads as *loci horridi* and starts to enjoy the freedom and distinction that comes with above-deck labor, while more prestigious and skillful tasks have to wait, such as manning the helm except during a calm (Chap. 24, pp. 127–130). Redburn's advancement in skill is also accompanied with decreasingly elaborate argot explanations for the readers: "I heard a snap

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<sup>266</sup> Melville, *Redburn*, 76. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

and a crash, like the fall of a tree, and suddenly, one of our flying-jib guys jerked out the bolt near the cat-head; and presently, we heard our jib-boom thumping against our bows” (Chap. 19, p. 105). The reduction of argot explanations is typical for scenes depicting crises at sea, in Melville and beyond: it contracts narrative space and contributes to the effect of tension, but more importantly, it is a narrative indicator of readers’ symbolic initiation into matters nautical in parallel with that of the protagonist – they are from here on out assumed to understand what he understands.

Redburn learns through trial and error, such as wrongfully hoping to make friends with the crew by trading in his jack-knife (Chap. 6), or trying to “mak[e] a social call on the Captain in his cabin” and venture towards the quarterdeck in the process, both of which are completely off limits to his rank (Chap. 14). A single sanctioned crossover to the quarterdeck is featured in Chapter 51, “The emigrants:” one of the steerage passengers, Carlo, is invited by cabin passengers to join them aft and entertain them with his organ-playing. The cruelty of their motivation – to make fun of his lack of talent – is paralleled with the despotic conditions of emigrant transport in Chapter 52.<sup>267</sup>

The remaining aspects of shipboard spatiality that readers learn through Redburn’s narration include, as was mentioned above: descriptions of “other places” within the ship, or kinds of heterotopias within heterotopias, such as the steerage passengers’ accommodation (Chap. 23); the accommodation of Irish emigrants on the homeward leg of the voyage (Chap. 47); the sick-bay (Chap. 58); as well as the quiet places where sailors can separate themselves from the collective and meditate – the forecabin during forenoon watch, while fellow sailors are asleep (Chap. 18), or “under the lee of the long-boat” (Chap. 56). Finally, *Redburn* also elaborates on the spatiality of different kinds of sailing industries: in Chapter 23, readers are informed that the Highlander is “a regular trader to Liverpool; sailing upon no fixed days, and acting very much as she pleased, being bound by no obligations of any kind: though in all her voyages, ever having New York or Liverpool for her destination” (119). Being a “transient ship” (119), the Highlander’s mobility is thus smoother than that of a typical merchantman, where crews are driven to much harder work due to greater commercial pressure. The wear and tear incurred by such merchantmen often results, Redburn narrates, in these ships being turned into whaling ships: in terms of naval architecture, whaling is thus described as the

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<sup>267</sup> “For the emigrants in these ships are under a sort of martial-law; and in all their affairs are regulated by the despotic ordinances of the captain. And though it is evident, that to a certain extent this is necessary, and even indispensable; yet, as at sea no appeal lies beyond the captain, he too often makes unscrupulous use of his power. And as for going to law with him at the end of the voyage, you might as well go to law with the Czar of Russia” (*Redburn*, 288).

melancholy almshouse of ships as each section of ship geography is converted toward a different purpose:

Thus, the ship that once carried over gay parties of ladies and gentlemen, as tourists, to Liverpool or London, now carries a crew of harpooners round Cape Horn into the Pacific. And the mahogany and bird's-eye maple cabin, which once held rosewood card-tables and brilliant coffee-urns, and in which many a bottle of champagne, and many a bright eye sparkled, *now* accommodates a bluff Quaker captain from Martha's Vineyard [...]. The broad quarter-deck, too, where these gentry promenaded, is now often choked up by the enormous head of the sperm-whale, and vast masses of unctuous blubber; and every where reeks with oil during the prosecution of the fishery. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* Thus departs the pride and glory of packet-ships! (119–20)

This succession, or flow, between sailing industries as ships change identities when adapted for different purposes also contributes to reading ships as assemblages: instead of clean separations, ships serve as repositories of the collective memory of seamanship, carrying all former striations and technical inscriptions on their bodies.

Melville takes a leap between *Redburn* and *White-Jacket* when it comes to shipboard structure: its narrative function in *Redburn* was part of the *Bildungsroman*, as the transatlantic voyage was pertinent to Redburn's social formation in search for his father's English past; in *White-Jacket*, Melville focuses on ship space entirely, creating a veritable anatomy of navy shipboard life. Instead of housing 500 emigrants like the *Highlander*, the U.S. frigate the *Neversink* now houses 500-odd crewmen. The voyage is not a return crossing of the Atlantic but a "homeward-bound" vector after three years of cruising: the frigate sails out of Callao, Peru, via Cape Horn but its final destination in the United States is only revealed as Norfolk, Virginia, in the penultimate chapter as the ship sails with sealed orders until it reaches a certain latitude (765). As an individuated character with a full name and family background, Wellingborough Redburn was an anomaly among Melville's first-person narrators; in *White-Jacket*, Melville returns to his incognito-fugitive paradigm of narration, creating a microcosm of characters, events, technology and language that are individuated, but also stand for all others of their kind: Melville's method, explicated in the longer Preface to the English edition, is to make them exemplary: "the object of this work is not to portray the particular man-of-war in which the author sailed, but, by illustrative scenes, to paint general life in the Navy" (1423–24, Note 343.1–9).

*White-Jacket* presents a spatial and temporal classification of shipboard life, from virtually all stations assigned to all parts of the ship and the accompanying seamanship cachet they carry, to the round-the-clock routine of naval labor, with substantial explanations of differences between the navy and other types of sailing (chaps. 2–4; 17; 19; 21; 38 et pass.). The hierarchical architecture of the Neversink in *White-Jacket* is described in far more systematic and exhaustive fashion than that of the Highlander in *Redburn*, including a greater degree of ceremony, in its incarnations of navy protocol, discipline, performatives, and spectacle. Like *Redburn*, *White-Jacket* is a main-top-man in the starboard watch, the difference being that sailors aboard navy ships are assigned to concrete, numbered, stations, whereas merchantmen have no duty specifications save for the elementary division into starboard/larboard watch (355; 359). Unlike *Redburn*, *White-Jacket* is not a novice but an experienced whaleman, however, he encounters the same obstacle of sea labor filtered through technical argot as *Redburn* does, having to learn a new code of seamanship in the navy in addition to his existing maritime knowledge: witnessing the contempt that many navy crewmen harbor for whaling, *White-Jacket* chooses not to disclose his whaling past to his fellow topmen (360–364). In terms of horizontal striations of shipboard space expounded in Chapter 3, *White-Jacket* speaks of Sheet-Anchor-men (the much respected veterans, situated on the fore-castle, in charge of “the fore-yard, anchors, and all the sails on the bowsprit, 356”), After-Guard’s-Men (whose duties are least seamanlike, but they labor in the stern and are chosen for their looks, 357), and Waisters (“the rag-tag and bob-tail of the crew,” stationed on the gun-deck in the waist of the vessel, “subject to ignoble duties” such as drainage, sewage, tending to animals and food storage, 357). Vertically, there are the topmen (“always made up of active sailors” and working above deck in the rigging, 356); in opposition, three levels below the main deck – there are laborers to whom *White-Jacket*, in clear contrast of prestige to the topmen to whom he belongs himself, refers to as “Troglodites,” the lowest class of laborers on board,

[...] who burrow, like rabbits in warrens, among the water-tanks, casks, and cables. Like Cornwall miners, wash off the soot from their skins, and they are pale as ghosts. Unless upon rare occasions, they seldom come on deck to sun themselves. They may circumnavigate the world fifty times, and they see about as much of it as Jonah did in the whale’s belly. They are a lazy, lumpish, torpid set; and when going ashore after a long cruise come out into the day, like terrapins from their caves, or bears in the

spring, from tree-trunks. No one ever knows the names of these fellows; after a three years' voyage, they still remain strangers to you. (357–58)

For *White-Jacket*, the distinction is virtually evolutionary, as if he were speaking of a different species of (sub)humans. He goes on to describe midshipmen in the steerage, as well as the complex ranking system of all the quarterdeck officers (Chap. 6). Similar to *Redburn*, he also provides spatial coordinates for “other spaces” on board (the sick-bay, Chap. 77; spots that sailors use for privacy and meditation, such as the fore-chains, or unused corners of the ship used for napping, chaps. 76; 21), as well as for what L. A. Zurcher refers to as the informal organization in the ship,<sup>268</sup> such as the scuttle-butt (i.e. the fountain), “just forward of the main hatchway, on the gun-deck” as the main place for socializing and gossip among sailors (*White-Jacket*, 647). The overall spatial effect on board the *Neversink* is that the set-up of the naval code is such that there is no organic comradeship or communal spirit: the method is to have compartmentalized yet closely-quartered groups of servicemen, set up in permanent opposition or even animosity toward each other:

The immutable ceremonies and iron etiquette of a man-of-war; the spiked barriers separating the various grades of rank; the delegated absolutism of authority on all hands; the impossibility, on the part of the common seaman, of appeal from incidental abuses, and many more things that might be enumerated, all tend to beget in most armed ships a general social condition which is the precise reverse of what any Christian could desire. [...] These things are undoubtedly heightened by the close cribbing and confinement of so many mortals in one oaken box on the sea. Like pears closely packed, the crowded crew mutually decay through close contact, and every plague-spot is contagious. (743)

Any fellow-feeling that might exist does not come from affection or common interest, but by virtue of being stuck together in the same trouble: *White-Jacket* observes his fellow crewmen “all employed at the same common business; all under lock and key; all hopeless prisoners like myself; all under martial law; all dieting on salt beef and biscuit; all in one uniform; all

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<sup>268</sup> Zurcher's article “The Sailor Aboard Ship: A Study of Role Behavior in a Total Institution,” is useful for illustration and comparison from the perspectives of history and social psychology, as he analyzes the hierarchy and divisions between various groups of officers and enlisted sailors on a twentieth-century navy steamer (*Social Forces* 43, no. 3 [Mar. 1965]: 389–400).

yawning, gaping, and stretching in concert, it was then that I used to feel a certain love and affection for them, grounded, doubtless, on a fellow-feeling” (529). In fact, the effect of *White-Jacket* as a shipboard anatomy is that, unlike with the Highlander in *Redburn* or the Pequod in *Moby-Dick*, there is no impression of a totality of the ship, only compartments, divisions, and subdivisions – in other words, striation. The minutiae of horizontal and vertical space compartmentalization on board the Neversink are indicative of the specific biopolitics of navy ship territorialization, in the service of the machine of nation: hyper-regulated ship space is in the service of creating docile bodies, and desired subjectification is achieved through a hyperstriated navy chronotope,<sup>269</sup> the mechanism of which is to create divisions instead of bonds. Strict shipboard discipline is alternately described in the narrative as excessive and as a necessary evil to keep the multitude of the crew in check.

Intervals of sanctioned leniency serve to reinforce navy discipline: in addition to the allowed shortcuts in chain of command during crises mentioned above, there are “dog-watches” (two hours in the early part of the evening), which “form the only authorized play-time for the crews of most ships at sea” (638). Another such example is “giving people liberty,” or granting sailors a day of leave when the ship is in port.

An important example of sanctioned leniency on board involves a spectacle: shipboard theatricals. In Chapter 23, the crew put together a play as a Fourth of July celebration, called “Cape Horn Theatre” – “The Old Wagon Paid Off!” (444). Several aspects of the relation between ship space, discipline, and performativity stand out: first, the theatricals are described as a deliberate substitution for the lack of grog on board the Neversink, thus one ceremonial form of leniency is replaced for another. Second, theatricals are associated with killing time in foreign harbors, thus indulging transgressive behavior at the same time as exerting control over the crew. Third, the part of the ship designated for the play is the half-deck (the portion of the deck next below the spar deck, which is between the mainmast and the cabin), which means that sailors are allowed to leave their usual stations and cross over into a special part of the ship that is not usually open to all. Further, the crossover of ship space is associated with

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<sup>269</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin defines the chronotope as “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. [...] What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space). We understand the chronotope as a formally constitutive category of literature [...] In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history” (*The Dialogic Imagination*, 84). The concept is highly relevant in my reading: firstly, because voyage literature foregrounds conceptualizations of space and time by default; secondly, because spatial and temporal aspects of shipboard life are intrinsically connected since the ship functions as self-sufficient entity (monad); finally, because both Melville and Conrad reimagine “temporal and spatial relationships” in their sea-themed narratives.

crossover in naval rank: discipline is temporarily lax during the theatricals as the event brings together the officers and “the people.” Finally, *White-Jacket* emphasizes the connection between theatricals and the performativity that is inherent to navy ceremony: “if ever there was a continual theatre in the world, playing by night and by day, and without intervals between the acts, a man-of-war is that theatre, and her planks are the boards indeed” (442).

The connection between performativity and discipline – cruelty, even – on a navy ship is evidenced again in the other main spectacle on board the *Neversink*: corporal punishment, as the officers don their “quarterdeck faces” (chaps. 33–36; 52; 67; 88). Like the “Cape Horn Theatre,” all crew members are expected to attend the ceremonies of Reading aloud the Articles of War (chaps. 70–72) and of flogging, or flogging through the fleet: the summons “*All hands witness punishment, ahoy!*” is shouted out three times (488–89). The rituals of reading aloud the articles of martial law which subjectify sailors on board and of the meticulously directed disciplining of those who trespass against this martial law (the ceremony is described in detail in Chap. 33) complement and contrast the public spectacle of the theater performance, creating a site of circular surveillance and hidden places, discipline and resistance, sanctioned liberties and unsanctioned transgressions – the only effect of totality, in fact, of this hyper-compartmentalized institution.

## 2.6. The ship as heterotopia

It warrants to address Michel Foucault’s concept of the heterotopia, namely of the ship as the heterotopia par excellence, as a relevant tool in my readings of Melville and Conrad and a commonplace in studies of sea literature. Foucault describes the ship as “a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea [...]”<sup>270</sup> In addition to these general terms, shipboard geography deserves a more detailed rundown with Foucault’s six principles of heterotopias which outline, among other things, the workings of power within heterotopias as well as their potential for subversion. The ship can thus be incarnated as a heterotopia of crisis and of deviation (the first principle) in its modalities of the navy and of the brig; as the heterochronia of the festival (the fourth principle) in its performativity. Due to press gangs and initiations, entry into a ship is either “compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications” (the fifth principle).

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<sup>270</sup> Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 27.

Finally, the ship is also a heterotopia of compensation (the sixth principle), where cleanliness of space and rigidity of conduct creates “a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled.”<sup>271</sup>

Nevertheless, a fundamental issue in the variety of actualizations of the ship in Melville’s and Conrad’s writing remains the distribution, mechanisms, and challenges of power; the tension between creating docile bodies and resistance to that form of biopolitics, between attempting to establish omnipresent surveillance in confined space and the search and/or allowance for blind spots of surveillance within those confines. In that respect, based on Foucault’s reading of Jeremy Bentham, shipboard geography could also be examined as a panopticonic spatial organization.<sup>272</sup> Foucault did not relate the two concepts in either *Discipline and Punish* or “Of Other Spaces,” however, certain spaces appear in his analyses in both works, such as the prison and the hospital, offering areas of potential comparison. Not only does he describe the idea of the panopticon as “Bentham’s utopia,”<sup>273</sup> which is a step away from analyzing its “concrete forms” as heterotopias, Foucault examines the prison under the heading “Complete and Austere Institutions,” where he also includes convict-ships.<sup>274</sup> Based on Erving Goffman’s *Asylums*, L. A. Zurcher analyzes the twentieth-century navy ship as a “total institution” from the perspective of social psychology, pointing to further research in this direction.<sup>275</sup>

At the same time, reading literary shipboard geographies of the nineteenth century with Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*, we cannot neglect the fact that the architecture of the ship is constructed so that *unsurveillable* areas exist, and that there is no interest or effort to eliminate them. This points to a pre-modern configuration, which focuses on controlling the body of the sailor, and where the public enactment of discipline and punishment fits in: in a top-down regime of executing orders, what is important is that adequate labor is carried out by the body. In other words, the quarterdeck is only interested in the forecastle in terms of its performance of the labor of seamanship, which in turn constitutes labor as both complicit with regimes of power and as a potential area of resistance (both of which aspects are touched on by Melville and Conrad). What the sailors do when not on watch, and how the internal

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1975; New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 231; 258.

<sup>275</sup> Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1961), xiii. The concept of the “total institution” was critically revised for the purposes of analyzing shipboard structure by Perry and Wilkie in “Social Theory and Shipboard Structure: Some Reservations on an Emerging Orthodoxy” (1974).

dynamic is set up within the forecabin, is thus of no concern to the officers in what Zurcher refers to as the “informal” aspects of shipboard labor. Acknowledging the importance of unsurveillable areas to the functioning of the ship helps us understand what Conrad does: if Melville’s ship anatomies traced all the burrows that common sailors found or carved for themselves to hide from the officers and the rest of their forecabin-mates, Conrad depicts a maritime world where *officers* experience being surveyed, and avail themselves of the hidden spaces on board ships in turn. Marlow speaks of “eyes” in the jungle, “eyes that had seen us;”<sup>276</sup> going blind himself, Captain Whalley in “The End of the Tether” is closely watched by the owner and engineer Massy; the entire narrative of “The Secret Sharer” is about a captain hiding his double/lover inside the cabin.

## 2.7. The ship as a machinic assemblage

In Deleuzian terms, any ship could be described as a machinic assemblage, the constitutive elements of which are deterritorialized in their own right in order to come together as a new compound. This new territory of the ship-assemblage, connected to land interests by way of its specific industry but also existing as an independently functioning system, consists of: a vessel – the piece of naval architecture made of natural and/or artificial material as a non-human element with its own set of technical performances;<sup>277</sup> a crew, which could also be described as “a social machine” inasmuch as it makes up a social field where different relations of labor and power are established in close relation to the technical properties of the vessel; and thirdly, something that I will call the vector of a voyage, and a compound in itself, comprising interaction between the technical, social, and even ideological, parameters of any single voyage (direction – outbound, homeward-bound, or undefined, as in exploratory missions or whaling; deadlines; ports of call; duration; specific maritime industry – navy, merchant marine, exploration, fishery, piloting, etc.) and the geographical elements against or alongside which they are acted out, human and non-human (the flux of the sea runs a full gamut from coastal to transoceanic journeys; weather and climate conditions; maritime landscape interventions such as the Suez or Panama canals, etc.). In sea narratives, these interactions usually take the form of crises (e.g. shipwreck, mutiny, accidents, desertion, etc.),

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<sup>276</sup> Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 42.

<sup>277</sup> W. Bonney also speaks of the sea in Conrad as a “nonhuman force” (“Betrayal of Language,” 146), and of the *Narcissus* as “a stable but nonhuman figure” (153), but unlike my concept of the ship-assemblage, he does not approach the Deleuzian line of thought to suggest that the nonhuman elements might on a certain plane enter into conjunction with the human element to form a new compound.

which lead to a variety of possible resolutions, from successful voyages that reach port and fulfill their missions to ships sinking and crews breaking up and/or refusing duty.

Any ship can thus be seen/read as an assemblage of human, natural, and technical elements in that it comes together and is taken apart in every individual voyage: merchant ships are most likely to lose and replace crew members, but their vectors are firmly regulated in terms of ports of call and deadlines; a single transoceanic merchant route changes dramatically if it employs a steamer instead of a sailing ship; a navy vessel might operate with the same hyper-territorialized crew for a long period of time, but the vectors of different missions change; even piloting coastal vessels – the closest to sedentary travel as far as sailing is concerned – have their purpose rooted in the need for hyperstriation of the ever-changing and unpredictable coastal landscape. In this sense, every ship could be described as a ship of Theseus, assembling and disassembling each time it leaves or reaches port, transfiguring during the voyage, the maintenance and replacement of its constituents driven by the desire to perpetuate the functioning of the machine.

With this outline, numerous variations of ships as assemblages become visible in both Melville's and Conrad's sea writing. To name only a few, the international character of crews throughout their oeuvres could be seen as an assemblage factor. In *Redburn*, the Highlander undergoes spatial modifications between the outbound and homeward-bound voyages in order to accommodate 500 passengers in lieu of cargo (Chap. 47), and one of the boats is, commonly for merchantmen, used as an animal pen (Chap. 59). *White-Jacket* expounds on how ship space would be converted and rearranged before battle (Chap. 16, pp. 419–420) and mentions the curious fact that Nelson's coffin was made out of the mainmast of the French line-of-battle ship L'Orient (Chap. 74, p. 683). The Pequod is described as a ship-animal, not only decorated with sperm-whale teeth, but with "sea-ivory" actually used as functioning ship parts (Chap. 16, p. 70); it also has a tri-partite Captain – Peleg, Bildad, and Ahab (Chap. 22 et pass.). The illogical spatial organization on board the San Dominick in "Benito Cereno" is a red flag, for readers if not for Amasa Delano, that a change of power has occurred on board (675–678). I have already mentioned Captain Whalley's feeling close to fusion between men and ships in Conrad's "The End of the Tether." In "Youth," the Judea undergoes virtually all of the transformations imaginable for a ship-assemblage: continuous disruptions of the crew and the vector of the voyage due to technical difficulties and weather; makeshift solutions that keep the ship from falling apart during a gale, as well as repairing a leak with entirely new parts (427; 429); damage caused by rats (429); fire, originating in the cargo hold (430–435),

after which the crew reach Bangkok in rescue boats, affirming that even the vessel of the ship can be dispensed with for the assemblage to still be in place.

## 2.8. Maritime subjectification in Melville and Conrad: Sailors as sedentary and nomadic

Both Melville and Conrad portray sailors as more sedentary than might be expected from sailors' traditional reputation in history and literature. While Melville does feature more references toward a smoother existence, such as the expatriate, a-national character of sailors and the connection between patriotism and sedentary existence in *White-Jacket* (427; 748), in *Redburn* he offers the following description:

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*; and their reminiscences of travel are only a dim recollection of a chain of tap-rooms surrounding the globe, parallel with the Equator. *They but touch the perimeter of the circle; hover about the edges of terra-firma*; and only land upon wharves and pier-heads. (148, emphasis mine)

The frame-narrator in *Heart of Darkness* singles out Marlow's roving disposition as an exception among fellow sailors:

He was a seaman, but he was a wanderer too, while most seamen lead, if one may so express it, a sedentary life. Their minds are of the stay-at-home order, and their home is always with them – the ship – and so is their country – the sea. One ship is very much like another and the sea is always the same. In the immutability of their surroundings the foreign shores, the foreign faces, the changing immensity of life glide past, veiled not by a sense of mystery but by a slightly disdainful ignorance, for there is nothing mysterious to a seaman unless it be the sea itself [...]. For the rest, after his hours of work, a casual stroll or a casual spree on shore suffices to unfold for him the secret of a whole continent, and generally he finds the secret not worth knowing.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 5. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

The background for Melville's incognito fugitives and for Conrad's agents of empire, then, is a class of sailors who are described as too poor to explore beyond the port of call (*Redburn*, 151–152), susceptible to local gangs who prey upon them (*Redburn*, 211), with strong family ties to land and plans for shore life (*The Narcissus*, 65–66; 102), and rather clumsy and out of their element upon docking (*The Narcissus*, 106). There is enough historical evidence to suggest that sailors as a social group did not experience a major shift towards sedentary modes of existence, but that, as Watson noted, the shift happened in literary representation.<sup>279</sup> It is more probable that Melville and Conrad both tailored their works to be balanced for their target audiences, while at the same time unsettling existing preconceptions of boundary-crossing in other aspects of their works.

Both Melville's and Conrad's protagonists strive for self-sameness and exhibit great resistance towards having it disrupted. The difference lies in that, for Melville's heroes, the threat of subjectival dissolution comes from the collective as well as from the other, since their aim is to produce an individuated enunciation. For Conrad's heroes, subjectival threats occur on the line between the Home and the World, which are not conceived as a (self-same) inside and a (self-different) outside, but as community of (self-)surveillance with a maritime conductor, where the general familiarity of everyone involved in sea business with everyone else's affairs is such that it threatens the secrecy and covert channeling of power that used to be the privilege of imperial agents, and which produces the effect of confined space on a hemispheric scale. For Melville's fugitives, Home is a destination left behind in the quest for what the subject-in-formation imagines as his authentic way of being,<sup>280</sup> a wall that had to be broken through; for Conrad's self-effacing yet self-inscribing agents, Home is a place of epistemological liability. If we recall Brian McHale's distinction between modernism and postmodernism as, essentially, the distinction between the dominant of the text being epistemological versus ontological,<sup>281</sup> Conrad's writing would still be capitally modernist even in its maritime sphere, while Melville's would emerge as containing proto-postmodernist elements, warranting a study in its own right. As a conclusion here, Conrad was perhaps braver than Melville in venturing to trace "the changes that go on inside," as the same never

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<sup>279</sup> Watson, *Sailor in English Fiction and Drama*, 203.

<sup>280</sup> The first-person narrator of Melville's *Omoo* had been called "Tommo" by the natives of Typee in Melville's previous narrative – to which *Omoo* is expressly linked – and he will be called "Paul" by Doctor Long Ghost towards the end of *Omoo*, but in the Round Robin he signs his name as "Typee" – the nickname he had received after his last destination, and a poignant example of how Melville's incognito fugitives reinvent themselves in the voyage.

<sup>281</sup> Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*, (New York and London: Methuen, 1987), 9–10.

returns to the same in his sea writing, whereas Melville took the changes that threatened the “inside” and folded them back onto the outside.

## 2.9. Conclusion: Sailing industries, ship space, and sea literature

More untapped potential for literary interpretations lies in differentiating between various kinds of sailing industries (and rivalries between them), and examining how they correlate with the smooth-striated spatiality gamut. What should be kept in mind is the themes and issues, maritime and otherwise, which Melville and Conrad attach to these types of sailing. With Melville, whaling narratives are associated with ship desertion, mutiny, anxiety of going native, Western colonization of Pacific islands; his navy narratives focus on what could be described as the biopolitics of seamanship: rigid discipline and the labor conditions of sailors, corporal and capital punishment; his one merchant marine text addresses business and commerce of the West with little venture towards contact with the other, as well as the enactment of (pseudo-)Oedipal connections between England and America. With Conrad, the dominance of the merchant marine is so prevalent that his narratives exhibit differentiation along different lines: deepwater voyages versus inland or coastal sailing, and sailing ships versus steamships. *The Narcissus* is an exception in terms of its detailed portrayal of the entire shipboard structure, with particular focus on the forecabin; for the large part, Conrad’s sea narratives address issues and anxieties of command, mission, or agency versus individual character and personal ideology.

Although shipboard geography has been the subject of historical, maritime, sociological and other scholarship,<sup>282</sup> to the best of my research, ship space in sea literature is accepted as a given and seldom analyzed as a valid subject in its own right, or understood as fundamentally different from land-based spatiality. Moreover, this disregard for the place of shipboard spatiality in the constitution of sea ethos can result in interpretations that stretch what is plausible in sea narratives, reading them as if *mores* of land-based society were entirely applicable to shipboard structure. At the same time, sea narratives should not be assumed to speak only of shipboard structure: their displaced social microcosms provide as much commentary about land-based society as they do about sea life, which adds to the potential of shipboard space as an object of study for new readings and interpretations.

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<sup>282</sup> My readings here are informed primarily by the works of M. Creighton, E. Goffman, N. Perry and R. Wilkie, and L. A. Zurcher, Jr.



### 3. HERMAN MELVILLE'S SEA NARRATIVES AND MINOR LITERATURE

#### 3.1. Introduction: Melville and minor literature

According to Deleuze and Guattari, “The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation.”<sup>283</sup> Herman Melville’s works are explored in all these aspects in a number of Deleuze’s texts, most notably in “On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature” (with Claire Parnet), *A Thousand Plateaus* (with Félix Guattari), and *Essays Critical and Clinical* (“Bartleby; or, The Formula,” and “He Stuttered”). Along with Franz Kafka in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* as a focal point, Melville’s writing joins that of Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, Samuel Beckett and several others to contribute to the articulation of the very concept of *littérature mineure*.

Secondly, Deleuze and Guattari describe minor literature as

[...] literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism; and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility [...]. The literary machine thus becomes the relay for a revolutionary machine-to-come, not at all for ideological reasons but because the literary machine alone is determined to fill the conditions of a collective enunciation that is lacking elsewhere in this milieu: *literature is the people’s concern*.<sup>284</sup>

This chapter examines how the concept of minor literature interacts with the specific ethos of Melville’s sea narratives. This interaction is worth studying for several reasons. Firstly, ship crews are a logical starting point for reading Melville’s sea oeuvre with Deleuze and Guattari: confined to close, compartmentalized living quarters and laboring in hyperregulated chronotopes,<sup>285</sup> ship crews are minority subjects par excellence, where everything is indeed collective, as well as political. Rather than existing “on the margins” of their shipboard communities, Melville’s first-person narrators could be described as folded into the collective

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<sup>283</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 18.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 17–18.

<sup>285</sup> As Hester Blum says, “In its codes and its structure, maritime work was necessarily collective; by virtue of sailors’ geographical isolation, time off duty was spent communally as well” (*View from the Masthead*, 111).

of the ship from the outside: they are sailors who never really become sailors. For the most part, they are incognito sons of gentlemen who have infiltrated the forecabin with the primary mission of never fitting in because they were never supposed to be there in the first place. As a consequence, their language refuses to be that of the master, but it is not a language of the people either. In fact, they strive for an individuated enunciation from behind their incognito monikers: there is nothing that they would like more than to be able to tell their own story, but the past that they have lost, relinquished, or which they are trying to hide in order to survive, whether in the tight-knit collective or in the vast expanse of global geography, prevents them from actualizing themselves as individuals. I will use the technical argot of sailing, and Melville's narrative treatment of narrowly sea-related themes, as entry points in examining the deterritorialization of language in Melville's sea writing and the specific new collective it establishes.

What kind of narrative, artistic and political capital emerges when what was thought of (in its various forms) as social or political order is exposed as *an* order, belonging to a specific ethos of land, its operations of exploration, commerce and territorial acquisition carried out through the heterotopic ethos of the sea, where different rules apply? What are the (self-) imagological effects of refracting subjectivity, economy, and nation through the nineteenth-century space of the ship and the variety of seafaring industries to which ships belong, especially since they are inherently international? Addressing these questions should not aim to reevaluate whether Melville falls within or without the "minor literature" label, or to extrapolate a presumably specific form of either sea narratives or American national literature from Melville's writing. My aim is to examine the productive tensions which emerge when the concept of minor literature is read back against the sea ethos and specific properties of Melville's sea writing.

In "Bartleby; or, The Formula" Deleuze speaks of how Melville's works (*Redburn*; *Moby-Dick*; *Pierre*; *Bartleby*; *The Confidence-Man*; *Billy Budd*) enact and problematize collectivity, specifically in connection with the paternal function. He traces how they break off from the paternal/Oedipal pattern by choosing the psychotic, rather than the neurotic path: Bartleby's "I prefer not to" disrupts the language of the father and the son; *Pierre* replaces the neurotic maternal incest with the brother-sister relationship that diminishes identification with the father; by targeting specific "offenders" – Moby Dick and Billy Budd – Ahab and Claggart unsettle the universality of and equality under law.<sup>286</sup> After stating the need for the

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<sup>286</sup> Deleuze, "Bartleby," 77–79; also, "On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature," 31–32.

paternal function to be dissolved, Deleuze asks the question, “How can this community be realized?”<sup>287</sup> He proceeds to offer America, i.e. the American historical, geographical and political “patchwork” or American pragmatism (which for Deleuze includes its prefiguration in Melville’s writing), as the answer and resolution to these questions.<sup>288</sup> American pragmatism is “this double principle of archipelago and hope:” it requires that “the knowing subject, the sole proprietor, [...] give way to a community of explorers, the brothers of the archipelago, who replace knowledge with belief, or rather with ‘confidence’ – not belief in another world, but confidence in this one, and in man as much as in God.”<sup>289</sup> This pragmatism will fight against “particularities that pit man against man and nourish an irremediable mistrust; but also against the Universal or the Whole, the fusion of souls in the name of great love or charity” – what is left, Deleuze says, is “originality.”<sup>290</sup> The concept of the archipelago, or “archipelago-perspectivism,” emerges as highly relevant:

It is first of all the affirmation of a world in *process*, an *archipelago*. Not even a puzzle, whose pieces when fitted together would constitute a whole, but rather a wall of loose, uncemented stones, where every element has a value in itself but also in relation to others: isolated and floating relations islands and straits, immobile points and sinuous lines – for Truth always has “jagged edges.”<sup>291</sup>

An ethos of dissolving universalizing principles (such as the paternal Law, or a knowing unified subject) and a shift towards non-hierarchical, unstructured, floating configurations (such as exemplified in the archipelago) will be of essence in my readings of Melville and Conrad.

Deleuze also notes the pitfalls of such an ethos: historical failures, such as those of the American and Soviet revolutions, evidenced in the fact that the paternal function was reinstated with the restoration of the nation-state; as well as failures in Melville’s literary consciousness, evident in “Bartleby;” *White-Jacket*; “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids;” *The Encantadas*; *The Confidence-Man*.<sup>292</sup> Between the dream of the

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 77–78; 85–88.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 86. Deleuze’s archipelago perspectivism should also be complemented with the ideas outlined in one of his early essays, “Desert Islands.”

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 85–89.

society of brothers and the threat of “the return of the father,”<sup>293</sup> Deleuze ends the essay with two points concerning politics and writing: by claiming that, “even in the midst of its failure, the American Revolution continues to send out its fragments, always making something take flight on the horizon,” and that “Even in his failure, the writer remains all the more the bearer of a collective enunciation, which no longer forms part of literary history and preserves the rights of a people to come, or of a human becoming.”<sup>294</sup> While this might sound as an echo of the Romantic principle that the failure of the work only accentuates the grandeur of artistic intention behind it – ironized by Melville himself by writing that “Failure is the true test of greatness,”<sup>295</sup> Deleuze’s thought implies that every “break through the wall”<sup>296</sup> is in fact productive of new configurations, towards a literature that “is the people’s concern.” Melville employs the paternal function, subject dissolution, and society of brothers in various ways throughout his sea-themed writing, in active reconfigurations of subjectivity, capitalism, and nation. The fraternal principle emerges in several forms: one is the “universal fraternity” Deleuze speaks of; another is its failure, manifested as the return of the paternal principle to disrupt the society of brothers, bringing with it “charity and philanthropy – all the masks of the paternal function;”<sup>297</sup> finally, Melville also articulates a temporary, subversive, and productive assemblage of a community of two. As a result, Melville’s sea writing does not seek to extricate itself from English literature in order to form a monistic American literary identity, but articulates itself in continuous dialogue with it. Finally, a more discernible collective is formed by Melville’s sea oeuvre, founded in an inversion of the language of sea narratives and the textual-imaginary community formed in the space between labor and reading.

### **3.2. American sea writing before Melville: Personal sailor narratives, J. F. Cooper, R. H. Dana Jr.**

Three major moments preceded Melville’s writing that are pertinent to the focus of this dissertation, for which I rely on Hester Blum’s study *The View from the Masthead*: the emergence of first-person nonfictional sea narratives written by working sailors; the rise of James Fenimore Cooper as both a figure of sea writing and “our national author,” as Melville

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 89–90.

<sup>295</sup> Herman Melville, “Hawthorne and His Mosses,” in *Moby-Dick*, ed. Hershel Parker and Harrison Hayford (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), 527.

<sup>296</sup> Deleuze, “Bartleby,” 89.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 88.

referred to him in his 1849 review of *The Sea Lions*;<sup>298</sup> and the contribution of Richard Henry Dana Jr.'s model of sea writing, which, dispensing with romanticism and insisting on material detail, gave legitimacy to the labor of common sailors serving "before the mast" but also managed to be more inclusive of nonspecialist readers than the maritime narratives preceding it.

As Blum notes, "American sailor writing came into being [...] when U.S. ships fell victim to Barbary piracy in the absence of British protection after the Revolutionary War."<sup>299</sup> Targeting the reading public and practical use of fellow sailors who might find themselves in the same predicament, the dozen-odd Barbary captivity narratives remain for the most part overlooked by critics according to Blum,<sup>300</sup> however, they paved the way toward wider public sympathy for the working sailor, as well as toward the production of first-person factual accounts directed at a larger land-based readership that ensued in the late federal era, especially in the aftermath of the War of 1812,<sup>301</sup> which, according to Robert E. Spiller, also served as a milestone on the general level of American national cultural consciousness.<sup>302</sup> These personal sea narratives foregrounded the materiality of seafaring and the conditions of labor from a viewpoint before the mast.<sup>303</sup>

Cooper's maritime-themed works might remain less known and popular in comparison with his Leatherstocking Tales, but his sea opus nonetheless includes "eleven novels, an American naval history, a commentary on a prominent case of mutiny, and an edited narrative of the life of a former shipmate."<sup>304</sup> His contribution to American literature lies in his commitment to the formation of a national cultural identity and in his inauguration of sea fiction.<sup>305</sup> While it is undeniable that Cooper's writing opened the door for many fictional and nonfictional maritime authors, such as William Leggett, Nathaniel Ames, Richard Henry Dana Jr. and Melville himself, if we placed Blum's revisionist reading<sup>306</sup> of Cooper's earlier sea fiction alongside Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature, we would most likely

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<sup>298</sup> Quoted in Rollyson, Paddock, and Gentry, *Critical Companion to Herman Melville: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (New York: Facts on File, 2006), 273.

<sup>299</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 8.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>302</sup> Robert E. Spiller, *The American Literary Revolution, 1783–1837* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967), x.

<sup>303</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, chaps. 2–3.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, 74–75.

<sup>306</sup> In her reading, Blum points out the complex literary history and contradictions of personal legitimation in Cooper's editing of the *Ned Myers* narrative (*View from the Masthead*, 92–102). She also notes how the almost legendary story of Cooper's having composed *The Pilot* (as well as *The Red Rover*) as a nautically precise corrective of Walter Scott's *The Pirate* only emerged in Cooper's revised preface to the 1849 reprint of *The Pilot* by G. P. Putnam. The legend was further popularized by Thomas Lounsbury's posthumous biography of Cooper and virtually unquestioned since (*View from the Masthead*, 81–82).

describe Cooper as a “major” author. Instead of embracing the first-person factual method of writing that sailor authors had established before him, he reached back to England for the historical romance model. Unlike Melville after him, Cooper seemed to perceive American history and ordinary sailor life as not rich or grand enough for his literary aims.<sup>307</sup> In his early sea fiction, he was also more interested in hierarchy and rank at sea than in detailed material conditions of labor, a politics that appealed to the *North American Review* in their efforts toward the establishment of an American national literature.<sup>308</sup>

Cooper had served on merchant ships, but was also a privileged beneficiary of his class when it came to procuring a midshipman commission through his father’s political connections upon joining the U.S. Navy in 1808.<sup>309</sup> In turn, his sea writing would feature enough technical specifics to make it plausible and appealing to land-based readers, without requiring concrete understanding of the language or inviting engaged interest in the conditions of sea labor. Despite being praised by critics for his use of sea language, it would not be persuasive enough for Ames and some other sailor writers.<sup>310</sup> Together with his revised prefaces to *The Pilot* and *The Red Rover* from 1849–50, a picture forms of Cooper as an author who not only sought to replicate existing literary models and hierarchical structures from across the Atlantic in his sea narratives, but who also found it important to inscribe himself into American national literature as a figure of (originary) authority: in his 1843 letter to Rufus Griswold he said “It has been said there is no original literature in America. I confess an inability to find the model for all the sea tales, that now so much abound, if it be not the Pilot [sic].”<sup>311</sup> Cooper’s literary politics was, for the large part, majoritarian in that it sought to replace the literary authority of England with that of America, but found frustration in trying to transplant existing hierarchical and generic models into American context.

Taking into account the discrepancy between his family background and his position on board the *Pilgrim* and the *Alert*, Richard Henry Dana Jr.’s writing nevertheless widened the space of legitimacy for first-person narratives of common sailors and technical argot. This kind of sea writing would make it easier for Melville to write about the sea in a way which

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<sup>307</sup> In an 1831 letter to Care & Lea publishers, Cooper wrote: “Europe itself is a Romance, while all America is a matter of fact, humdrum, common sense region from Quoddy to Cape Florida” (quoted in Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 77), whereas his 1850 Preface to *Red Rover* stated that “The history of this country has very little to aid the writer of fiction, whether the scene be laid on the land or on the water” (ibid., 90).

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 76–77.

<sup>309</sup> Thomas Raynesford Lounsbury, “Chapter I, 1789–1820,” in *James Fenimore Cooper* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1883).

<sup>310</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 72; 78–79.

<sup>311</sup> Quoted in Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 91.

could later, for Deleuze and Guattari, contribute to the formulation of the concept of minor literature.

### 3.3. Melville and the project of building American national literature

Hershel Parker writes: “In Melville’s youth the air had been thick with projects for a great independent national literature designed to match the physical and political grandeur of the young nation that had achieved and confirmed its independence by twice defeating the British,” and “in late 1847 Melville at twenty-eight found himself in a literary society where many American editors and writers, some hardly older than he was, hoped and plotted to rival the British in every aspect of literary production.”<sup>312</sup> Within this context, two broad factions appeared to form:

On one side were those who believed that American literature would best develop organically from its English roots and that the task of American literary men was to treat American themes in such a way as to link them with the best that had been said and thought in the Old World. Americans spoke the language of Shakespeare and this bound them to an essentially British outlook, as Edward Everett, for one, maintained.

On the other side were those who argued that literature as it was understood in the Old World was the institutional consequence of a hierarchical society. It depended ultimately on free time that the reading class procured through exploiting the mass of men. True democracy, making its first modern appearance on the American continent, meant not just a radically new kind of society but a radically different kind of literature.<sup>313</sup>

At the same time, interpreting Melville in terms of literary nationalism or internationalism seems to be less prominent as new readings emerge which place Melville in the context of print – and reprint – culture of antebellum America, namely magazine

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<sup>312</sup> Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography*, 1:573. Parker also provides a detailed account of the efforts of American writers of the time in the realm of epic poetry, as well as Melville’s personal opinion of them on the same pages, whereas a broader context is given in Robert E. Spiller’s anthology *American Literary Revolution*.

<sup>313</sup> Larzer Ziff, “Shakespeare and Melville’s America,” in *New Perspectives on Melville*, ed. Faith Pullin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978), 57.

publishing and writing/publishing for audiences on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>314</sup> After decades of scholarly efforts in studying the degrees of Melville's adherence to ideas of a collective American literary nationalism<sup>315</sup> and in the context of a call for a less- or de-nationalized remapping of American literature (such as by Lawrence Buell, Wai-chee Dimock and Paul Giles), Ida Rothschild's recent reading of his "Hawthorne and His Mosses" dismantled the professed nationalist discourse of "the Virginian" to uncover a submerged critique of the literary politics of the New Democrats, advocating against copyright law and in favor of a supposedly collective original American literary genius that would emerge.<sup>316</sup> According to Rothschild, "Through his critique of literary nationalism and American exceptionalism, Melville implies that, rather than seeking an insular cultural separation, American authors need to acknowledge and build on their shared cultural history with England."<sup>317</sup> My reading of Melville's sea-themed narratives with the concept of minor literature arrives at the same conclusion: the literary identity of Melville's sea narratives is always-already Anglo-American, imagining the American nation, its maritime activity and its writing in parallel and in comparison with its British origins, connections and models without the eventual goal of superseding them.

Hester Blum notes the specific challenges that American sea narratives pose in this sense:

For one, U.S. sailors have been seen by naval and maritime historians as agents in the project of early American nation building, even though seamen faced historically specific problems that frustrated the benefits of national affiliation (most directly, Barbary piracy and British impressments). The importance of their status as American

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<sup>314</sup> For instance, in *The New Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville*, Graham Thompson makes a case for reading "Bartleby," as well as Melville's other writing, in the context of contemporary magazine culture in America. I mention Lawrence Buell's "double audience awareness" in Melville in Note 378 of this chapter.

<sup>315</sup> Rothschild notes: "Critical works that use the 'Mosses' to address Melville's views on American authorship often assume that the work constitutes proof that Melville was – at least temporarily – an enthusiastic literary nationalist labouring within Evert Duyckinck's Young America circle," noting titles by G. Brown; J. McWilliams; S. Post-Lauria; E. Renker; D. Reynolds; and E. Widmer in this respect ("Reframing Melville's 'Manifesto' 'Hawthorne and His Mosses' and the Culture of Reprinting," *The Cambridge Quarterly* 41, no. 3 [2012]: 318, Note 2). She cites P. Coviello; M. T. Gilmore as authors who deem Melville as "only momentarily invested in nationalistic causes" (*ibid.*, 319, Note 2), and studies by R. Milder; W. Dimock as examples of constructing Melville "as an advocate for American exceptionalism and expansionism" (*ibid.*, 319, Note 2).

<sup>316</sup> Rothschild notes: "While advocates argued that America would only reach cultural maturity by protecting the rights of its authors, the New Democrats felt that copyright law would lend authority to the work of British authors, perpetuating America's status as a cultural colony of England. Original genius in American literature was destined to arrive, New Democrats insisted, but it would not assume the same form as it had abroad. Rather than being imitative, they explained, true American genius would arise naturally from within the country, as if spontaneously erupting from the native soil itself" ("Reframing Melville's 'Manifesto,'" 336).

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

citizens would fade in sailor writing after the early decades of the nineteenth century, in fact, when the threat of piracy and impressments were largely eliminated. International by definition, sailors and their multinational crewmates would appear to be the perfect subjects for the study of the global political economy, and indeed, scholars in Atlantic and related studies have discussed their position as collective laborers in an international setting. Yet sailors' actual writings have not significantly factored in such criticism.<sup>318</sup>

Finally, Deleuze's readings must be taken into account when discussing Melville as an American author: on the one hand, Deleuze espouses the idea of an "Anglo-American" literature, which builds configurations different from those produced in continental European literatures,<sup>319</sup> and which would in fact be in line with how Melville develops his position in his own writing. On the other hand, in "Bartleby" Deleuze discusses American literature separately from English and continental European literatures based on its "*democratic contribution*" (noted by Lawrence) which runs counter to "the European morality of salvation and charity, a morality of life in which the soul is fulfilled only by taking to the road, with no other aim, open to all contacts, never trying to save other souls, turning away from those that produce an overly authoritarian or groaning sound."<sup>320</sup> In this other sense, American literature per se could be understood as a minoritarian tendency within Anglo-American literature, as "The American is the one who is freed from the English paternal function, the son of a crumbled father, the son of all nations,"<sup>321</sup> which is a position explored in Melville's sea writing as well.

### **3.4. The collective and the political in Melville's sea writing**

#### **3.4.1. Ship crews: The sailor, the contract, the institution**

This section focuses on two issues: to what degree the "community of brothers" of which Deleuze speaks in "Bartleby" is actualized on board Melville's ships, and how these communities communicate as "collective assemblage[s] of enunciation" which characterize Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature.<sup>322</sup> Answers to these questions vary across

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<sup>318</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 12.

<sup>319</sup> Deleuze and Parnet, "On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature."

<sup>320</sup> Deleuze, "Bartleby," 87.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>322</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 18.

Melville's sea oeuvre and depend closely on the type of sailing depicted. As part of his description of the rank of midshipmen and their place in the distribution of power and discipline on board a frigate, *White-Jacket* makes a general comment on the interior dynamics of a navy collective which might have been quoted in any minor-literature-themed text by Deleuze and Guattari:

At sea, a frigate houses and homes five hundred mortals in a space so contracted that they can hardly so much as move but they touch. Cut off from all those outward passing things which ashore employ the eyes, tongues, and thoughts of landmen, the inmates of a frigate are thrown upon themselves and each other, and all their ponderings are introspective. A morbidness of mind is often the consequence, especially upon long voyages, accompanied by foul weather, calms, or head-winds. Nor does this exempt from its evil influence any rank on board. Indeed, high station only ministers to it the more, since the higher the rank in a man-of-war, the less companionship. (*White-Jacket*, 581)

Obviously, the fact that ship crews appear to be suitable subjects for minor literature does not in itself determine analytical rapprochement to either major or minor literary use: the same features of ship crews which hold minoritarian potential are also potential sites of domination and control, and the treatment of maritime subjects can take any form, including the discourse of territorialization such as hierarchy, rank, and nationalism. Melville's own sea writing is not immune to this. A fundamental property of ships as social machines, which registers as a contradiction when they are used for narrative explorations of the social order in general, is that they are, regardless of the type of industry or service in which they are engaged (e.g. navy, merchant marine, fishery), governed by maritime – or, in the case of navy, admiralty – law. Neither democratic nor monarchical, the ship collective is always already a heterotopic order, which is why it bears comparisons to both and is a productive ground for examining land-based society and politics. The humorous mistake that Melville's Wellingborough Redburn makes in trying to connect with Captain Riga as his desired father figure on board the *Highlander* is that of assuming that the gentleman class they both belong to on land carries the same semantic weight at sea (*Redburn*, Chap. 14). It is a mistake which is promptly, physically, corrected by the chief mate, and one that should not be committed by readers of sea writing either. Conflating the order of the ship with the political order of a land-based territory (or, in the Deleuzian sense and beyond political order, any territorialization, such as

family, economy, or nation) inevitably reduces the ship to a necessarily failed monarchy or democracy, diminishing the critical potential of maritime order for questioning land-based issues.

*White-Jacket; or, The World in a Man-of-War* explores democracy and citizenship through several microcosmic figures: one is the man-of-war as “a city afloat” (425; chaps. 31, 33–36). Another is the man-of-war as theater, in the sense of performative aspects of navy conduct,<sup>323</sup> as well as a literal stage for the crews’ theatricals (Chap. 23). A third microcosm figure is the man-of-war as a fragment of land (371) as well as a continent (531); also, there is the earth as ship (“The End”). The most productive inversion, however, is that of the “ship of state” turned into “ship-as-state”: instead of assigning metaphorical naval stations to different parts of government for creative comparison, the ship is in turn likened to a state – a monarchy, or even a despotic state, the power of which is situated in the body of the ruler, with subjects as body parts:

For a ship is a bit of terra firma cut off from the main; it is a state in itself; and the captain is its king.

It is no limited monarchy, where the sturdy Commons have a right to petition, and snarl if they please; but almost a despotism, like the Grand Turk’s. The captain’s word is law; he never speaks but in the imperative mood. When he stands on his Quarter-deck at sea, he absolutely commands as far as eye can reach. Only the moon and stars are beyond his jurisdiction. He is lord and master of the sun. (371)

In most cases, it would seem to be a cardinal principle with a Navy Captain that his subordinates are disintegrated parts of himself, detached from the main body on special service, and that the order of the minutest midshipman must be as deferentially obeyed by the seamen as if proceeding from the Commodore on the poop. (574)

As ships are likened to monarchies/despotic states according to their way of command in *White-Jacket*’s narrative, a politically and semantically laden term of American democracy is also introduced to describe the majority of the crew of the *Neversink*: starting with Chapter 7,

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<sup>323</sup> These include: protocol on board (chaps. 39–40; 56–57); the ceremony of reading the Articles of War (chaps. 70–71); the execution of disciplinary measures in the universally visible “bull-ring” (chaps. 23; 32–33; 52; 66–67).

the common seamen are referred to as “the people”<sup>324</sup> while the Captain, the Commodore and the Lieutenants are named “sea-kings and sea-lords” in contrast (377). In this obvious mix of monarchic and democratic language, the inhabitants of the fore-castle and of the quarter-deck are further described as “two essentially antagonist classes:” the prospect of war with England holds the opportunity of career promotion and “glory” only for the officers (566); also, the Captain and the officers are not subject to the same treatment by martial law as the common seamen – “one set of sea-citizens is exempted from a law that is hung in terror over others” (499). Further, America is called out for not extending to its navy the social mobility that is programmatically built into its land-based society:

[...] in a country like ours, boasting of the political equality of all social conditions, it is a great reproach that such a thing as a common seaman rising to the rank of a commissioned officer in our navy, is nowadays almost unheard-of [...]. Is it not well to have our institutions of a piece? Any American landsman may hope to become President of the Union – commodore of our squadron of states. And every American sailor should be placed in such a position, that he might freely aspire to command a squadron of frigates. (467)

The more we read about the captain being the judge, jury and executioner (497), about the appeal to sea-citizenship as an argument against corporal punishment aboard ships, about officers and common seamen as antagonistic social classes (496), the more obvious the impracticality of these land-based similes becomes: an appeal for the improvement of seamen’s condition cannot be made on the grounds of democratic/monarchic similes. However, a closer look at White-Jacket’s discourse, especially in the chapters which are articulated as a formal treatise on corporal punishment in the U.S. Navy (chaps. 33–36), reveals that his language of democratic citizenship should be understood not as one more microcosmic comparison, but in terms of how he positions himself as a (speaking) subject against the law. In *Coldness and Cruelty*, Deleuze describes Kant’s Copernican revolution in conceptualizing the law as no longer grounded in a higher principle such as the Good, but as “self-grounded and valid solely by virtue of its own form,” without recourse to its object or content; the law becomes “the Law.”<sup>325</sup> Classical in its ceremonials of corporal punishment

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<sup>324</sup> The ironic title of Chapter 54, “‘The People’ are given ‘Liberty,’” refers to the day of liberty granted the crew by navy protocol.

<sup>325</sup> Deleuze, *Coldness and Cruelty*, 82–83.

and monthly public reading of the Articles of War, White-Jacket's man-of-war world is also modern in the fact that the very ceremony of Articles of War serves to produce the "state of indeterminacy equaled only by the extreme specificity of the punishment" that Deleuze speaks of,<sup>326</sup> and which White-Jacket refers to as "arbitrariness" in terms of how it is applied by officers. According to Deleuze, in the classical conception "the law may be viewed either in the light of its underlying principles or in the light of its consequences."<sup>327</sup> Since the Articles of War are read publicly in *White-Jacket*, there ought to be a congruence between the principles of the law and its consequences, and yet there is none. In his treaty, White-Jacket asks that the principles of checks and balances, egalitarianism and transparency which are valid for land-based institutions be valid for the navy as well: in this sense, he is making his demands as a citizen of the United States, evoking the rights of democratic citizenship in his treatise chapters, saying that "the law should be 'universal'" (*White-Jacket*, 499). At the same time, White-Jacket builds another position, speaking as a navy serviceman who was "arraigned at the Mast" himself (641), effectively saying "I did not sign up for this." In this sense, to use Deleuze's terminology from *Coldness and Cruelty*, navy service is seen not as a master-servant relationship (which it is, in many of its practices), but as a *contract* with an *institution* (the navy, merchant navy, etc.), where the contract is always-already broken since the Law, as represented or embodied by the institution, is "without substance or object or any determination whatsoever, [...] such that no one knows nor can know what it is,"<sup>328</sup> but which is appealed to in the novel by using both the language of the sufferer (victim) and the language of power (torturer). The gesture of White-Jacket's direct appeal to "Legislators" (496) intimates an understanding of the law by Melville not unlike Kant's: the land-based law-makers reside outside the world of the ship, as the law remains outside the realm of its influence/consequence.

Many Melville's sea narratives, in fact, make use of the contractual relation between a sailor and his ship as a structural device (allowing for variations according to the specific type of sailing): the whaling ship desertions that serve as primary narrative propellers in *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Mardi* are all triggered by some form of a breach of contract on behalf of the captain and/or officers; Redburn and Harry Bolton are swindled out of their wages by Captain Riga upon their return to New York, which contributes to a reading of *Redburn* as an anti-Bildungsroman. Before sailing out on the Pequod, Ishmael describes how he negotiated over

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 83.

his pay (lays)<sup>329</sup> – a contract which is voided by another contract, namely Ahab’s pact of collective betrayal of whaling,<sup>330</sup> neither of which will ever be fulfilled as the Pequod sinks. The contract is a condition for a sailor to join a crew, for a voyage to begin: the biopolitics of the body, labor, wages, chronotope of work and leisure become terms of the contract, with varying degrees of negotiation; it is thus not insignificant that Billy Budd was impressed into the British Navy from a merchantman – named “The Rights of Man,” no less. Cancelling the institute of the contract opens space for the theater between two Primary Natures (Billy Budd and Captain Claggart) to act itself out before the Law is reinstated by Captain Vere.

The entire first part of *Omoo* could be described as a legal drama,<sup>331</sup> as it studies the principles and consequences of maritime law in terms of an Australian whaler (the Julia) in international waters, sailing with an international crew, mutinous in reaction to their captain’s unlawful conduct, leading to incarceration on a newly English-governed Polynesian island. Chapter 20 features the Round Robin, a form of petitioning persons or institutions of authority where the signatories’ names are arranged “in such a way, that, although they are all found in a ring, no man can be picked out as the leader of it” (*Omoo*, 402). The narrator, who signs his name as “Typee,” writes a list of grievances to be presented to the English consul in Papeete, which is then signed by the crew members of the Julia who refuse duty (most sign their nicknames, not their real names). The law responds with indeterminacy and denial of access: the consul is absent from the island and his duties are performed by a substitute, who ignores the Round Robin and orders the ship for another whaling cruise (405–12); after two weeks of incarcerating the mutineers without trial, the law responds with a ceremony described by the narrator as “the Farce of the Affidavits” (473), during which counter-statements by non-rebellious crew members, including the Captain, are read before the mutinous members of the crew. The affidavits are described as “an atrocious piece of exaggeration” and “ridiculous parade,” “done with a view of ‘bouncing,’ or frightening us into submission” (467–68). The case exhausts itself without going to trial, exposing the institutions of the consul, the prison (“Calabooza Beretanee,” chaps. 33–34), and the lack of legal closure as comical and absurd. What is left is the Round Robin as a collective paralegal device (paralegal because it is not an official procedure) of challenging the law, but also as a metafictional device, since it is also a term for a collective literary production. The signatory page of the sailors’ Round Robin is incorporated as a hand-drawn facsimile in *Omoo* (403), a visual interpolation that breaks the

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<sup>329</sup> Melville, *Moby-Dick*, Chap. 16.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. 36.

<sup>331</sup> Melville, *Omoo*, chaps. 1–39. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

printed text of the narrative. The document is drafted in a mystical atmosphere, written on an empty page torn out of sailors' own reading material on board, "A History of the most Atrocious and Bloody Piracies," using an albatross feather for a quill and soot and water for ink (402), with high expectations, as "Some present, very justly regarding it as an uncommon literary production, had been anticipating all sorts of miracles therefrom" (409). Juxtaposing a patchwork literary production and an instrument of sailor dialogue with structures of power in one and the same gesture ironizes both, implying that a challenge to the law has as much chance to produce change as a literary text to produce miracles.

What does it mean, in Melville's sea-themed narratives, to sign a contract with an institution? The frequency and repetition of Melville's foregrounding of (violated, challenged, amended, deserted) pacts between sailors and their ships testifies to the irony in giving one's formal consent to an agreement which is destined to be breached before it is signed, irony in acting *as if* an institution were a consenting party like the signatory individual. It is not a masochistic contract as Deleuze would describe it, signing up to be either a victim or a torturer, since those terms are not discussed – the body of the sailor offers itself as victim, but for no one's education, since, as we saw in *White-Jacket* and *Omoo*, the institution remains unmoved. The term of this contract with an institution is the indeterminacy of the Law itself. Signing up for this means that sailors do not stand against the Law or against the institution,<sup>332</sup> but by virtue of complicity with the institution seize license to partake of the indeterminacy of the Law (or Melville's arbitrariness) themselves. The speaking subjects that emerge from such a pact can take a variety of positions, acting and speaking as both victims and torturers, taking authority for inflicting pain from having suffered it, in full command of the language of both. This would explain Redburn's anti-Bildungsroman series of failures in the context of someone who has only suffered, but not learned to make others suffer, not during his first voyage and perhaps not even by the time of narration. It would also illuminate why the experimental sailing community aboard the *Parki* in *Mardi* (chaps. 19–37) did not consolidate in the principles of comradeship and solidarity but Taji's autocracy: he had to eliminate the one crew member who was not only as good a sailor, but who could inflict pain as easily as he: Annatoo, who amputated her own husband's arm in a crisis (737). Not least, as whaling is the very business of inflicting pain, it explains why Ahab's gesture of contractual alliance with the crew of the *Pequod* in *Moby-Dick* is more powerful in fusing the

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<sup>332</sup> This would be the position of a "universal law" point of view, exhausting itself in the plea that sailors are not treated equally as other citizens; it could also be seen as what Deleuze refers to as charity and philanthropy as masks of the paternal function in "Bartleby," i.e. the kind of advocacy that speaks "for" someone instead of opening space for their own speech.

collective together<sup>333</sup> than his charisma or captain's authoritarianism might have been alone: a pact with the devil gives one powers beyond one's given faculties.

### 3.4.2. The male bond: Social machines of two

Another pattern in Melville's sea oeuvre is an alternative type of community in which Melville's sea fugitives do operate well – the minimal social machine of two, which conflates and subverts fraternal, spousal, and comrade functions. When thinking about deserting the *Dolly*, Tommo considers Toby as a potential partner in crime: “[...] is he not the very one of all my shipmates whom I would choose for the partner of my adventure? and why should I not have some comrade with me to divide its dangers and alleviate its hardships? Perhaps I might be obliged to lie concealed among the mountains for weeks. In such an event what a solace would a companion be!” (*Typee*, 45). The narrator of *Omoo* does the same with Doctor Long Ghost: “I began to long for a change; and as there seemed to be no getting away in a ship, I resolved to hit upon some other expedient. But first, I cast about for a comrade; and of course the long doctor was chosen. We at once laid our heads together; and for the present, resolved to disclose nothing to the rest” (*Omoo*, 524).

Virtually every Melville sea hero partners up with a “comrade” for at least part of his journey: Tommo and Toby in *Typee*; Typee and Doctor Long Ghost in *Omoo*; Taji and Jarl in *Mardi*; Wellingborough Redburn and Harry Bolton in *Redburn*; Ishmael and Queequeg in *Moby-Dick*. These minimal social machines function as temporary assemblages during times of mutual interest, and are disbanded when no longer necessary, more often than not by death of the comrade. They are also infused with the issue of power to the point of frenzy: Melville's sea-fugitives are deterritorialized from land and from their personal background, but stop determinedly short of absolute deterritorialization. They do not identify with their crews; they find beachcombing, tattoos, taboo kanakas or other similar becomings intriguing, but they are not willing to cross the line; they prefer to stay incognito, make themselves imperceptible orphans of land and curmudgeons of the sea. Their comrades are their doubles, their dangerous supplements, their brothers, spouses and friends: additions of power with a plus or minus sign, depending on what the fugitive needs.

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<sup>333</sup> “They were one man, not thirty. For as the one ship that held them all; though it was put together of all contrasting things – oak, and maple, and pine wood; iron, and pitch, and hemp – yet all these ran into each other in the one concrete hull, which shot on its way, both balanced and directed by the long central keel; even so, all the individualities of the crew, this man's valor, that man's fear; guilt and guiltiness, all varieties were welded into oneness, and were all directed to that fatal goal which Ahab their one lord and keel did point to” (*Moby-Dick*, 415).

Analysis of male bonding as a trope in American literature, particularly Melville, is not a new field. Leslie Fiedler addressed it in the 1960s in his *Love and Death in the American Novel*, and Joseph A. Boone revised some of Fiedler's theses in his essay "Male Independence and the American Quest Genre."<sup>334</sup> For Boone, the male quest and male companionship as its feature function as a space for challenging contemporary heteropatriarchal norms and the genres which supported it, including the romance as a large fictional category and its sentimental and adventure derivatives which targeted the female and the male social identity, respectively: "concealed beneath the quest-romance's male-defined exterior there often exists a fascinating if ambivalent exploration of sexual politics, including a *potentially* radical critique of the marital norms, sexual roles and power imbalances characterizing nineteenth-century American familial and social life."<sup>335</sup> The American male quest offered a masculinity open to crossing boundaries of race, class, and/or gender: geographical displacement from societal norms enabled "the discovery of an affirming, multiform self that has broken through the strictures traditionally imposed on male social identity."<sup>336</sup> Boone appreciates *Moby-Dick* for its vision of "vital male identity" and exploration of "the psychological connection between self-sufficient male identity and an acknowledgement of the 'feminine' within man,"<sup>337</sup> evident in the marriage-like relationship between Queequeg and Ishmael,<sup>338</sup> whose quest is in sharp contrast with Ahab's con-quest.<sup>339</sup> *Billy Budd*, written some three decades after *Moby-Dick*, "presents the death of Melville's personal ideal of independent manhood."<sup>340</sup>

I will narrow my observations regarding Boone's article to two points: one, regarding the nature of male friendships in Melville's oeuvre beyond *Moby-Dick* and *Billy Budd*, and two, how the male bond is articulated within the specific sea ethos of nineteenth-century maritime narratives. Both Fiedler and Boone emphasize that these male companionships take form outside the bonds of conventional society, and that the challenge they pose to this society is that they are more egalitarian: unlike their British counterparts, which tend to be

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<sup>334</sup> Before Fiedler and Boone, H. F. Watson quotes Lyly's reference to "the theme of Two Friends" in relation to patterns from Greek romance in Elizabethan fiction (*Sailor in English Fiction and Drama*, 51).

<sup>335</sup> Joseph A. Boone, "Male Independence and the American Quest Genre: Hidden Sexual Politics in the All-Male Worlds of Melville, Twain and London," in *Feminisms*, ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl (1991; New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 961.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 962.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 968. Similarly, Boone writes of *Billy Budd*: "The very existence of such 'female-substitute' figures in the quest genre becomes a powerful textual signifier of the oppressiveness and potential destruction associated with an ethos equating power with masculinity" (*ibid.*, 967).

<sup>338</sup> Boone here refers to Fiedler, who first described male friendships in American literature as "a kind of counter-matrimony" (*Love and Death in the American Novel* [1960; New York: Stein and Day, 1966], 211).

<sup>339</sup> Boone, "Male Independence," 969.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, 974.

hierarchical and follow a master/servant pattern, “American comrades often present a more multifaceted model of loving relationship: their bonds simultaneously partake of brotherly, passionate, paternal, filial, even maternal qualities, without being restricted to one definition alone.”<sup>341</sup> While this is true of *Moby-Dick*, and while *Billy Budd* could be interpreted as this principle still being upheld even as it is destroyed, it cannot be said to hold true for other Melville’s sea narratives, which Boone’s article does not address. *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Mardi* and *Redburn* all contain instances of male companionship which replicate heteropatriarchal structures of power, only with male participants; they are in fact closer to their European predecessors<sup>342</sup> or Cooper’s model of the adventure story that Boone analyzes.<sup>343</sup>

As was said above, Melville’s sea fugitives are quick to scan the relations of power in any given situation, and power plays an important role in whether they choose partners above, beneath, or equal with their own station. Long Ghost is chosen because the narrator, who calls himself Typee, feels he can benefit from his authority within the crew (*Omoo*, Chap. 13), but his ability to impose himself as superior with the farmers in Martair will frustrate him: “things at last came to such a pass, that I told him, up and down, that I had no notion to put up with his pretensions; if he were going to play the gentleman, I was going to follow suit; and then, there would quickly be an explosion” (559). He might be “A King for a Comrade,” however Jarl the Viking in *Mardi* is nonetheless portrayed as intellectually inferior to Taji, assuming the role of a devoted, industrious wife, only to be left at Mondoldo and killed off in a subsequent third-hand account after Taji decides to keep only Media, Babbalanja, Mohi and Yoomy as companions for the rest of his Mardi journey.<sup>344</sup> After failing to ingratiate himself with Captain Riga, Redburn reaches out in the opposite direction and picks up Harry Bolton as a protégé of his own. The relation of power between the comrades also seems to be connected with the degree of functionality of the ship crew: a more evolved version of Tommo and Toby from *Typee*, Ishmael and Queequeg are the closest that any of Melville’s sea comrades get to an egalitarian relationship, just as the Pequod crew come closest to operating as a harmonious collective; it is also the only instance of a Melville sea hero partnering up beyond his race. The disproportion in power between Typee and Doctor Long Ghost, as well as between Taji and Jarl, appears to be paralleled in the mutiny/desertion of the Julia crew in *Omoo*, and in the Parki chapters in *Mardi*.

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<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 966.

<sup>342</sup> Fiedler recognizes the Quixotic origin of male pairing in literature, adding Don Juan and Leporello, Robinson Crusoe and Friday, Pickwick and Sam Weller to the line of succession (*Love and Death*, 366).

<sup>343</sup> Boone, “Male Independence,” 965.

<sup>344</sup> Herman Melville, *Mardi*, chaps. 3; 11; 15; 102; 118.

This discrepancy in how Melville develops the male companionships in his sea narratives could be explained by focusing on sea ethos, which is the central approach of this dissertation and which Boone's analysis does not address. As much as a ship at sea seems to be separate from land, or at least distant enough to hold *potential* for new assemblages, we must remember that within the nineteenth-century paradigm of sea narratives the ship is always-already a fragment of earth, which means that part of its ethos is inevitably tied to land-based norms. The ideal male selfhood that Melville was able to articulate in *Moby-Dick* should therefore be read with reference to the rest of Melville's sea oeuvre, which replicates normative power relations in its male companionships, thus highlighting *Moby-Dick* as an exception, not as a rule. Melville's subversive quality lies in the fact that these male communities of two are formed in direct protest against (re)territorializing with the collective of the crew.

At the same time, the community of two is subversive in another aspect, that of being dangerous for the Melville incognito fugitive as a bachelor, which is a Deleuze and Guattari term par excellence in defining minor literature:

The bachelor is a state of desire much larger and more intense than incestuous desire and homosexual desire. Undoubtedly, it has its problems, weaknesses, such as its moments of lowered intensity: bureaucratic mediocrity, going around in circles, fear, the Oedipal temptation to lead the hermit's life [...], and, even worse, the suicidal desire for self-abolition [...]. But, even with these downfalls, it is a production of intensities ("The bachelor has only the moment"). He is the deterritorialized, the one who has neither "center" nor "any great complex of possessions" [...]. With no family, no conjugality, the bachelor is all the more social, social-dangerous, social-traitor, a collective in himself. The highest desire desires both to be alone and to be connected to all the machines of desire. A machine that is all the more social and collective insofar as it is solitary, a bachelor, and that, tracing the line of escape, is equivalent in itself to a community whose conditions haven't yet been established.<sup>345</sup>

Relinquishing names, family backgrounds and land deterritorializes Melville's sea protagonists by removing what individuation they had: this opens them up to new assemblages, new zones of proximity, including coupling with other sailors. Because they

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<sup>345</sup> Deleuze and Guattari: *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 70–71.

have been de-individuated, they can use coupling to take on certain properties of their comrades (of race, occupation, skill, nomadism etc.) to achieve their immediate goal (of deserting a ship; negotiating a contract; gaining more power within a crew, etc.). This opens a zone of proximity towards “family” and “conjugalities,” which is threatening for the bachelor’s status as a bachelor and which is why the comrade is as a rule dispensed with in the course of the narrative, but in turn, they also transfigure “family” and “conjugalities” into something different, not tied to land-based heteronormativity.

Variations of the comrade relationship occur as well: uniquely among Melville’s sea narratives and in line with the connection between the dynamic of the crew and the dynamic of the social machine of two, *White-Jacket* does not have a single partner on the *Neversink*, but several “comrades of the main-top,” Jack Chase, Nord, and Williams (Chap. 13). There are also failed or unrealized partnerships: apart from Redburn’s clumsy misinterpretation of maritime rank which thwarts his desired paternal friendship with Captain Riga, another interesting example is the impossible friendship between Tommo and Marnoo in *Typee* (Chap. 18). Tommo is both jealous of and fascinated by Marnoo’s taboo status, which enables him to move freely among the native tribes of Nukuheva Island; sensitive to power-play as most Melville sea narrators are, Tommo wants to be taken under Marnoo’s wing but is quickly turned down because acting in Tommo’s interest compromises Marnoo’s taboo status, causing suspicion among the natives. The most powerful unrealized community of two is probably the one in *Moby-Dick*, when the *Pequod* meets the whaler Samuel Enderby of London, and Ahab meets Captain Boomer, a fellow whaling captain who has had his arm torn off by the White Whale.<sup>346</sup> “Aye, aye, hearty! let us shake bones together! – an arm and a leg! – an arm that never can shrink, d’ye see; and a leg that never can run,” he announces enthusiastically, hoping to have found a counterpart,<sup>347</sup> only to find out that Boomer has no intention of pursuing *Moby-Dick* again: “No more White Whales for me; I’ve lowered for him once, and that has satisfied me. There would be great glory in killing him, I know that; and there is a ship-load of precious sperm in him, but, hark ye, he’s best let alone; don’t you think so, Captain?”<sup>348</sup> Despite sharing virtually every aspect of Ahab’s experience, from the chase to the loss of limb and delirious recovery, Captain Boomer is happy to accept the wisdom of his limitations, and Ahab is left to makeshift, power-disbalanced connections with Pip and Fedallah. Finally, the dynamic between Claggart and Billy Budd or captains Delano

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<sup>346</sup> Melville, *Moby-Dick*, Chapter 100.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, 340.

and Cereno could in a certain sense be described as negative comrade relationships, with the caveat that these characters appear in Melville's later sea works where he abandoned first-person narration and where the failure of connection is an ironic prerequisite for these narratives to develop the way they do.

As they leave the Spouter-Inn and head for the packet schooner that will take them to Nantucket, Ishmael and Queequeg attract looks from passers-by: "As we were going along the people stared; not at Queequeg so much – for they were used to seeing cannibals like him in their streets, – but at seeing him and me upon such confidential terms. But we heeded them not" (61). It is not sailors as a class, or Queequeg as an Islander, that is scandalous, but the interracial assemblage of Ishmael and Queequeg, the compound of their multiple identities put together, since, if he has coupled with Queequeg, it ensues that Ishmael is now more like him.<sup>349</sup> Melville's communities of two function as assemblages, described by Deleuze and Parnet as "a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus, the assemblage's only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a 'sympathy'."<sup>350</sup> Having a comrade, partner, shipmate, lover, brother – the designation does not matter really because they could be either or all of them at the same time – is subversive because it dismantles the collective as well as the bachelor: first, it betrays the collective by singling out, choosing one individual over many others, like Claggart chooses Billy Budd and like Ahab chooses the white whale. At the same time, Ahab no more chooses the white whale than is chosen by the whale, in the sense of his wound existing before him, him being born to embody it.<sup>351</sup> The bachelor is thus fashioned and transformed in and of his assemblages, "not being inferior to the event, becoming the child of one's own events."<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> Also noted by Priscilla Allen Zirker in "Evidence of the Slavery Dilemma in *White-Jacket*," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (1966): 480. L. Fiedler's interpretation of interracial bonds is that of "a symbolic union of the 'primitive' or instinctual life and the questing ego" (Boone, "Male Independence," 966; Fiedler, *Love and Death*, 365–66). Finally, when Boone comments that "it is [Huckleberry Finn's] loving relationship with the slave, Jim, above all else, that becomes the measure of Huck's status as a cultural misfit and of his untraceable deviation from a traditional standard of manhood" ("Male Independence," 971), it should be noted that Ishmael and Queequeg paved the way some three decades earlier.

<sup>350</sup> Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 69.

<sup>351</sup> A paraphrase of Deleuze and Parnet's reference to Joe Bousquet (*ibid.*, 65).

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

### 3.4.3. Fathers, brothers, sisters, bachelors: (Af)filiation continued

Describing in detail the process of its composition, Hershel Parker calls *Mardi* an “Island-Hopping Symposium.”<sup>353</sup> According to *A Herman Melville Encyclopedia*, “Mostly misunderstood or ignored well into the twentieth century, *Mardi* is now seen as a challenging combination of quest narrative, lush description and travelogue, poetic prose, digressive essays, literary allusions, disguised partial autobiography, satire, and allegory.”<sup>354</sup> Although *Mardi* has been recognized as an anomaly among Melville’s works, more often than not it is seen as a sort of hinge-narrative: no longer *Typee* or *Omoo*, but not quite *Moby-Dick* or *Pierre* yet. Richard H. Brodhead also reads it as a sort of laboratory for Melville’s literary development, focusing on the phrase “I have created the creative”<sup>355</sup> in one of the narrative’s many literary-philosophical dialogues. Brodhead reads Melville’s correspondence with his editor thus: “to be properly judged *Mardi* needs [...] to be read as a metamorphosis, a growth through radical changes of state.”<sup>356</sup> Without speculating with Brodhead whether Melville wrote *Mardi* “without direction” and only understood “where it was headed and why it followed the course it did” in Chapter 169, “Sailing On,”<sup>357</sup> I agree that *Mardi* should be read for its breaks, “as one sort of book displaces another in it it bursts the fetters of conventional form [...] and a reportorial tie to reality [...], freeing the imagination to soar into realms of beauty and strangeness.”<sup>358</sup> One such break seems crucial for how we read *Mardi*: up to Chapter 9, the novel resembles the factual travel narrative model Melville employed in *Typee* and *Omoo*: a discontented whaler (the narrator to later call himself Taji) decides to desert ship after providing some coordinates on whaling as an industry and the state of his crew and ship. The difference is that Taji and his comrade Jarl jump ship on high seas, with no harbor in sight; their crew look to rescue them but finally give up. Taji says: “the consciousness of being deemed dead, is next to the presumable unpleasantness of being so in reality. One feels like his own ghost unlawfully tenanting a defunct carcass” (690). Brodhead interprets the jump from the whaler as an act of suicide.<sup>359</sup> References to “lost souls [...] tossed along by the chain of shades which enfilade the route to Tartarus” (*Mardi*, 690) and Mohi and

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<sup>353</sup> Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography*, 1:565; Chapter 28.

<sup>354</sup> Robert L. Gale, “Mardi,” in *A Herman Melville Encyclopedia*, ed. Robert L. Gale (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 267.

<sup>355</sup> Melville, *Mardi*, 1256. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

<sup>356</sup> Richard H. Brodhead, “*Mardi*: Creating the Creative,” in *New Perspectives on Melville*, ed. Faith Pullin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978), 32–33.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

Yoomy's wondering if Taji is a specter (1315) seem to confirm that. This suggests that the rest of the narrative – all 186 chapters of it – should be read as enunciation from beyond the (unmarked sea) grave, and the spatiality of the novel as an underworld or night journey, both physical and spiritual.

Chapter 9 is entitled “The Watery World Is All Before Them.” This is one of several resonances of the last lines of Milton's *Paradise Lost*<sup>360</sup> throughout Melville sea oeuvre, pointing to the interstice between the moment of self-knowledge and leaving one world for the next as a recurrence in Melville's maritime thought.<sup>361</sup> Variations of the reference are made throughout the novel: as the narrator's party views the Mardi archipelago for the first time (“all Mardi lies before us,” 862); just before the moment of narrative self-awareness noted by Brodhead occurs in Chapter 169, “The universe again before us; our quest, as wide” (1212); and in the final chapter, as the party leave the Mardi archipelago: “Mardi Behind: An Ocean Before” (1314). These interstices are indicative of the organization of narrative space in *Mardi*: on the one hand, Taji's suicide and the Miltonian references could be seen as brackets, or containers, dividing space in the novel into concentric circles – embedding the allegorical “world” of Europe, Asia, Americas and Africa *within* the Mardi archipelago should then be read along the same lines. On the other hand, they could be read as the “radical changes of state” and “burst[ing] of fetters” that Brodhead speaks of: each time a wall is broken (to use Deleuze's phrase,<sup>362</sup> in line with Ahab's “thrusting through the wall,” *Moby-Dick*, 140), Taji's language becomes more free-roving, culminating in passages such as this:

And here, in this impenetrable retreat, centrally slumbered the universe-rounded, zodiac-belted, horizon-zoned, sea-girt, reef-sashed, mountain-locked, arbor-nested, royalty-girdled, arm-clasped, self-hugged, indivisible Donjalolo, absolute monarch of Juam: — the husk-inhusked meat in a nut; the innermost spark in a ruby; the juice-nested seed in a golden-rinded orange; the red royal stone in an effeminate peach; the insphered sphere of spheres. (*Mardi*, 901)

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<sup>360</sup> “The world was all before them, where to choose / Their place of rest, and Providence their guide; / They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow, / Through Eden took their solitary way.” (John Milton, *Paradise Lost* [1667; London: Penguin, 1996], XII.646–49).

<sup>361</sup> Other instances include: the last sentence of *Omoo*, “all before us was the wide Pacific” (*Omoo*, 646); “all the world was before me” as Redburn departs from home (*Redburn*, 16); *Moby-Dick* offers a more complex elaboration dialed back, but still resonant of Milton's rhetoric, in terms of circumnavigation, which is at the same time ironic as the Pequod never makes it back, leaving the circular voyage open: “Round the world! There is much in that sound to inspire proud feelings; but hereto does all that circumnavigation conduct? Only through numberless perils to the very point whence we started, where those that we left behind secure, were all the time before us” (*Moby-Dick*, 195–96).

<sup>362</sup> Deleuze, “Bartleby,” 89.

Enunciation distributes itself among different speakers, ranging from a dissociated Taji discoursing with himself to his three companions (Babalanja; Yoomy; Mohi) being used as mouthpieces (often layered into different voices themselves) for Taji's own thoughts on philosophy, literature, and history.

Another break occurs immediately after Taji's presumed death and before encountering the Mardi archipelago: the murder of the priest Aleema, the abduction of his daughter/sacrifice Yillah, and Yillah's subsequent disappearance which prompts the quest portion of the narrative. In *Typee* or *Omoa*, the killing of a Polynesian priest might have been open to interpretation as a colonizing gesture by the Western narrator; in *Mardi*, however, Taji inscribes the priest with the burden of ancient Indo-European, Egyptian and Judeo-Christian heritage: calling him "Aaron" before he finds out his real name, he invokes the Biblical Moses' brother, or the first High Priest of the Hebrews. Further, he describes him thus:

The old priest, like a scroll of old parchment, covered all over with hieroglyphical devices, harder to interpret, I'll warrant, than any old Sanscrit manuscript. And upon his broad brow, deep-graven in wrinkles, were characters still more mysterious, which no Champollion nor gipsy [sic] could have deciphered. He looked old as the elderly hills; eyes sunken, though bright; and head white as the summit of Mont Blanc. (*Mardi*, 791–92)

Not only does Taji do away with the embodiment of the symbolic/the law/the sacred in this underworld, he and Yillah become lovers. Since Aleema is the carrier of the symbolic weight of the law on a general level, the affair between Yillah and Taji cannot be explained away as exogamy in a tribal community; rather, it points to an incestuous configuration described by Deleuze in "Bartleby:" "While neurosis flounders in the nets of maternal incest in order to identify more closely with the father, psychosis liberates incest with the sister as a becoming, a free identification of man and woman."<sup>363</sup> Brodhead notes: "conjunction of murder, sexual penetration, and profanation committed by the narrator of *Mardi* has as its immediate

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<sup>363</sup> Ibid., 78. Incest is used even more subversively in Chapter 109, "Hivohitee MDCCCXLVIII," where "1848" does not refer to the year of European revolutions (which is satirized later in chaps. 153; 161 and elsewhere), but the number of incestuous generations of high priests of the island, which thus places the law as such into the configuration of sibling incest: "The present Pontiff's descent was unquestionable; his dignity having been transmitted through none but heirs male; the whole procession of High Priests being the fruit of successive marriages between *uterine brother and sister*. A conjunction deemed incestuous in some lands; but, here, held the only fit channel for the pure transmission of elevated rank" (989, emphasis mine).

consequence the opening up before him of Mardi, the world beyond for which he sought.”<sup>364</sup> This is important because it detects a causal relation between the murder, the abduction, and the subsequent quest: first, Aleema was summoned *in order to* be removed, so that Taji’s *Welteröffnung*, the “creating” of “the creative,” could take place; in that sense, the world of Mardi “opens” before Taji just as much as it is created in the same instant. Second, Yillah the sister/lover was summoned only to be taken away: to provide motivation for a quest which will never be fulfilled, but more importantly, so that Taji could be bachelorized. Taji’s merciless removal of the expert woman sailor Annatoo, failure to find Yillah, refusals to accept queen Hautia’s advances, even the murder of Jarl, who had been described as a devoted wife, add up to a repetitive rejection of an alliance with the feminine.

Finally, the encounter with Aleema and Yillah, which presides over the rest of Taji’s underworld narration, contributes to another displacement: after his murder, Aleema continues to haunt Taji as a “specter,” “ghost,” and “phantom,” sometimes singularly, sometimes in multiplied form by his phantom sons. At the same time, on disappearance, Yillah is described as “a phantom” (*Mardi*, 856). The horizon of Taji’s movement across the archipelago is thus bracketed by two phantoms: one from his past, hunting him, and one in his presumable future, waiting to be found; one “behind” and the other “before.” The fact that the hunt/quest romance is thwarted in *Mardi*, i.e. it is one more set of fetters to be burst in terms of literary convention as Taji is not caught or punished and Yillah never appears again, has as its effect the reduction of temporality. The chronotope of the archipelago portion of the novel is thus flattened to its spatial dimension, as timeless movement across the archipelago within the interstice of “the world before them.” The word “before” bears great significance in sea narratives for its temporal and spatial sense, “before the mast” resonating like Derrida’s “before the law.”

Another flattening occurs in *Mardi*, embodied in the parallelism between the archipelago and the constellation: Taji comes from the ship Arcturion, i.e. the star Arcturus in the Boötes constellation, which helps avengers navigate in their pursuit of Taji (966) – Taji’s ship is thus also the star which steers his pursuers towards him; his comrade Jarl is from the Isle of Skye, literally “Skyeman.” References such as “Mapped out in the broad shadows of the isles, and tinted here and there with the reflected hues of the sun clouds, the mild waters stretched all around us like another sky” (822) abound in the text, and the overall effect is that of a reduction to a surface, or rather, of the archipelago and the constellation mirroring one

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<sup>364</sup> Brodhead, “*Mardi*: Creating the Creative,” 35.

another. There is an awareness of a world outside the Mardi archipelago (1112), just like there is a bracketing-off of Taji's underworld narration within the concentric circles of the text; this suggests that *Mardi* is not merely an experimental narrative of tearing down conventions: if Melville bursts open a wall, he also closes it behind him, in a simultaneity that enables him to approach that which Deleuze and Parnet describe as "speak[ing] *with*, writ[ing] *with*. With the world, with a part of the world, with people."<sup>365</sup> Within the archipelago, however, emerges a deliric (not delirious), open-faced narrative that lays bare its devices: the displacement of death, the law and romance frees language towards a bachelors' world of surface mobility.

If Taji murdered a father only to conjure him up as a phantom, as if in an act of inoculation, the anti-Bildungsroman of Wellingborough Redburn is a further study in "the ruins of the paternal function"<sup>366</sup> as the father refuses to be conjured. "Son-of-a-Gentleman, in the Merchant Service," as the novel's title describes him, Wellingborough Redburn joins the crew of the Highlander, a packet ship that runs between New York and Liverpool, as a boy – novice sailor. Redburn is an exception among Melville's prophet-narrators in that he does not take to the incognito fugitive mode: writing from the perspective of "older" Redburn, he gives his full name and family history, from the senator great-uncle after whom he was named to the family's possessions and traditions, as well as its fall from grace, which is his main reason for going to sea (chaps. 1; 7). Another reason for joining the merchant marine is Redburn's expressed wish to find comfort under the paternal blanket, at least initially. After unsuccessfully looking to Captain Riga as his desired father figure (chaps. 14; 79), he devotes all of Chapter 30 to a detailed presentation of *The Picture of Liverpool: or, Stranger's Guide and Gentleman's Pocket Companion for the Town*, his father's guide-book to Liverpool from fifty-odd years ago. The guide-book contains a map of Liverpool, including blank spaces similar to those that Joseph Conrad would describe as having intrigued him on the map of Africa not even twenty years later:<sup>367</sup> "a level Sahara of yellowish white: a desert" (*Redburn*, 159). More importantly, it contains the palimpsest of Walter Redburn's notes from his own visit to Liverpool – a list of expenses, appointments, and things to do (158). It is young Wellingborough's intention to perform a "filial pilgrimage" (168) to retrace his father's

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<sup>365</sup> Deleuze and Parnet, "On the Superiority," 52.

<sup>366</sup> Deleuze, "Bartleby," 78.

<sup>367</sup> Conrad writes: "It was in 1868, when nine years old or thereabouts, that while looking at a map of Africa of the time and putting my finger on the blank space then representing the unsolved mystery of that continent, I said to myself, with absolute assurance and an amazing audacity which are no longer in my character now: 'When I grow up, I shall go *there*.' ... And of course I thought no more about it till after a quarter century or so an opportunity offered to go there – as if the sin of childish audacity were to be visited on my mature head. Yes. I did go there: *there* being the region of Stanley Falls, which in '68 was the blankest of blank spaces on the earth's figured surface" (*A Personal Record*, 220).

English steps, restriate the city space that his father had already striated fifty years earlier. He builds a cognitive map of Liverpool based on the map in the guide and his father's notes (166), however, on upon disembarking the ship in Liverpool, Redburn finds that the city landscape has changed, and that his father's inscriptions which gave his family legitimacy are outdated by fifty years: "Yes, the thing that had guided the father, could not guide the son" (171); the past can be a teacher, but not a guide (172). For Redburn, the striation of paternal metageography which was to provide him with comfort is lost: the city of Liverpool is a smooth space again. Redburn quickly revises his relation to the guidebook: losing no respect for the family relic, he uses it to retrace the map of Liverpool and his father's footsteps after all, registering individual discrepancies and differences (172–75) and proceeding to reinscribe the fifty-year-old guidebook with his own metageography (chaps. 32–42), moving past the city limits in the process, into the English countryside and even London (chaps. 43; 45–46), before returning to America.

Having been made to feel "like an Ishmael in the ship" on the voyage out (73), Redburn takes on a protégé for the homeward-bound leg of his journey in an attempt to compensate for the failures of the paternal principle he has encountered thus far (his thwarted alliance with Captain Riga and changed geography of his father's experience of Liverpool): the young Englishman Harry Bolton, a purported gentleman heir of dubious background (Chap. 44) and blatant lies (such as having been at sea, Chap. 50). The lack of integrity and legitimacy of Bolton's personal history raises much suspicion with Redburn, but does not diminish his mission to take on the fatherly role of guide for someone less experienced than he, almost as if to forcefully redeem his own life story by rewriting it in reverse. The relationship between the two takes on the configuration of a reworked family triangle: brothers by age, by their families' financial fall from grace, and by status in the merchant marine; father and son in terms of the paternal role Redburn takes on himself; and implicit romantic partners according to the title of Chapter 45, where "Harry Bolton Kidnaps Redburn, and Carries Him Off to London" and the "semi-public place of opulent entertainment" where they spend their "Mysterious Night In London" (249; Chap. 46). Although only on his second voyage himself, Redburn wants to make certain that Captain Riga gives Bolton better treatment than he gave him (Chap. 44): he fails, as both of them receive diminished wages upon payment (Chap. 61). He wants to make Bolton "the nation's guest" in America (304), but Bolton abandons the job at the forwarding house Redburn procures for him, and disappears to his apparent death on a whaling ship (Chap. 62). Similar to Benito Cereno in Melville's narrative published six years after *Redburn*, Harry Bolton is portrayed as

embodying Old World melancholy<sup>368</sup> that is simply incapable of surviving trauma or adapting to the fact that “This world, my boy, is a moving world; its Riddough’s Hotels are forever being pulled down; it never stands still; and its sands are forever shifting” (172) – something that Redburn the American is made to work out during his first walk on English soil.

Describing *Redburn* as Melville’s reworking of Washington Irving’s *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gentleman*, Arnold Goldman says:

The novel has described a contrary process to that in Irving’s book: it has discovered that there is no England for an American, that England is not the father of an American man, that its uses are all ironic – or ironic to a degree Melville would not attribute to Irving. For success had to involve cisatlantic accommodation, and the discovery that accommodation was not possible involves failure. From such a discovery there may be no complete recovery.<sup>369</sup>

As I mentioned earlier, however, Wellingborough Redburn was never looking for an English father, but for comfort in the portion of his American father’s past that was English, and which is shown to be unredeemable. If Taji was haunted by the phantom of the father he killed, Redburn is a Hamlet homeward-bound, coveting an encounter with the father’s ghost that never happens; the American son will end his journey with the failed adoption of an English brother/son/lover. Frustrated that his experiences of Liverpool are for the most part heterotopic<sup>370</sup> and do not match the majestic preconceptions of England from his father’s stories and the travel books he read in his family home (“Is there nothing in all the British empire but these smoky ranges of old shops and warehouses? is Liverpool but a brick-kiln?,” 174), Redburn immediately answers his own question:

But, Wellingborough, I remonstrated with myself, you are only in Liverpool; the old monuments lie to the north, south, east, and west of you; you are but a sailor-boy, and you can not expect to be a great tourist, and visit the antiquities, in that preposterous shooting-jacket of yours. Indeed, you can not, my boy.

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<sup>368</sup> On Old World melancholy of character Benito Cereno, see Jean Fagan Yellin, “Black Masks: Melville’s ‘Benito Cereno’” (686–7).

<sup>369</sup> Arnold Goldman, “Melville’s England,” in *New Perspectives on Melville*, ed. Faith Pullin, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978), 73.

<sup>370</sup> Chapter titles speak sufficiently here: “The Docks;” “The Old Church of St. Nicholas, and the Dead-House;” “The Dock-Wall Beggars;” “The Booble-Alleys of the Town;” “Placards, Brass-Jewelers, Truck-Horses, and Steamers.”

True, true – that’s it. I am not the traveler my father was. I am only a common-carrier across the Atlantic. (174–75)

It is not just the landscape of Liverpool that has changed: the family landscape has changed as well. Redburn’s father had been an importer in Broad-street, and upon his death Redburn’s mother had to move with their five children from New York to a village on the Hudson River (Chap. 1). The family’s financial troubles are one of the main reasons why Redburn goes to sea, and when he does, he is not a passenger like his father used to be, but a common sailor, laboring at sea instead of traveling for business or pleasure. Wellingborough Redburn belongs to a different class than his father Walter, which in turn restricts the possibilities of striating what for him is the newly smooth space of England.<sup>371</sup> “You are nothing but a poor sailor boy; and the Queen is not going to send a deputation of noblemen to invite you to St. James’s,” he will say to himself (148). The transformed landscape of Liverpool is as much an effect of time as it is a symptom of the dissolution of the paternal principle in Redburn’s family, worked out in parallel with issues of class, as well as nation. The emigration which he witnesses (German, Irish – chaps. 33; 51; 52) is not based in ethnic, political or religious oppression but economic hardship, and the space of America is offered, as is the American identity, as a place of liberation:

Let us waive that agitated national topic, as to whether such multitudes of foreign poor should be landed on our American shores; let us waive it, with the one only thought, that if they can get here, they have God’s right to come; though they bring all Ireland and her miseries with them. For the whole world is the patrimony of the whole world; there is no telling who does not own a stone in the Great Wall of China. But we waive all this; and will only consider, how best the emigrants can come hither, since come they do, and come they must and will. (318)

Redburn’s missing father is ostensibly reworked into a “universal paternity,” in which America is open to being claimed (“Settled by the people of all nations, all nations may claim her for their own,” 185), but is also the America of Manifest Destiny, possessive of the politics, history, religion, and literature of the rest of the world as its own: “Our ancestry is lost in the universal paternity; and Cæsar and Alfred, St. Paul and Luther, and Homer and

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<sup>371</sup> Chaps. 2; 23; 41–42 provide good examples of Redburn’s experience of Britain’s rigid boundaries.

Shakspeare [sic] are as much ours as Washington, who is as much the world's as our own" (185). Linear filiation gives way to lateral extension, which is a principle conducive to alliance, sympathy and fraternity as Deleuze describes them in "Bartleby" and "On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature." What is it about Redburn as a character, and *Redburn* as a novel, that thwarts such lines of flight then, as opposed to *Omoo*, *Mardi*, or *Moby-Dick*? For one, his attempts at alliances are all based in the principle of filiation: he has not renounced his family name; he looks to replicate lost family structures by appealing to father figures which remain absent and/or silent. He is not capable of entering into assemblages based on sympathy, or zones of proximity/indiscernibility that would take him beyond himself. He is deracinated enough for a bachelor, but not (yet?) capable of participating in the economy of pain that is part of shipboard life.

In the immediate context of the voyage from Liverpool to America, as well as that of Redburn's personal narrative, this kind of perspective can only be an instance of (dramatic) irony.<sup>372</sup> Firstly, Redburn's message of "universal paternity" is immediately offset by the harsh reality of conditions on board the *Highlander* that the five hundred Irish emigrants are subjected to on their way to the promise land, including martial law discipline, famine and disease (chaps. 51–52; 57–58), juxtaposed with the comfort of cabin passengers (Chap. 51) – similar to *Mardi* and "Benito Cereno," the narrator of *Redburn* shows what he does not tell. In addition to discussing the condition of sailors and how they are perceived and treated by the rest of society in Chapter 29, Redburn still speaks *for* people enduring hardship, acts in the name of charity in trying to provide care for Bolton, and replicates the paternal function – doomed to fail – by appropriating the role himself.

Secondly, America is framed as a failed promise land before and after Redburn's own voyage. Even before his demise in the whaling industry, it is clear that Redburn's protégé Harry Bolton does not accept the transplant into America as his personal salvation and remains skeptical of the country.<sup>373</sup> At the outset of the narrative, however, Redburn meets a Lancashire boy who, "finding that he would have to work very hard to get along in America,

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<sup>372</sup> I side here with Lawrence Buell in stating "I question the theory that there is a stable ironic distance between the narrative voice and the figure of the young Redburn, though I would agree that they are not the same. This means that I would posit another distinction between narrative voice and implied author" ("Melville and the Question of American Decolonization," *American Literature* 64, no. 2 [June 1992]: 236, Note 15).

<sup>373</sup> "Again I assured him, as I had often done before, that New York was a civilized and enlightened town; with a large population, fine streets, fine houses, nay, plenty of omnibuses; and that for the most part, he would almost think himself in England; so similar to England, in essentials, was this outlandish America that haunted him. I could not but be struck – and had I not been, from my birth, as it were, a cosmopolite – I had been amazed at his skepticism with regard to the civilization of my native land. A greater patriot than myself might have resented his insinuations. He seemed to think that we Yankees lived in wigwams, and wore bear-skins. After all, Harry was a spice of a Cockney, and had shut up his Christendom in London" (*Redburn*, 305).

and getting home-sick into the bargain, he had arranged with the captain to work his passage back” (33). A young Englishman has already found disappointment in America and is going back to England at the same time as a young American, failed by America, goes to England a first time in pursuit of better prospects.

Thirdly, the final sentence of the novel reads “But yet, I, Wellingborough Redburn, chance to survive, after having passed through far more perilous scenes than any narrated in this, *My First Voyage*” (340), perhaps hoping that the reader might have forgotten the image from the first chapter of the family heirloom from his great-uncle and namesake Senator Wellingborough, the glass ship of French make, *La Reine*:

We have her yet in the house, but many of her glass spars and ropes are now sadly shattered and broken – but I will not have her mended; and her figurehead, a gallant warrior in a cocked-hat, lies pitching headforemost down into the trough of a calamitous sea under the bows – but I will not have him put on his legs again, till I get on my own; for between him and me there is a secret sympathy; and my sisters tell me, even yet, that he fell from his perch the very day I left home to go to sea on this my first voyage. (14)

Redburn’s own utterance originates in a place of failure: years after his first voyage, older Redburn still labors at sea and is not yet fully independent: the end of the narrative is inscribed in its very first chapter, in one of its very first naval images, before the story of the Highlander even begins. Redburn’s Bildungsroman is one of return(s) instead of progression, and the narrative of his “first voyage” also remains his *only* one – there are no other Redburn stories in Melville’s sea opus. The personal metahistory and metageography of America’s England might be restriated, but the model of universal patrimony is as soon dismantled as it is proposed: the American man fails as the patron of the English man, and England cannot participate in the promise of America. Redburn’s “first voyage” effectively contains his second voyage as well, that of returning to America: he is, at one and the same instant, the Lancashire boy, returning from America to England in self-defeat, as well as one of the 500 Irish emigrants newly arriving to seek survival in the U.S. “if they can get here, they have God’s right to come” is, on a certain level, Redburn’s self-initiation back into his country. His father’s ghost remains the faint palimpsest of the belated guidebook; father figures reject him; his attempt at becoming someone else’s patron is thwarted; the only thing left in order to survive is to become one’s own father: build oneself up as a self-made man, not with the

promise of America but with the labor of the sea. This is the hope of Redburn, only hinted at in the novel but exemplified by other Melville's protagonists, such as White-Jacket aligning with his topmast brothers, and the crew of the Pequod bonding over joint labor in chasing, killing, and processing whales.

In its French make and Hamburg origin, and given to one family member by another – Redburn's father to his senator great-uncle – the original *La Reine* stood for the good standing of the previous generations of Redburn's family, built on business connections with Europe. As his Liverpool experience shows, though, Wellingborough is no longer entitled to such ties since his class position has changed: "For capitalism [...] the claim to lineage was not available," Mark Conroy says in his comparison of feudal and capitalist legitimation modes.<sup>374</sup> The broken spars and the plunging figurehead of the present condition of the souvenir are the legacy and embraced haunting of a different, de-Europeanized, de-gentrified American: for Wellingborough, the ship (not just *La Reine* but ships in general) is not an *objet* of conspicuous consumption but a site of labor. "I will not have her mended" and "I will not have him put on his legs again" is a gesture similar to Redburn's dealing with his father's guidebook in Liverpool: he divests them both of their original purpose, but keeps both as reminders of the past and projections of the future. Redburn's new metageography takes him to a harsher existence, but also to the smooth space of the sea and whaling as an industry.

#### **3.4.4. The Anglo-American persuasion of Melville's sea writing**

In the pursuit of *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael describes gamas – encounters – between the Pequod and nine other whalers: the Goney, the Town-Ho, the Jeroboam, the Jungfrau, the Bouton de Rose, the Samuel Enderby, the Bachelor, the Rachel, and the Delight.<sup>375</sup> The Jungfrau is based out of Bremen with a Dutch captain, while the Bouton de Rose is a French whaler. The Samuel Enderby, named after the eighteenth-century English merchant and founder of the whaling and sealing company Enderby & Sons, is London-based, commanded by Captain Boomer, the likeness of whose fate to Ahab's was described above. The remaining ships are not only all American, but also Nantucketers. In this complex portrayal of the micro- and macro-politics of global whaling, Ahab accosts each ship with no desire to take part in a gam for its own sake, but with the pressing question of whether, when, and where they might have

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<sup>374</sup> Mark Conroy, *Modernism and Authority: Strategies of Legitimation in Flaubert and Conrad* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 25.

<sup>375</sup> Melville, *Moby-Dick*, chaps. 52; 54; 71; 81; 91; 100; 115; 128; 131, respectively.

encountered the White Whale. Apart from being described as country tokens in the international competition in the industry of whaling – and faulty enough not to be a match for American whalers, the German and the French ship have no knowledge whatsoever of the existence of a white whale. With inconclusive information from the Goney as its captain drops his speaking trumpet before he can answer Ahab, the only other American ship not to have encountered Moby-Dick is the Bachelor, happily homeward-bound with oil casks full to the brim and a celebratory atmosphere on board. Its captain's response to Ahab's formulaic question is "No; only heard of him; but don't believe in him at all."<sup>376</sup> The ships which have encountered the white whale all report confrontations with tragic consequences: wrecked whaling boats, grave bodily injury, and multiple crew members dead or lost at sea.

If we read the Pequod's gams as a fictional statistical snapshot (i.e. not in terms of the actual history of whaling but of national politics expressed through the rendition of the whaling industry in *Moby-Dick*), whaling would have an extremely local and an extremely global dimension: the first would be tied to Nantucket as a specific locale, and the second to the global maritime supremacy of this specific American locale. More importantly for my argument here, *Moby-Dick* as such seems to be described by Ishmael as an exclusively Anglo-American phenomenon: not only is there goodhearted rivalry between English and American whalers,<sup>377</sup> but the only other nation to have pursued him is England (the Samuel Enderby and Captain Boomer); the one American whaler which has not encountered him (the Bachelor) and does not "believe in him" still partakes of the corpus of knowledge about him; the German and French representatives might be present in the industry, however they are excluded from the discourse of the pursuit of the White Whale.

This Anglo-American dimension is consistently present in other Melville's sea narratives.<sup>378</sup> Although the first-person narrator of *Omoo* is a self-identified American, the entire legal plot of the mutiny on the Julia and its aftermath is rendered under the auspices of British law as the Julia is an Australian ship, with the English consul in charge of handling the renegades; because of their historical connection, the English and American navies are grouped against the French in comparisons of disciplinary regulations (Chap. 29), and Queen Pomaree of Tahiti is said to have a "partiality for the English and Americans" in an effort to

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<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. 53.

<sup>378</sup> Lawrence Buell explores the context of "double audience awareness" by American Renaissance authors, focusing on Melville and the textual differences in the British and American editions of his works, as the background and explanation of Melville negotiating an Anglo-American readership whilst maintaining an independent narrative voice ("Melville and the Question of American Decolonization," *American Literature* 64, no. 2 [June 1992]: 215–37).

resist the French occupation (*Omoo*, 576). The personal, political, geographical and historical complexity of Anglo-American identity as explored in *Redburn* was analyzed above. Throughout *White-Jacket's* criticism of the practices of the United States Navy, the British Navy is used as a historical and contemporary benchmark, a "kindred marine" (465) to look up to and from whose mistakes to learn (e.g. chaps. 27; 36; 40). White-Jacket's discussion of "The Genealogy of the Articles of War" (Chap. 71) is a good example of the complexity of Anglo-American relations that Melville brings into play in his criticism: the despotism of the Articles of War might be traceable back to the Britain of James II, however, White-Jacket makes certain to emphasize that the cruelty of American Navy discipline is the result of "grafting" British naval regulations from two hundred years earlier onto the purportedly democratic order of the United States (662).

Simultaneously with the Anglo-American comparison and criticism, White-Jacket abstains from expressed national loyalty:

Ay, ay! We sailors sail not in vain. We expatriate ourselves to nationalize with the universe; and in all our voyages round the world, we are still accompanied by those old circumnavigators, the stars, who are shipmates and fellow-sailors of ours – sailing in heaven's blue, as we on the azure main. Let genteel generations scoff at our hardened hands, and fingernails tipped with tar – did they ever clasp truer palms than ours? Let them feel of our sturdy hearts, beating like sledge-hammers in those hot smithies, our bosoms; with their amber-headed canes, let them feel of our generous pulses, and swear that they go off like thirty-two pounders. (*White-Jacket*, 427)

In comparison, this quote exemplifies how *Mardi* was the laboratory for Melville's maritime philosophy before *White-Jacket*: an alliance is formed on the basis of common labor with other sailors; an ancestry is formed with the universe, based on the same principle of labor (stars as "old circumnavigators," "shipmates and fellow-sailors"), as well as on the parallelism between archipelago and constellation, sea and sky. Despite serving on a man-of-war, White-Jacket chooses to be a fugitive from national loyalty: "I thank God I am free from all national invidiousness," he says (466). As he advocates for the betterment of the condition of men serving in the U.S. Navy, White-Jacket exposes how the practices of that navy in fact discourage national spirit. Nationality is foregone for a higher kind of collectivity: that of sea labor, and of social injustice in general. Unlike the feudal metaphors he would later use to describe the order of the Pequod in *Moby-Dick*, Melville infused the earlier-published *White-*

*Jacket* with the above-described “the people” as the ironic quarterdeck designation for lower-ranked seamen, using it to accentuate the difference in power that accompanies that of rank on board a navy ship and ending the narrative with “we the people suffer many abuses” (769). The heterotopia of the ship is employed as a background against which American democracy is examined, allowing White-Jacket at the same time, paradoxically, to do so from a position of eschewed national loyalty, and adherence to the ethic of labor instead.

The most elaborate, layered, and deliberately ironic examination that any Melville’s sea narrative offers of the relation between English and American national identities, separately and in dialogue with one another, is featured in *Mardi*. As mentioned above, it is part of the allegorical chapters in which countries and continents of Melville’s contemporary world were assigned imaginary names indicative enough of their extratextual identities: the allegory begins with the reputation of King Bello and the group’s visit to the island of Dominora – England (chaps. 145–47), and is followed by Kaleedoni (Scotland), Verdanna (Ireland), Franko (France), Ibereea (Spain), Luzianna (Portugal), Hapzaboro (the Austrian Empire), Hoolomooloo (Hawaii), Muzkovi (Russia), Kaneeda (Canada), and so on. Europe, captured in the moment of 1848 revolutions, bears the name of Porpheero, whereas North and South America are called Kolumbo, and Africa is Hamora, after the Biblical son of Noah. The United States is given the name Vivenza, and is described as a former colony of Dominora which has recently gained independence (Chapter 146).

The section of *Mardi* which is explicitly devoted to Dominora and Vivenza spans some sixteen chapters. It is by no means a simple portrayal, but a multifocal, satirical, and often humorous, reflection which makes use of the character mouthpieces and the ideologies they stand for: Taji as narrator, who veers between imposing and imperceptible but remains the controlling instance of the discourse; King Media as monarch and demi-god; Mohi as historian; Yoomy as poet, and Babbalanja as philosopher. In contrast to other islands, in Vivenza Taji’s party is greeted by a collective, an “exceedingly boisterous” “throng” (1171). Everyone is a king in Vivenza (1171), and the “Head-Chief”/“great chieftain” (1178; 1184)<sup>379</sup> is in “no way distinguished, except by the tattooing on his forehead – stars, thirty in number; and an uncommonly long spear in his hand. Freely he mingled with the crowd” (1178). The island’s Temple of Freedom is a work-in-progress, but more than that, it is “the handiwork of slaves,” its striped tappa standard is hoisted by a man with a collar round his neck and stripes

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<sup>379</sup> Identified by G. Thomas Tanselle as President Polk (*Mardi*, 1332, Note 1178.8).

on his back to match those on the flag (1171).<sup>380</sup> The convocation of chiefs, i.e. the island's house of representatives, is a festival of disorder, gluttony and "a great show of imperious and indispensable business" (1172), where only a few individuals stand out for doing work of actual political consequence.

King Bello of Dominora (England) is at one and the same time the embodiment and representation of his kingdom. In this corporeal model, Dominora's territorial annexations are located in and represented by an excess on King Bello's "mountaineer" body: the dangerously large hump on his back, which is increasingly burdening (1132). The dominant device with which Bello is described is the paternal metaphor; its fraternal and avuncular derivations are equally paternalistic in character, and its effects stretch beyond Dominora's relation with Vivenza to the entire Mardi archipelago:

[...] a testy, quarrelsome, rapacious old monarch; the indefatigable breeder of contentions and wars; the *elder brother* of this household of nations, perpetually essaying to lord it over the juveniles; and though his *patrimonial dominations* were situated to the north of the lagoon, not the slightest misunderstanding took place between the rulers of the most distant islands, than this doughty old cavalier on a throne, forthwith thrust his insolent spear into the matter, though it in no wise concerned him, and fell to irritating all parties by his gratuitous interference. (1123, emphasis mine)

Among the juvenile nations lorded over by King Bello, Vivenza is exceptional in that it is an actual offspring of Dominora, yet it has effaced its patrimony: it has created a self-legitimizing discourse on the basis of military liberation ("repelling the warriors dispatched by Bello to crush their insurrection," 1128), whilst at the same time erasing its historical dues to its former ruler, Dominora. In its youthful ignorance of the history of the archipelago, it believes that democracy is coextensive with self-rule, and that political freedom of a democracy trickles down to individual independence: "But in no stable democracy do all men govern themselves. Though an army be all volunteers, martial law must prevail. Delegate your power, you leagued mortals must. The hazard you must stand" (1184–85).

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<sup>380</sup> As the group is still approaching Vivenza from the sea, their first encounter with the island is "an open temple of canes, containing only one image, that of a helmeted female, the tutelary deity of Vivenza" (1169). The inscription on the arch is interpreted by the "antiquarian" and "Champollion" Mohi to say "In-this-re-publi-can-land-all-men-are-born-free-and-equal," only to be subverted immediately by Media claiming "False!" and Babbalanja asking "And how long stay they so?" (1169). Mohi also discovers an apparent postscript which says "Except-the-tribe-of-Hamo" (1170).

In Chapter 161, while Taji's group visits the northward section of Vivenza, the people of Vivenza voice their collective support of the revolutions gaining momentum in Porpheero (i.e. the Europe of 1848). A king in the midst of republican uproar, Media keeps quiet and discreet, then makes himself scarce. During his absence, a mysterious scroll is fixed onto a palm tree, unsigned but claiming to be from the gods, with the aim of pointing out once more the errors in political judgment displayed by Vivenza. Authorship of the scroll is not fully disclosed as Media and Babbalanja accuse one another of writing it, however the position of the voice behind the scroll is certainly anti-republican. The scroll is read out loud for the community to hear, and collectively denounced afterwards. The allegoresis itself is not demanding, as the language of the scroll is simple and its arguments transparent, yet the overall effect is far from unambiguous.

The scroll relativizes freedom in monarchies and republics, saying that domination can, but does not have to, be declared or undeclared, just like independence. The irony is exacerbated by describing monarchies as seemingly easier to defend in terms of political legitimacy than democracies: oppression is built into the system, and the consequences of dissent well known. Monarchs are described as “gemmed bridles upon the world, checking the plunging of a steed from the Pampas” (1182). The egalitarianism of democracy, however, is described as a trigger for overflow and loss of control: “republics are as vast reservoirs, draining down all streams to one level; and so, breeding a fullness which can not remain full, without overflowing” (1182). In the totality of history, democracy is described as an experiment, integral to the general flow but short-lived in the intervals of its enactment: “though crimson republics may rise in constellations, like fiery Aldebarans, speeding to their culminations; yet down must they sink at last, and leave the old sultan-sun in the sky; in time, again to be deposed. For little longer, may it please you, can republics subsist now, than in days gone by” (1183–84). The islands/countries given as examples (Romara, Franko, and Dominora) had until then experienced democracy only in experimental form; coming last in line, the future of democracy of Vivenza remains to be seen. Historical odds are stacked against it: “Civilization has not ever been the brother of equality” (1184).

The harshest criticism of Vivenza's democratic complacency comes from the scroll's exposure of slavery as its foundation and inherent contradiction:

[...] the state that to-day is made up of slaves, can not to-morrow transmute her bond into free; though lawlessness may transform them into brutes. Freedom is a name for a thing that is *not* freedom; this, a lesson never learned in an hour or an age. By some

tribes it will never be learned [...]. Though King Bello's palace was not put together by yoked men; your federal temple of freedom, sovereign-kings! was the handiwork of slaves. (1185)

It is in passages like these that Melville's universal fraternity trumps his exaggeration to absurdity. Beneath the universal horizon of history, and beyond the inherent contradictions of democracy, lies the specifically anomalous political set-up of Vivenza: the wedge of slavery built into a society which so recently freed itself from oppression is an irrefutable argument against its declarations of political enfranchisement and economic freedom, and the irony lies not in saying one thing and meaning another, but in the fact that the truth comes from the least desirable source: the non-democratic voice of the author of the scroll. Vivenza's case remains incongruous and irredeemable.

Finally, in the scroll, the sea is offered as a backstop for political affairs, and recommendations given not in terms of internal but foreign affairs:

'Oro has poured out an ocean for an everlasting barrier between you and the worst folly which other republics have perpetrated. *That barrier hold sacred.* And swear never to cross over to Porpheero, by manifesto or army, unless you traverse dry land.

'And be not too grasping, nearer home. It is not freedom to filch. *Expand not your area too widely, now.* Seek you proselytes? Neighboring nations may be free, without coming under your banner. And if you can not lay your ambition, know this: that it is best served, by waiting events.

'Time, but Time only, may enable you to cross the equator; and give you the Arctic Circles for your boundaries.' (1186–87, emphasis mine)

The geographical isolation provided by the ocean which surrounds Vivenza translates into potential for political prudence, since news from other countries arrives with a delay. The temporal delay and geographical isolation ought to be utilized when it comes to territorial expansion as well, as the young country might gain more allies through political conversion than through territorial acquisition. Together with its relativizing flux-and-reflux, or ebb-and-flow, conception of history, *Mardi* presents an allegorical view of the relation between England and America as a father and son (Chap. 159), but which reconceptualizes this linear, filial relationship as a lateral alliance: "Ho! worthy twain! Each worthy the other, join hands on the instant, and weld them together. Lo! the past is a prophet. Be the future, its prophecy

fulfilled;” “all Mardi would go down before them” if the sire and the son joined hands (1177). The past and the future fulfilling one another is evocative of the Biblical Old and New Testament legitimizing one another, a double-mirror effect. The effect is, perhaps paradoxically, minoritarian in the Deleuzian sense: unlike Cooper, who indebted Melville by bequeathing him with a wider playing field, but whose means of validating Americanness in (sea) literature were closer to the majoritarian end of the spectrum, the zone of proximity that is articulated between England and America enables an analysis of America’s majoritarian aspirations by facing them with a majoritarian mirror, using a monarch character as mouthpiece. Beyond *Mardi* and including Melville’s other sea narratives, the American identity is thought out in continuous double-mirror relation with the British. These are not stages in forming or formulating America’s political and literary identity (which would supposedly separate itself from Britain eventually), but its building-blocks: like the phenomenon of the white whale, this identity would always be *Anglo-American*. This is why Redburn is able to assert with such conviction that the language of the new Pentecost would be “the language of Britain” (186): his statement is doubly coded between the naiveté of his perspective (young and older alike) and America’s – always potentially subversive – entitlement to its English past and, more importantly, to the English language.

### **3.5. Melville and deterritorialization of language: Sea argot**

Melville is not only a highly textually sensitive author, but also essentially heteroglossic. From his multiply framed narration and polymorphous mouthpieces/split narratorial voices,<sup>381</sup> neologisms and linguistic virtuosity, to his sea narratives’ treatment of English as such, his Polynesian phonetic interstices, and his linguistic version of universal patrimony through the use of Latin in colonizing/reterritorializing Pacific islands in the Western idiom as well as internationalizing/globalizing sea labor, Melville’s sea writing offers vast exploration potential in terms of the high coefficient of deterritorialization which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, characterizes the language of minor literature. This chapter focuses on the place of specialized sea argot in the language of Melville’s sea writing, and its use as a minoritarian device. Not all Melville’s sea narratives analyzed here center on the maritime ethos in their entirety: while *Redburn*, *White-Jacket*, *Moby-Dick*, “Benito Cereno” and *Billy Budd* could be

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<sup>381</sup> A pronounced example might be Chap. 180 of *Mardi*, where the framing could be schematized as follows: [implied author] : Taji : Babbalanja : Azaggeddi : Lombardo.

described as sea narratives proper, seafaring episodes merely frame the narrative of *Typee*, and are interspersed throughout *Omoo*, *Mardi*, and *Israel Potter*.<sup>382</sup>

In Melville's sea narratives, sea argot is the first manifestation of shipboard deterritorialization, as well as barrier to labor: until he can understand his orders, the tyro cannot do his work or become part of the crew.<sup>383</sup> Even seasoned sailors, who happen to cross sectors within seafaring industries (from whaling to navy, like White-Jacket, or from merchant to whaling, like Ishmael), are described as having to re-learn what they know, or re-negotiate their position between the labor required and the language received to communicate it.<sup>384</sup> In Chapter 3 of *Mardi*, the narrator describes his comrade-to-be:

Now, in old Jarl's lingo there was never an idiom. Your aboriginal tar is too much of a cosmopolitan for that. Long companionship with seamen of all tribes: Manilla-men, Anglo-Saxons, Cholos, lascars, and Danes, wear away in good time all mother-tongue stammerings. You sink your clan; down goes your nation; you speak a world's language, jovially jabbering in the Lingua-Franca of the fore-castle. (*Mardi*, 673)

The mother tongue is described as a "stammering" (Deleuze would call it a suspension of language<sup>385</sup>), whereas the new, world's, language is a "jovial jabbering" – a hyperinflation of

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<sup>382</sup> Describing the genealogy of the sea narrative in American literature, Hester Blum says: "It should be noted that sailor writing is distinct from the standard forms of contemporary travel writing in the sense that sailors are concerned with describing the places and people they encounter only to a secondary degree; the main impetus of their narratives is to describe the local culture of the ship, as well as its material demands" (6). White-Jacket, for instance, closely adheres to this principle in insisting on recounting only shipboard events, and avoiding those related to the ship's stays in harbor (*White-Jacket*, chaps. 39; 89).

<sup>383</sup> On his second day out of port, lost between the *man-ropes* (74), *stun'-sails* (75), *starboard-main-top-gallant-bow-line*, *larboard-fore-top-sail-clue-line* (76) and other items of nautical vocabulary, Redburn says: "For my own part, I could do but little to help the rest, not knowing the name of any thing, or the proper way to go about aught [...]. People who have never gone to sea for the first time as sailors, can not imagine how puzzling and confounding it is. It must be like going into a barbarous country, where they speak a strange dialect, and dress in strange clothes, and live in strange houses. For sailors have their own names, even for things that are familiar ashore; and if you call a thing by its shore name, you are laughed at for an ignoramus and a landlubber" (75–76).

<sup>384</sup> A merchant marine new to the navy is compared to a Scotsman in England/London in *White-Jacket*: "Well-nigh useless to him, now, all previous circumnavigations of this terraqueous globe; of no account his arctic, antarctic, or equinoctial experiences; his gales off Beachy Head, or his dismastings off Hatteras. He must begin anew; he knows nothing; Greek and Hebrew could not help him, for the language he must learn has neither grammar nor lexicon" (359). Arguments between sailors of different backgrounds involve sea language as well: "What knew you of gun-deck, or orlop, mustering round the capstan, beating to quarters, and piping to dinner?" (363). Not nearly a Nantucketer himself, Ishmael will recodify his merchant marine background to reformulate a hierarchy of prestige between different kinds of seafaring: "Merchant ships are but extension bridges; armed ones but floating forts; even pirates and privateers, though following the sea as highwaymen the road, they but plunder other ships, other fragments of the land like themselves, without seeking to draw their living from the bottomless deep itself. The Nantucketer, he alone resides and riots on the sea; he alone, in Bible language, goes down to it in ships; to and fro ploughing it as his own special plantation" (*Moby-Dick*, 65).

<sup>385</sup> Gilles Deleuze, "Re-Presentation of Masoch," in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (1993; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 55.

language, to the point of unintelligibility, brought about by a very literal de/reterritorialization – that of the shipboard.

Melville's employment of sea argot demonstrates a pattern of being inclusive of specialists and nonspecialists alike, often explicitly addressing his narratees.<sup>386</sup> Within the tyro/initiation template as well as elsewhere, nautical vocabulary, labor organization and ship maneuvering are explained for non-initiated readers, extending sailor knowledge beyond the sailing realm proper. Chapter titles throughout Melville's opus are fairly self-evident in this respect, and Chapter 10 in *Omoo* is a good example of this inclusive gesture:

*I may as well give some idea of the place in which the doctor and I lived together so sociably.*

*Most persons know that a ship's forecabin embraces the forward part of the deck about the bowsprit: the same term, however, is generally bestowed upon the sailors' sleeping-quarters, which occupy a space immediately beneath, and are partitioned off by a bulkhead.*

*Planted right in the bows, or, as sailors say, in the very eyes of the ship, this delightful apartment is of a triangular shape, and is generally fitted with two tiers of rude bunks.*  
(365, emphasis mine)

In similar fashion, the narrator of *Mardi* explains the boats-suspension system on a South Seaman (Chap. 5); Redburn provides a detailed overview of the organization and labor on board his merchant ship the Highlander, including crew dynamic, distribution of power and self-perception of sailors (Chap. 12), labor details (chaps. 13; 16; 20; 24), sailor wardrobe (Chap. 15), dangerous maneuvers (Chap. 19), while most of *White-Jacket* is in fact a description of the minutiae of identical operations on a man-of-war. Despite its recurrent appeals to specialist readers, Chapter 24 of *Moby-Dick* is a notable example of directly involving the nonspecialists by telling them “ye shall soon be initiated into certain facts hitherto pretty generally unknown” about whaling (98). “Benito Cereno” and *Billy Budd* feature less complex technical argot than the other narratives on the whole, however when they do employ

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<sup>386</sup> Readers are explicitly addressed on a number of occasions in Melville's sea narratives up to and including *Moby-Dick*, with varying intent and implication: for instance, while *White-Jacket* at one point identifies with landspeople (“we plain people ashore,” 520), Ishmael seems to address a more initiated, if putative, reader (“if you be a Nantucketer, and a whaler, you will silently worship there,” 351; “You may have seen many a quaint craft in your day, for aught I know,” 69), while at the same time explaining shipboard activities for the uninitiated and mentioning “the civil skepticism of some parlor men” (219). I provide a more inclusive list of narratee addresses in Note 402 in this Chapter.

it, they retain the principle of inclusiveness in either using simpler terms, or offering explanation for nonspecialist readers.

This linguistic inclusiveness is broken in situations of narrative tension, then picked up again afterward, to various degrees: usually in scenes describing quick action and dangerous ship maneuvers, explanations are retracted and sea argot is used in shorthand form. In Chapter 23 of *Omoo*, the islander harpooner Bembo tries to run the Julia aground and the rest of the crew rush to save the ship:

“*Haul back the head-yards!*” “*Let go the lee fore-brace!*” “*Ready about! About!*” were now shouted on all sides; while distracted by a thousand orders, they ran hither and thither, fairly panic-stricken.

It seemed all over with us; and I was just upon the point of throwing the ship full into the wind (a step, which, saving us for the instant, would have sealed our fate in the end), when a sharp cry shot by my ear like the flight of an arrow.

It was Salem: “*All ready for ’ard; hard down!*”

Round and round went the spokes—the Julia, with her short keel, spinning to windward like a top. Soon, *the jib-sheets lashed the stays, and the men, more self-possessed, flew to the braces.*

“*Main-sail haul!*” was now heard, as the fresh breeze streamed fore and aft the deck; and directly the after-yards were whirled round.

In a half-a-minute more, we were sailing away from the land on the other tack, with every sail distended. (419, emphasis mine)

Similarly, Chapter 19 of *Redburn*, “A Narrow Escape,” describes the Highlander barely avoiding a crash with another ship in the dark; *White-Jacket* offers descriptions of hypothetical ways to round the dreaded Cape Horn in Chapter 24. On the one hand, the suspension of jargon elaboration quickens the pace of narrative action and contributes to the effect of tension, as nonspecialist readers are left to their own devices to understand the scene. At the same time, it could also be interpreted as acknowledgment of the readers’ symbolic initiation into the imaginary-textual collective formed in the space between sea labor and sea language. Instead of *understanding* the scene, they are now understood to have *become* part of it.

At the same time, as was said above, most Melville’s sea narrators are incognito fugitives, folded into sailing from the outside: specialists by labor, they use the sea argot, but

do not subscribe to the sea ethos. The distance between the first-person narrators and the rest of the crew is underscored by linguistic ridicule of fellow sailors. Redburn thus expresses his clear disappointment when his idea of British English is betrayed by the Lancashire boy he meets prior to his voyage out of New York: “he talked such a curious language though, half English and half gibberish, that I knew not what to make of him; and was a little astonished, when he told me he was an English boy, from Lancashire” (33). Chapter 21 is more complex, with Larry the Nantucketer (another instance of nautical cross-over, from whaling to merchant marine) stepping on the scene. On the one hand, Larry’s criticism of (Western) civilization as opposed to “the delights of the free and easy Indian Ocean” (113) partakes of the ethos of *Omoo* (and partly *Typee*) and the critical eye cast back toward the West upon encountering what appears a Rousseauian, simpler and more just world in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. On the other hand, however, Larry’s language is that of an uneducated man, very different from the language of Melville’s narrators, or even Dana Jr., if we wanted to compare:

“And what’s the use of bein’ *snivelized*?” said he to me one night during our watch on deck; “snivelized chaps only learns the way to take on ‘bout life, and snivel. You don’t see any Methodist chaps feelin’ dreadful about their souls; you don’t see any darned beggars and pesky constables in *Madagasky*, I tell ye; and none o’ them kings there gets their big toes pinched by the gout. Blast Ameriky, I say.” (*Redburn*, 113)

Larry is a caricature character, in a sense the reverse of King Media in *Mardi*: a convenient device where satire is voiced using a mouthpiece whose credibility is undermined by the narrative authority at hand. The expressed object of satire, “snivelization” and “snivelized chaps” such as Redburn and the likes of him, is supposed to be a matter of broader geographical and cultural difference, however the fact that the credibility of Larry’s position is undermined by his own speech makes it a matter of class within Western society.

The direct and public humiliation of Tubbs, another whaleman-turned-man-of-war’s-man in *White-Jacket*, by Jack Chase, White-Jacket’s “gentlemanly” role model among the foretopmen, uses specialized sea argot as part of its justification:

“Why, you lean rogue, you, a man-of-war is to whalemens, as a metropolis to shire-towns, and sequestered hamlets. *Here’s* the place for life and commotion; *here’s* the place to be gentlemanly and jolly. And what did you know, you bumpkin! before you came on board this *Andrew Miller*? What knew you of gun-deck, or orlop, mustering

round the capstan, beating to quarters, and piping to dinner? Did you ever roll to *grog* on board your greasy ballyhoo of blazes? Did you ever winter at Mahon? Did you ever ‘*lash and carry?*’.” (363)

This exact speech makes White-Jacket decide against sharing his own whaling background with his newly-found station-mates, knowing that it would endanger the privilege he has worked so hard to achieve. He will later criticize the language with which the master-at-arms’ temporary substitute, Sneak, chides a sailor for apparently slacking off: “It is often observable, that, in vessels of all kinds, the men who talk the most sailor lingo are the least sailor-like in reality. You may sometimes hear even marines jerk out more salt phrases than the Captain of the Forecastle himself” (675). There are several other instances where sea argot spilling beyond the narrow realm of sea labor proper is deemed a kind of linguistic extreme: Toby, whose inferior position with regard to Tommo was described above, uses sea language in describing his and Tommo’s plans for Nukuheva island (*Typee*, 59; 61); *Omo* presents two instances of non-native speakers who have served on English-speaking ships, and whose only English seems to consist of nautical phrases – the islander harpooner Bembo is described as “a better seaman never swore. This accomplishment, by the bye, together with a surprising familiarity with most nautical names and phrases, comprised about all the English he knew” (*Omo*, 398); having served on a whaler, “Capin Bob” “prided himself upon his English. Having acquired what he knew of it in the forecandle, he talked little else than sailor phrases, which sounded whimsically enough” (*Omo*, 447); Captain Vere of the *Bellipotent* is favorably described for opposite reasons, as “Ashore, in the garb of a civilian, scarce anyone would have taken him for a sailor, more especially that he never garnished unprofessional talk with nautical terms.”<sup>387</sup>

Despite their democratic gestures of opening up sea language to include nonspecialists, Melville’s sea narratives thus simultaneously demonstrate reserve toward an excess of sea argot. Critic L. J. Reynolds says:

One of White-Jacket’s subtle yet emphatic antidemocratic theses is that he, Jack Chase, and their select group of friends are truly superior to the mass of other men on the man-of-war and compose a valid aristocracy, one differing from Jefferson’s natural aristocracy of talent and virtue by including the class-oriented standards of

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<sup>387</sup> Herman Melville, *Billy Budd, Sailor (An Inside Narrative)*, in *Pierre; Israel Potter; The Piazza Tales; The Confidence-Man; Uncollected Prose; Billy Budd* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 1369.

birth, breeding, manners, education, and social condition, so strenuously defended by Cooper.<sup>388</sup>

This statement could, again, be expanded to include most Melville's first-person sea narratives. In addition, it is not far from what Blum notes of Cooper's portrayal of Long Tom Coffin and his shipmates in *The Pilot*:

Coffin and his shipmates are so constrained by their idiom that even their search for alternate forms of literary expression – whether poetry or the legend of Captain Kidd – always refer back to the same narrow set of signification.<sup>389</sup>

The officers of *The Pilot* are able to move successfully from ship to shore, from the longboat to the parlor, yet the one common sailor characterized in the novel, the towering Long Tom Coffin, cannot exist independently of his ship and goes down with it. Out of touch, perhaps, with the concerns of the common seaman (an accusation made by Dana and others), Cooper's call for landsmen to become involved in sailors' lives was the kind of impulse that other mariners, such as Nathaniel Ames, rejected [...].<sup>390</sup>

In terms of sea ethos, Melville's narratorial voices seem to share more with Cooper's adherence to hierarchy and anti-democratic sentiments than would initially appear, even if – in terms of how they employ sea language – they are more democratic and inclusive. The complexity of interpreting Melville depends to a great extent on the perspective taken: on the one hand, his narratives contain manifestoes, speaking “in the place of” rather than “for the benefit of”<sup>391</sup> subalterns such as common sailors, emigrants, and the colonized. They are genuinely humanitarian in their intent, they slip through the cracks of narratorial bias and trump the context of humor or satire within which they are often set. However, when read with the focus on sea language and sea ethos and alongside Deleuze, Melville's sea writing is shown to overstep the gesture of working sailors' personal maritime narratives which invite

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<sup>388</sup> Larry J Reynolds, “Antidemocratic Emphasis in *White-Jacket*,” *American Literature* 48, no. 1 (March 1976): 18.

<sup>389</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 86.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>391</sup> Deleuze makes this distinction in “Life and Literature,” *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 4.

landed readers to “inhabit the working lives of seamen imaginatively,”<sup>392</sup> thus betraying both specialists and nonspecialists; the democratic declarations remain rhetorical, and are rarely enacted on the diegetic level; what remains is the persistent explicit erosion of narrative reliability, folding in upon itself through the auxiliary devices of humor, (dramatic) irony, and satire.

Melville’s sea narrators often insist on the incommensurability of language and experience, or the inadequacy of language (on the level of *langue* as well as *parole* – English as such) to render experience accurately.<sup>393</sup> *Typee* (151; 238), *Omoo* (329–31), *Redburn* (15–16), and *White-Jacket* (Chap. 19) all contain multiple references to their narrators’ “delirious” state of mind or explain how their narration is affected either by the events recounted, or by subsequent sailing experiences. A potential key to interpret it is given in the first quotation in the “Etymology” section of *Moby-Dick*, that of Hakluyt:<sup>394</sup> “While you take in hand to school others, and to teach them by what name a whale-fish is to be called in our tongue, leaving out, through ignorance, the letter H, which almost alone maketh up the signification of the word, you deliver that which is not true.”<sup>395</sup> Before the narrative proper begins, it is announced that in what is effectively a translation into English something will be left out, without which the narrative will not be true and will lose its meaning. The “Etymology,” “Extracts” and cetology sections scattered throughout *Moby-Dick* seem to sum up the principle already present in previous Melville’s sea narratives: that of “jovially jabbering,” of deliberately offering an excess of language, yet leading to no “truth.” If less sophisticated, the title of Chapter 152 of *Mardi* was equally honest: “They sail round an island without landing; and talk round a subject without getting at it” (1147).

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<sup>392</sup> Blum, *View from the Masthead*, 72.

<sup>393</sup> Tommo feigns guilelessness in refusing to provide interpretation for what he sees among the Typees: “I shall not presume to decide” (*Typee*, 208), “I cannot divine” (209), “I will not venture to assert” (219); Ishmael does the same throughout *Moby-Dick*, also calling himself “unlettered” and offering the brow of the whale to the readers to decipher and interpret (*Moby-Dick*, 275), as well as mock-belittling his ability to describe the tail of the whale (296 et pass.). *Redburn* insists on the disparity between reading about sea tragedies in newspapers versus his narrative description versus the lived experience (*Redburn*, 318), while Ishmael veers between insisting on an irresolvable tension between textual knowledge and experience (of live whales when whaling) (*Moby-Dick*, 218; 296 et pass.) and instances where the two do overlap, such as in observing whale migration paths (155). *Mardi* holds multiple references to limits and limitations of language as such, as well as language and arbitrariness: “words are but algebraic signs, conveying no meaning except what you please. And to be called one thing, is oftentimes to be another” (930). It also insists that “there is no telling all” (702) and “Thus far, through myriad islands, had we searched: of all, no one pen may write: least, mine” (1279).

<sup>394</sup> According to Note 781.1–25 in the Library of America edition of *Moby-Dick* (p. 1428), Hakluyt is quoted via Charles’ Richardson’s *A New Dictionary of the English Language*.

<sup>395</sup> Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 7.

### 3.6. Conclusion: The specific textuality and narrativity of Melville's sea narratives

The chief pursuit of Melville's sea narrators' is that of an individuated enunciation, made impossible by the multiple collectives (family, nation, ship crews) which act as sieves for their discourse. The result of this struggle for their utterance to break through is hypercontrolling, spasmodic, and therefore ultimately unreliable narration, and hegemonic tendencies in their language. Nina Baym says of *Mardi*:

Hence Melville conceived of truth as in the possession of a taunter, a withholder, an opponent. He could not tell the truth because someone, a little bit ahead of him, was keeping it from him; Melville was left then with "telling" the *quest* for truth. In this very general sense, *Mardi* does contain a narrative about the chartless search for an elusive truth. [...] The critics, of course, did not perceive that Melville was trying to transcend all genres (nor do we when we analyze *Mardi* as a novel or romance), perhaps because they could not conceive of a work written altogether outside the bounds of literature. A person who endeavors to write literature must deal in literary conventions, they assumed, and when he does not will only create a "hodge-podge." This is the discovery that Melville made in *Pierre*, and it bitterly disillusioned him.<sup>396</sup>

Without stretching Baym's reading of *Mardi* to include all Melville's sea narratives, I would nevertheless suggest a path of reading his sea oeuvre outside the bounds of fact and fiction, verisimilitude, and genre, as a separate, specific form of textuality, minoritarian in ethos but in a different way than perhaps even Deleuze read it. *Typee* describes how faraway events are censored into narratives told at home: "The enormities perpetrated in the South Seas upon some of the inoffensive islanders wellnigh pass belief. These things are seldom proclaimed at home; they happen at the very ends of the earth; they are done in a corner, and there are none to reveal them" (37). White-Jacket refuses to tell the details of a fellow sailor's flogging ("The story itself can not here be related; it would not well bear recital," *White-Jacket*, 574) and vows to speak only of shipboard events and leave out what happens on shore (584; 743). Turning his back on his readers in perhaps the most beautifully lyrical denial of narrative in Melville's sea oeuvre, the narrator of *The Encantadas* stops decidedly short of retelling the full story of widow Hunilla: "But no, I will not file this thing complete for scoffing souls to

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<sup>396</sup> Nina Baym, "Melville's Quarrel with Fiction," *PMLA* 94, no. 5 (Oct. 1979): 913-14.

quote, and call it firm proof upon their side. The half shall here remain untold. Those two unnamed events which befell Hunilla on this isle, let them abide between her and her God. In nature, as in law, it may be libelous to speak some truths.”<sup>397</sup>

*Redburn*, *White-Jacket*, and *Moby-Dick* all insist at some point on the importance of testimony, however unreliable their narration,<sup>398</sup> and “Benito Cereno” places testimony, official as well as informal, at its center. Ishmael says: “The drama’s done. Why then here does any one step forth? – Because one did survive the wreck.”<sup>399</sup> The kind of testimony offered by Melville’s sea narratives lies deliberately between catalogue and exemplariness: like Ishmael’s “handful” of whaling events of global influence,<sup>400</sup> which is in effect a synecdoche, promising “nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete must for that very reason infallibly be faulty,”<sup>401</sup> they do not tell only the story of Tommo, Taji, or Billy Budd, but build a new kind of formulaicity, in spite of themselves. This formulaicity also folds in and claims as its own the hypertext of other maritime and travel narratives, dictionaries and literary references acknowledged and unacknowledged by Melville, quoted word for word as well as those altered without notice. It actively addresses its narratees and invites them to “finish” what they are reading.<sup>402</sup> Announcing unmarked and arbitrary diegetic omissions, they offer in return an excess of putative or absentee narration of events that do not but could have happened: *Typee* opens with a list of provisions which have been eaten and are no longer to be found on board the Dolly (11–12), and provides a description of a hypothetical sea battle (290–91); *Redburn* tells of other possible versions of the Highlander’s narrow escape from crashing into other ships (106); *White-Jacket* gives hypothetical scenarios of rounding Cape Horn (Chap. 24), and juxtaposes the description of a naval drill with how an actual naval battle might look like (Chap. 16); the Grampus’ and the Goney’s “nearly four years of cruising” in *Moby-Dick* turn out to be proleptic of the future

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<sup>397</sup> Herman Melville, *The Encantadas, or, Enchanted Isles*, in *Pierre; Israel Potter; The Piazza Tales; The Confidence-Man; Uncollected Prose; Billy Budd* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 801.

<sup>398</sup> *White-Jacket* says: “I let nothing slip, however small; and feel myself actuated by the same motive which has prompted many worthy old chroniclers, to set down the merest trifles concerning things that are destined to pass away entirely from the earth, and which, if not preserved in the nick of time, must infallibly perish from the memories of man. Who knows that this humble narrative may not hereafter prove the history of an obsolete barbarism? Who knows that, when men-of-war shall be no more, ‘White-Jacket’ may not be quoted to show to the people in the Millennium what a man-of-war was?” (*White-Jacket*, 647). *Redburn* ends his narrative with the following words: “But yet, I, Wellingborough Redburn, chance to survive, after having passed through far more perilous scenes than any narrated in this, My First Voyage – which here I end” (*Redburn*, 340), emphasizing the connection between survival and narrative as testimony.

<sup>399</sup> Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 427.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>402</sup> A representative, though not exhaustive, list of narratee addresses/implication would include: *Typee*, Preface, pp. 33; 38; 236; *Omoo*, 365–6; *Mardi* 680; 763; 1262; *Redburn*, 54; 76; Chap. 20; *White-Jacket*, 352; 381; 387; 629; 670; *Moby-Dick*, 69; 73; 351; chaps. 1; 24; 49; *The Encantadas*, 799.

which the Pequod would never see.<sup>403</sup> Everything that did, did not, could have and could not have happened, in Melville's as well as any other maritime narrative, gains purchase in this kind of textuality.

The "active solidarity" which Deleuze speaks of is articulated as a flight from configurations such as family and nation: personal names and family histories are not only jettisoned, but made up and transformed in the course of the narrative; the ethics of sea labor emerges as a principle of alliance that is lateral instead of hierarchical, and productive of assemblages in its aspect of forming configurations between human and nonhuman elements at sea. Another minoritarian aspect of Melville's sea narratives is the fact that the collective utterance they form is unwanted, because they are uttered by the "exceptional individual" in the collective multiplicity, that is, the sailor who wishes nothing but to escape from sailing because he feels that his contract in the collective economy of pain on shipboard has been breached: "every Animal has its Anomalous."<sup>404</sup> From the confined space of the ship, there issues a testimony of survival from beyond the bounds of the log, the manifest and the deposition, struggling to be the "individual concern"<sup>405</sup> of Tommo, Taji, White-Jacket, or Ishmael, but which, caught up in the refraction of multiple collectives confining it, cannot escape the formulaicity of being *a* story, or *yet another*, story of the sea. In the end, the frenzied question "Typee or Happar?" over which Tommo and Toby keep arguing, and which they assume means the difference between life and death, makes no difference: like the Arcturion in *Mardi*, it is in fact a matter of "chassezing across the Line" (664); like the Round Robin in *Omoo*, it is a wheel of "all hands" pointing to incognito sailor names, any of whose story could be told at any one time.

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<sup>403</sup> Melville, *Moby-Dick*, chaps. 3 and 52, respectively.

<sup>404</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 268–69.

<sup>405</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 71.



## 4. JOSEPH CONRAD'S SEA NARRATIVES AND MINOR LITERATURE

### 4.1. Introduction: Conrad as a minoritarian author? Englishness and identity games

“‘To-morrow we walk, Tuan, now I know you,’ answered the Malay. ‘I speak English a little, so we can talk and nobody will understand, and then – ’” The Malay prince Dain Maroola and the failed Dutch businessman Kaspar Almayer, foreigners to one another as well as to the English language, use English as a secret code of business and private interests. As early as *Almayer's Folly* (35), published in 1895, Joseph Conrad captured what would be his biographical and authorial performativity of Englishness for the rest of his career, and part of what Zdzisław Najder would describe as his “private mythology:”<sup>406</sup> a necessity of participating in that language which, as belonging to it is denied, prompts a ritual performance of codes that allows for incremental legitimation of the foreigner.

With all the productive friction emerging between Melville's writing and Deleuze's readings (including those with Guattari, Parnet, or other co-authors), Melville remains a Deleuze favorite par excellence. Conrad, however, does not register on Deleuze's radar with the same intensity: he mentions Conrad in his book on painter Francis Bacon,<sup>407</sup> however, Conrad does not figure in Deleuze's detailed readings, especially in minor-literature-oriented ones. At the same time, the field of Deleuzian readings of/with Conrad by other authors continues to proliferate: in addition to S. M. Islam and N. Israel, whose works are engaged with in this chapter, notable recent publications include G. Z. Gasyna's comparative reading of exilic discourse in J. Conrad and W. Gombrowicz, as well as J. Hughes' chapter on *The Shadow-Line* in his book of reading T. Hardy, G. Gissing, J. Conrad and V. Woolf with Deleuze.

On the one hand, suffering from what N. Israel called “a peculiarly acute form of national and psychical deracination,”<sup>408</sup> Joseph Conrad is almost too obviously opportune a candidate, in life as in writing, for a minoritarian reading. Adam Gillon's and Ian Watt's respective summations of Conrad's biographical foreignness and literary exile are good examples of what has become commonplace in Conrad studies:

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<sup>406</sup> Zdzisław Najder, Introduction to *The Mirror of the Sea and A Personal Record*, by Joseph Conrad (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), xix.

<sup>407</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (1981; New York and London: Continuum, 2003), 15–16.

<sup>408</sup> Nico Israel, “Exile, Conrad, and ‘La Différence Essentielle des Races’,” *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 30, no. 3 (Spring 1997): 364.

Consider, for example, Conrad's arrival in England, which he himself defined as a very lonely exploration; or his solitary years at sea and the lack of true contact between him and other sailors; or the hardship and the unreality of being an English writer; the self-consciousness at his inability to speak English without a heavy foreign accent; or his ambiguous if not downright misogynous feelings toward his young English wife, who could not understand him and to whom he remained a stranger to the end of his days; or the inability of the English critics, friends and admirers included, to understand what he was trying to say in his fiction; or, finally, his financial troubles.<sup>409</sup>

Exile [was] central to the lives and the art of Joyce and Lawrence, Pound and Eliot; [it was] not much less so to the later generation of Hemingway, Beckett and Auden. Conrad's case, though, was special, and in two ways. For one thing, Conrad did not choose his exile – the fate of his family and his country forced it on him; and for another, Conrad's exile was much more absolute – with very minor exceptions he did not write about his own country, and he wrote nothing for publication in his native tongue. The very absoluteness of his exile, however, set the course of Conrad's thought in a different direction from that of his peers . . . . [T]he son of Apollo, the defeated orphan, the would-be suicide, the inheritor of the Polish past, [Conrad] had walked the Waste Land from childhood on.<sup>410</sup>

Conrad's "Polishness" is well-documented and analyzed, most prominently by authors like Zdzisław Najder, Gustav Morf, or Adam Gillon. Conrad's own comments on his foreignness and express attitude towards the English language and identity continue to be a major research interest. The fact that his is an extreme case of literary biographism, where life and literature are converged on purpose in order to better understand the compound of Conrad the man/Conrad the oeuvre, is all the more reason to study him in a Deleuzian framework. Next, Conrad is an author of sea narratives: the collectivity of ship crews, the strict, compartmentalized organization of ship space, and the specific coastal, national, and global spatiality – including territoriality – of different sailing industries (navy, merchant, exploration, fishing/whaling) traverse an entire spectrum of minoritarian potential.

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<sup>409</sup> Adam Gillon, "Some Polish Literary Motifs in the Works of Joseph Conrad," *The Slavic and Eastern European Journal* 10, no. 4 (Winter 1966): 425–26.

<sup>410</sup> Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 32, quoted in Nico Israel, "Exile, Conrad, and 'La Différence Essentielle des Races,'" 364.

On the other hand, Conrad did not only infuse English literature with the liminality of his maritime perspective in literature and of his non-Englishness; his ability to fuse into, to write himself into, the major literature of England, contains enough complicity (ambivalent as it is) to cast doubt on reading him as a minor author in the Deleuzian sense. Among his legitimations, Conrad was commissioned in 1905, by H.A. Gwynne, to write a tribute to Lord Nelson at the centennial of the Battle of Trafalgar (the tribute is now part of *The Mirror of the Sea*), and inaugurated into F. R. Leavis' English literary canon *The Great Tradition*. He had obituary-tributes written about him by, among others, John Galsworthy and Virginia Woolf: while Galsworthy might have written his as Conrad's friend and been more appreciative of Conrad's literary achievements than Woolf, both texts are nonetheless pervaded with the conspicuousness of Conrad being a foreigner – even in death, for Woolf he was still “our guest,” who arrived mysteriously “long years ago, to take up lodging in this country.”<sup>411</sup>

The very same sea that holds such minoritarian potential for writing was also Conrad's ticket into English legitimation: as Keith Carabine said (referring to the work of A. White) in his Introduction to *The Mirror of the Sea*, “Conrad had (understandably) disliked being thought of as an oddity, an exotic and a foreigner. Given such pressures, it is not surprising that in *The Mirror* he chose to align himself with a particularly English mode of life and lineage, namely that of the British Merchant Service.”<sup>412</sup> An exact statement by Conrad from *A Personal Record* reads as follows: “I told [the examiner at the Marine Department of the Board of Trade], smiling, that no doubt I could have found a ship much nearer my native place, but I had thought to myself that if I was to be a seaman, then I would be a British seaman and no other. It was a matter of deliberate choice.”<sup>413</sup> It was only in 2002 that Jürgen Kramer set out to re-evaluate a major critical stance toward Conrad: by revisiting the apparent hyper-Anglicization of Conrad's fictional crews as opposed to the ships on which he served in real life, Kramer presents two convincingly substantiated claims – first, that Conrad's literary texts employed a much more ambivalent attitude toward England than was previously thought; and second, that extreme biographism in approaching Conrad's oeuvre is a misreading.<sup>414</sup> Situating historically the discourse on race in Conrad's fiction, Peter Edgerly Firchow notes that “Conrad was by no means alone in thinking in stereotypical ways about other national or ethnic groups though it should be noted that Conrad's fiction tended in this

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<sup>411</sup> Quoted in Jürgen Kramer, “Conrad's Crews Revisited,” in *Fictions of the Sea: Critical Perspectives on the Ocean in British Literature and Culture*, ed. Bernhard Klein (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 167.

<sup>412</sup> Keith Carabine, Introduction to *The Mirror of the Sea & A Personal Record*, by Joseph Conrad (London: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2008), 16.

<sup>413</sup> Conrad, *A Personal Record*, 290.

<sup>414</sup> Kramer, “Conrad's Crews Revisited,” 157–75.

respect to be subtler and more balanced than that of most other writers of the period,” not neglecting that, at the same time, “Conrad seems to be claiming that there are two kinds of imperialism: one is British and good; another is non-British and, to varying degrees, not good.”<sup>415</sup> Nico Israel provides a good outline of how critics have both mythologized Conrad’s border position (conflating his “life” and “art” using excessive psychologizing) and called him to task for his “ideological complicity with colonialism and imperialism.”<sup>416</sup>

This is by no means a comprehensive overview of Conrad’s complex negotiation with Englishness and what it entailed for him to become accepted as an English author, but a short list of repudiations and attempts at rescuing Conrad, resulting in irresolvable ambiguities regarding major issues such as nation, literature, and language. Conrad’s fiction has sent biographers to hunt for sources on a global archival and geographical scale,<sup>417</sup> superposing the map of his life onto the map of his works to see where they diverge, tracing everything from how “English” Conrad made his fictional ship crews to how much “guilt” he felt upon emigrating from Poland;<sup>418</sup> it should be noted, though, that being an author of sea narratives – a topic inherently international as well as decidedly English – certainly augmented this need for a Conradian literary geography. His memoirs are even more misleading: as Carabine notes, Conrad’s *A Personal Record* is neither “personal” nor a “record” proper.<sup>419</sup> Composed between 1904 and 1905, almost ten years after his merchant navy career ended, *The Mirror of the Sea* could be described more as a retroactive codebook of the specific sea ethos Conrad had already forged in his fiction than an accurate, if personal, document of his sea career. Paul B. Armstrong describes Conrad’s prefaces as “not [...] always informative or reliable keys to his intentions”<sup>420</sup> and his “writings about art and literature [as] often eloquent and profound, and they offer interesting perspectives on his fictions even if they are often more suggestive than conclusive.”<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> Peter Edgerly Firchow, “Race, Ethnicity, Nationality, Empire,” in *Heart of Darkness*, by Joseph Conrad, ed. Paul B. Armstrong (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), 237; 241.

<sup>416</sup> Israel, “Exile, Conrad,” 364–65. Among others, Israel’s references include: J. Baines; A. Gillon (*The Eternal Solitary*); L. Gurko (*Giant in Exile*); G. Jean-Aubry; F. Karl; F. R. Leavis; J. Meyers; Z. Najder; N. Sherry; I. Watt.

<sup>417</sup> For instance, Allen; Najder; Sherry.

<sup>418</sup> See for instance Baines; Karl; Kramer; Najder; Watt.

<sup>419</sup> The full commentary by Carabine is as follows: “[Conrad’s] autobiography is not ‘a record’ – an account of facts preserved in permanent form – because it contains few hard facts such as dates, and actual names of either people or ships, including his own Polish surname; and it deliberately flouts expectations of a linear chronology. Again, as the ‘record’ of a life, as all commentators and especially Conrad’s great Polish biographer Najder have noted, it plays fast and loose with facts” (Introduction to *A Personal Record*, 181).

<sup>420</sup> Paul B. Armstrong, Introduction to *Heart of Darkness*, by Joseph Conrad (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), xv.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv.

Armstrong did include in his Norton edition of *Heart of Darkness* a poignant statement by Conrad, from a 1922 letter to his assistant Richard Curle, which to me seems the direction in which we should be reading Conrad:

It is a strange fate that everything that I have, of set artistic purpose, labored to leave indefinite, suggestive, in the penumbra of initial inspiration, should have that light turned on to it and its insignificance . . . exposed for any fool to comment upon or even for average minds to be disappointed with. *Didn't it ever occur to you . . . that I knew what I was doing in leaving the facts of my life and even of my tales in the background?* Explicitness, my dear fellow, is fatal to the glamour of all artistic work, robbing it of all suggestiveness, destroying all illusion.” (*Heart of Darkness*, 302, emphasis mine)

Based on this, with Joseph Conrad, we might be dealing with a productive revision of minor literature as “a minor practice of major language from within”<sup>422</sup> to include an active practice of performing (re)territorialization by a deracinated subject whose foreignness is not possible to hide or ever fully assimilate, but – virtually against its will – is turned into a platform to “become” “one of us” by teaching himself to speak “our” (English) language, dissolving his subjectivity in the process and replacing it with an identity game. Conrad cancelled out Poland from his oeuvre save for personal correspondence, but kept it as a hinted-at presence in his writing, denying himself as a subject to either the English or to the Poles and pointing out his foreignness to both:

English critics – for indeed I am an English writer – speaking about me always add that there is something incomprehensibly impalpable, ungraspable in me. You alone (i.e., the Poles) can grasp this ungraspable element, comprehend the incomprehensible. *This is my Polishness.* The Polishness which I took to my works through Mickiewicz and Słowacki. My father read *Pan Tadeusz* aloud to me, and made me read out loud, not once, not twice. I preferred *Konrad Wallenrod*, *Grażyna*. Later I preferred Słowacki. Do you know why Słowacki? *Il est l'âme de toute la Pologne, lui.*<sup>423</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, “What is a Minor Literature?,” 18.

<sup>423</sup> Quoted in Gillon, “Some Polish Literary Motifs,” 431.

In this statement he gave to a Polish journalist in 1914, Conrad speaks to his own people from without, yet steps out of his adopted identity by claiming an incomprehensibility that will always remain beyond its grasp. Commenting on *Heart of Darkness*, Edward Said noted that “your self-consciousness as an outsider can allow you actively to comprehend how the machine works, given that you and it are fundamentally not in perfect synchrony or correspondence. Never the wholly incorporated and fully acculturated Englishman, Conrad therefore preserved an ironic distance in each of his works;”<sup>424</sup> Said also notes that “the net effect [of dislocations in Marlow’s language] is to leave his immediate audience as well as the reader with the acute sense that what he is presenting is not quite as it should be or appears to be.”<sup>425</sup> Keith Carabine wrote that *The Mirror of the Sea* “can be regarded [...] both as a work that draws upon national English feelings and myths about the sea and as a discourse on ‘ships, seamen, and the sea:’ a discourse that Conrad has mastered and that places him within a particular English lineage, but one that also occasionally reveals an uneasy relation to that lineage.”<sup>426</sup>

When Conrad wrote that he would be a British seaman or no other, that writing in English came naturally to him because he was “adopted by the genius of the [English] language,” he was – deliberately or not – performing.<sup>427</sup> If “masquerade” is a term associated with Herman Melville’s narratives, Joseph Conrad was masquerading in plain sight: his foreignness indelible and naturalized Englishness always-already denied, he found a way to occupy, at the same time, both positions and neither in this identity game, and this strategy made a more supple boundary of Englishness.<sup>428</sup> Ninety years after his death, beyond his personal feelings or influence, it could be said that the effect of Joseph Conrad has approached what Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet describe as becoming imperceptible:<sup>429</sup> the assemblage of Conrad the man, Conrad the author, Conrad’s writing and the wake of criticism

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<sup>424</sup> Edward Said, “Two Visions in *Heart of Darkness*,” in *Heart of Darkness*, by Joseph Conrad, ed. Paul B. Armstrong (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), 425–26.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, 427.

<sup>426</sup> Carabine, Introduction to *The Mirror of the Sea*, 19, emphasis mine.

<sup>427</sup> The full famous Conrad quote is as follows: “The truth of the matter is that my faculty to write in English is as natural as any other aptitude with which I might have been born. I have a strange and overpowering feeling that it had always been an inherent part of myself. English was for me neither a matter of choice nor adoption. The merest idea of choice had never entered my head. And as to adoption – well, yes, there was adoption; but it was I who was adopted by the genius of the language, which directly I came out of the stammering stage made me its own so completely that its very idioms I truly believe had a direct action on my temperament and fashioned my still plastic character . . . . All I can claim after all those years of devoted practice, with the accumulated anguish of its doubts, imperfections, and falterings in my heart, is the right to be believed when I say that if I had not written in English, I would not have written at all” (Author’s Note to *A Personal Record*, 200–1).

<sup>428</sup> The terms “rigid” and “supple boundaries” are used by S. M. Islam in his book *Ethics of Travel*.

<sup>429</sup> Deleuze and Parnet, “On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature,” 45.

that continues to churn behind him has become itself a “dirty little secret.”<sup>430</sup> “There we no longer have any secrets, we no longer have anything to hide. It is we who have become a secret, it is we who are hidden, even though we do all openly, in broad daylight [...]. The great secret is when you no longer have anything to hide, and thus when no one can grasp you. A secret everywhere, no more to be said.”<sup>431</sup> The revolutionary quality of Conrad lies in that his discourse did not follow a line of flight but of (re)territorialization, but that every step he took created a rupture where “what he is presenting is not quite as it should be or appears to be,” as Said stated.

This Chapter provides a reading of three major narratives by Conrad in which the sea ethos is dominant: *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Lord Jim*, and *Heart of Darkness*, focusing on the interaction between language, seamanship and the spaces Conrad opens up for minoritarian strategies. I will concentrate on the collective assemblage of the ship in *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, the confining effect of global(ized) geography on the empire in *Lord Jim*, and the paradoxically reactionary minoritarianism of imperial agents in *Heart of Darkness*.

## 4.2. Conrad and language

I will rely on the essays of William W. Bonney in this chapter when dealing with Conrad and language. Bonney’s conceptual framework is especially suitable for several reasons: firstly, because it explores the correlation between language and space within the specific epistemological and ontological transformations Conrad undertakes in his writing; secondly, because he examines how “Much of Joseph Conrad’s art probes the limitations of the English language,”<sup>432</sup> which is to say that he reads Conrad from within the English language rather than from without, with his Polish and/or French linguistic background as determinants; and thirdly, because he pays special attention to the sea, ships, and sea ethos in Conrad’s works (most notably, in *Heart of Darkness*, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Nostromo* and *Typhoon*).

Bonney’s analyses are complex, exhaustive and articulate: in lieu of an approximate summary of his theses, the following is a quote from Bonney’s article “Joseph Conrad and the Betrayal of Language:”

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>432</sup> Bonney, “Betrayal of Language,” 127.

[...] when Conrad's characters approach conceptual breakdown their dependence upon linguistic complexity is radically increased, and this psychic event is typically correlated with the presence of the respective characters within some sort of circular and (usually) watery physical boundary which threatens to convert the life-preserving simplicity of horizontal linear action into a final vertical plunge through the surfaces of both words and world, as language fatally turns upon itself and an inverse transcendence occurs. Whether or not such a breakdown takes place is determined in part by the characters' respective levels of mental sophistication before encountering a potential semiotic vortex.<sup>433</sup>

In "Circle and Line: Terminal Metaphor in Joseph Conrad," Bonney says: "[In Conrad's writing] circles are themselves tropes that usually locate the frontiers of human conceptualization, areas of semantic overdetermination that threaten to annul language itself."<sup>434</sup> He goes on to examine *Typhoon* and *Nostramo* as mutually antithetical examples of texts where the circles and the lines are dealt with differently: Captain MacWhirr of *Typhoon* not only survives but escapes the circular figure – the hurricane – psychologically unscathed, because of his commitment to "simple linearity" and a high degree of correspondence between tropes and literal fact in the text,<sup>435</sup> however, the more intellectually complex Decoud of *Nostramo* does not make it through the plunge into the semiotic vortex/transcendence of his linguistic system. Unwrapping Decoud's metaphor of silence as a "tense, thin cord to which he hung suspended by both hands" to reveal that it is virtually impossible to establish correspondence between the tenor and the vehicle or the trope and the fact (the stillness and the cord, respectively), Bonney notes that "A grammatical structure remains, but content has dissolved into an infinitude of stillborn possibilities."<sup>436</sup>

Starting with Conrad's seemingly incoherent metaphors, Bonney forges a way to address the language of Conrad's works that will derive conclusions different from that of F. R. Leavis, who claimed that Conrad "is intent on making a virtue out of not knowing what he means."<sup>437</sup> Bonney refers to Morse Peckham's conceptual framework of semiotic patterns and matrices to demonstrate that Conrad's is a more radical approach to ontics and language:

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<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 144–45.

<sup>434</sup> Bonney, "Circle and Line," 7.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid., 11; 9.

<sup>436</sup> Bonney, "Betrayal of Language," 142.

<sup>437</sup> F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition. George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad* (1948; London: Chatto and Windus, 1950), 180, quoted in Bonney, "Betrayal of Language," 129.

Conrad's tropes frequently are resistant to interpretive responses because he is purposefully deriving (and therefore isolating) these semiotic patterns from an original semiotic matrix, which he typically rejects. Conrad is involved in what Peckham terms "semiotic transformation," an inherently discontinuous process: "because the meanings of words are not immanent ... the connection between a verbal sign pattern and its semiotic transformation ... is not immanent."<sup>438</sup>

Two major implications can be derived from Bonney's texts that are relevant for this chapter: one is related to the sea, and the other to the ship in Conrad's writing. Firstly, interpretations of Conrad's sea-themed narratives as "tests" of characters in the face of indifferent forces of nature cannot be viable because they rely "upon the metaphysical opposition of order and disorder implicit in classical and Christian metaphors of vessel as microcosm, a 'ship of state,'" which is no longer ontologically valid for Conrad's texts.<sup>439</sup> After Conrad has effectively abolished the concept of matter,<sup>440</sup> he "mingles promiscuously the attributes of solidity and insubstantiality, of land and water, until interpretational possibilities become overwhelming."<sup>441</sup> The sea thus comes to participate in the Conradian spatiality of lines and circles, where circles are correlated with material vacancy and semiotic overdetermination,<sup>442</sup> and linearity with intellectual and linguistic simplicity as well as action, which in sea narratives takes the form of sea labor.<sup>443</sup> Thus, when it comes to ships, according to Bonney's reading of Conrad, and especially *The Narcissus*,

[...] only those capable of an unselfconscious mental state that may even border on the illiterate can develop a relationship with the vessel that permits subsistence at a point where speech is unnecessary and conceit becomes irrelevant, where syntactic structures dissolve into separate categories due to the cessation of concern with subjective relationships, and where perception approaches mathematical simplicity.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> Ibid.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>440</sup> In addition to the quote above: "the entire cosmos lacks substance, amounting at last only to words in the form of a frustrated nominalization [...] and aqueous tropology: 'there is no space, time, matter, mind as vulgarly understood, there is only the eternal something that waves and an eternal force that causes the waves.' Consequently, the very idea of literal matter survives simply as an occasion for jokes and puns, in the midst of which attention is typically drawn to the absence of any durable cosmic substrata" ("Betrayal of Language," 130–31; incorporated quote from E. Garnett, *Letters from Joseph Conrad, 1895–1924*, 143).

<sup>441</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid., 133–34.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid., 144–45.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., 146.

Now that we have touched on the realm of sea labor, it becomes clear that the language shifts which Bonney detects in Conrad's writing will have implications for Conradian sea argot as well. Having already noted a connection between linguistic simplicity and scheduled, linear action enabling survival in Conrad's texts, Bonney further extracts a bias for the technical, exact, almost mathematical sea argot from Conrad's fictional and nonfictional writing: survival is most effective when "[men] lack the opportunity or verbal skill necessary to create elaborate and fatuous self-images; when all they have for a linguistic base is an algorithmic technical language that has evolved for centuries in a situation in which it is constantly tested against nonhuman forces like the sea."<sup>445</sup> While sea labor did appear as a factor towards crew cohesion in some of Melville's narratives (e.g. *White-Jacket*; *Moby-Dick*), an elaborate poetic based in the language of sea labor is not discernible in his oeuvre like it is in Conrad's; rather, it is used as a collectivizing device to include nonspecialists in the maritime world depicted. Sea argot is thus described as a linguistic extreme which is an inverse of the semiotically overdetermined circinate figures, and to which Conrad was very much inclined in his nonfictional writing. I will analyze the concept of self-less sea labor in connection with Conrad's employment of sea argot later in sections 4.4. and 4.5. in order to connect Bonney's reading of *The Nigger of the Narcissus* with my Deleuzian approach to that novel, my main thesis being that sea argot is employed towards forming a zone of proximity between the sea, ship, and sailor as a line of flight/survival.

### 4.3. The Narcissus as ship-assemblage

In *Modernity at Sea*, Cesare Casarino reads the Narcissus (both ship and narrative) in conjunction with Foucault's concept of the heterotopia, as well as a prime example of how ship space is represented as "a paradoxical symbiosis of fragment and monad," or, more precisely, "an oscillation [...] between a continuously becoming-monad and a ceaselessly becoming-fragment."<sup>446</sup> In Conrad's novel, the Narcissus is presented as both "a fragment detached from the earth" and "lonely and swift like a small planet" (*Narcissus*, 18): while the former implies an incompleteness, as well as likeness to land in its quality of representability of the social field, the latter depicts the ship as a "self-enclosed totality."<sup>447</sup> Casarino goes on to explore how this continuous becoming-monad and becoming fragment is related to

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<sup>445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>446</sup> Casarino, *Modernity at Sea*, 20.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid., 20–1.

representations of ship space and empire in *The Narcissus*, as well as to Conrad's narrative method.

As was described in section 2.7, in Deleuzian terms, any ship could be described as a machinic assemblage of human, natural, and technical elements, which are deterritorialized in their own right in order to come together as a new compound. It could also be described as a ship of Theseus, assembling and disassembling each time it leaves or reaches port, transfiguring during the voyage, the maintenance and replacement of its constituents driven by the desire to perpetuate the functioning of the machine. For this reason, sea narratives make especially engaging reads as minor literature. Because ships vacillate between monad and fragment, because their existence is unique yet derivative, narratives about these assemblages take on the same properties: their spaces are simultaneously confined – limited by the physical space that the ship occupies and compartmentalized within the space of the ship – and vast in that the solipsistic circle of each ship's individual horizon<sup>448</sup> can traverse and occupy virtually any aqueous surface, from oceanic to inland. Characters in these narratives are able to be idiosyncratic yet stock-types, dispensable occupiers of functions in a collective, yet producers – as well as products – of individuated enunciations. We are dealing with *a* ship by the name of Narcissus, *a* captain who is also Captain Allistoun, *a* mutinous crew member called Donkin, and so on: they are functions, yet at the same time they are very specific, original singularities. “The machine must be able to switch into some sort of social-political organization, because a pure machine would give no story or novel,” Deleuze and Guattari said.<sup>449</sup> It is because of these interstices that the formulaic (and thus potentially restricting) vault of sea narratives can give rise to infinite registers of literary discourse.

*The Nigger of the Narcissus* begins and ends with the ropes that tie the ship into port, joining the fragment with the land from which it came and to which it returns. The voyage is homeward-bound, from Bombay to London, and the *Narcissus* is a merchant ship: this is a highly striated manner of traversing oceans, governed by the starting and ending points of departure and destination. The crises arise from the interaction between the make-up of the ship (though iron-hulled, the *Narcissus* is still a sailing ship, and the technology of its operations will contribute to how rounding the Cape of Good Hope is managed in Chap. 3), the dynamic of the crew (within the forecabin as well as between the forecabin, the waist and the quarterdeck), and the demands of geography and weather (placidity of the Indian Ocean

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<sup>448</sup> Bonney, “Betrayal of Language,” 134, after Conrad's *Chance*.

<sup>449</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, “Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature: The Components of Expression,” trans. Marie Maclean, *New Literary History* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1985): 602.

versus weathering the Cape). It also features an insight into the forecandle and spatial traverses between the forecandle and the quarterdeck untypical of other Conrad's sea narratives:<sup>450</sup> although he touched on virtually every type of sailing, vessel, and crew in his writing, Conrad for the most part maintained an officer's perspective with his narrators. In contrast, the majority of Melville's protagonists are positioned before the mast or below deck: it is only with "Benito Cereno" and "Billy Budd" that he steps towards the quarterdeck.

The full dynamic of the ship's mechanics is cast at the reader on the very first pages, in *medias res*. The *Narcissus* is rendered in its spatial coordinates – fore/aft, port/starboard, followed by a description of how the ship is prepared for leaving Bombay, the make-up of crew, the chain of command, and the technicalities of merchant ship labor:

The main deck was dark *aft*, but halfway from *forward*, through the open doors of the forecandle, two streaks of brilliant light cut the shadow of the quiet night that lay upon the ship. A hum of voices *was heard* there, while *port and starboard*, in the illuminated doorways, silhouettes of moving men appeared for a moment, very black, without relief, like figures cut out of sheet tin. The ship was ready for sea. The carpenter had driven in the last wedge of the main-hatch battens, and, throwing down his maul, had wiped his face with great deliberation, just on the stroke of five. The decks *had been swept*, the windlass *oiled and made ready* to heave up the anchor; the big tow-rope lay in long bights along one side of the main deck, with one end carried up and hung over the bows, in readiness for the tug that would come paddling and hissing noisily, hot and smoky, in the limpid, cool quietness of the early morning. *The captain was ashore, where he had been engaging some new hands to make up his full crew*; and, the work of the day over, *the ship's officers had kept out of the way*, glad of a little breathing-time. Soon after dark the few liberty-men and the new hands began to arrive in shore-boats rowed by white-clad Asiatics, who clamoured fiercely for payment before coming alongside the gangway-ladder. The feverish and shrill babble of Eastern language struggled against the masterful tones of tipsy seamen, who argued against brazen claims and dishonest hopes by profane shouts. (1, emphasis mine)

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<sup>450</sup> As Tobias Boes notes, the original subtitle of the novel was "A Tale of the Forecandle" ("Beyond the *Bildungsroman*: Character Development and Communal Legitimation in the Early Fiction of Joseph Conrad," *Conradiana* 39, no. 2 [2007]: 121).

We learn the time and place, we learn that the 25-odd international crew of the ship is to consist of both old and new hands, and we learn the perspective of the narrator, referring to the “Eastern language” with exoticizing indiscriminatio. The language of this passage is self-contained, unexplained and uninviting for nonspecialists. Its passive forms are perhaps the most prominent indicators that we are dealing with a machine-like structure: the decks are swept and the windlass oiled, voices are heard and silhouettes seen – the mechanism takes care of itself. There are no agents, no names or subjects connected to these actions. The only agent named is the carpenter, and he is named for his function: battening the hatches is a final, almost symbolic gesture of sea labor before sailing out, and the carpenter’s position within the crew is that of a hinge: neither of the forecandle nor of the quarterdeck, carpenters belong to “the waist” of a ship.

After presenting the initial operations of the ship-assemblage, the narration zooms in on what is happening in the forecandle to provide the reader with a registration of visual and auditory stimuli, as yet without an interpretive superstructure:

[...] shore-going round hats were pushed far on the backs of heads, or rolled about on the deck amongst the chain-cables; white collars, undone, stuck out on each side of red faces; big arms in white sleeves gesticulated; the growling voices hummed steady amongst bursts of laughter and hoarse calls. “Here, sonny, take that bunk! ... Don’t you do it! ... What’s your last ship? ... I know her .... Three years ago, in Puget Sound.... This here berth leaks, I tell you! ... Come on; give us a chance to swing that chest! ... Did you bring a bottle, any of you shore toffs? ... Give us a bit of ‘baccy.... I know her; her skipper drank himself to death.... He was a dandy boy! ... Liked his lotion inside, he did! ... No! ... Hold your row, you chaps! (2)

Despite the chaotic scene limited to sensory perception, it becomes clear that other elements come into play in this assemblage: every other ship, every other voyage, the customs and pecking order being established and re-established each time a crew is convened on board a ship. The narration will then zoom in further, providing names, nicknames, detailed physical descriptions and ethnic/linguistic background of exactly twenty crew members and the ship’s cat, which is virtually every individual crew member on board.

Two dominant narrative techniques can be discerned in *The Narcissus* which contribute to the rendition of ship as assemblage: cinematic narration<sup>451</sup> and fragmentation of ship operations, very often employed in conjunction with one another. The cinematic technique pans across the ship and horizon, zooms in and out of scenes, creating an effect of instant shifts between the micro- and macrocosmic perspectives.<sup>452</sup> The most poignant example of this cinematic device is perhaps the one in Chapter 3, in which the *Narcissus* approaches and weathers the Cape of Good Hope. The fragmented close-ups of ship operations, emphasized by the inclusive “we” of the first-person narrator/focalizer are zoomed out of at machinic speed, to reveal the ship small and helpless in the macro perspective: “Sails blew adrift. Things broke loose. Cold and wet, we were washed about the deck while trying to repair damages. The ship tossed about, shaken furiously, *like a toy in the hand of a lunatic*” (32, emphasis mine).

Descriptions of fragmented actions, body parts and voices separate from owners or agents, of machinic movement and sound, labor operations and vectors of motion through ocean space dismantle what might have otherwise been thought of as individuals/subjects, a ship and an ocean entity, laying them bare as compounds, the components of which interact with other components to create new compounds. The parts never blend, or fuse together: they connect with machinic joints and hinges. The assemblage is composed of metal, iron and canvas just as much as of limbs, tobacco smoke and labor, of wind, wave and heat. A cut-down spar is equal to the losses cut in human lives: the machine transfigures itself for, and during, each voyage, over and over again.<sup>453</sup>

The first-person narrator of *The Narcissus* makes himself explicitly known only in the last pages of the novel, after the *Narcissus* has reached London and docked. He gives his former shipmates one last cinematic once-over as they pick up their wages on board the ship and head for the Black Horse for one last drink, already losing members as Charley and

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<sup>451</sup> In his presentation of the printed manuscript of Conrad’s notes for the speeches he gave in America in 1923, Arnold T. Schwab provides an outline of Conrad’s views on cinematography and connection between cinematography and his own writing (“Conrad’s American Speeches and His Reading from ‘Victory,’” *Modern Philology* 62, no. 4 [May 1965]: 342–47).

<sup>452</sup> A non-exhaustive list of examples might include: repetitive rounds of fore-castle faces, which builds the effect of familiarity with the crew (4–5; 106–107); shift from fore-castle floor to the panorama of Bombay outside the ship (8–9); space shifts on board the *Narcissus* (12–13; 78–79); ship space and crew (16–17; 19–20); seascape during a storm (32–33).

<sup>453</sup> A non-exhaustive list of examples of fragmentary descriptions of the ship-assemblage might include: the collective of the crew in different stages of cohesion (2–4; 7–8; 18–20; the collective perceives itself as falling apart 26; 59; 61–62; self-disciplined collective, comradeship, 59); the captain-ship compound (Allistoun has been commander of the *Narcissus* since it was built, 18–19); ship topples over during a squall (35).

Belfast go their separate ways, and the narrator “disengage[s]” himself “gently” from the group (106):

Outside, on Tower Hill, they blinked, hesitated clumsily, as if blinded by the strange quality of the hazy light, as if discomposed by the view of so many men; and they who could hear one another in the howl of gales seemed deafened and distracted by the dull roar of the busy earth [...]. From afar I saw them discoursing, with jovial eyes and clumsy gestures, while the sea of life thundered into their ears ceaseless and unheeded. And swaying about there on the white stones, surrounded by the hurry and clamour of men, *they appeared to be creatures of another kind – lost, alone, forgetful, and doomed; they were like castaways*, like reckless and joyous castaways, like mad castaways making merry in the storm and upon an insecure ledge of a treacherous rock [...]. *The dark knot of seamen drifted in sunshine* [...]. I never saw them again. The sea took some, the steamers took others, the graveyards of the earth will account for the rest [...]. A gone shipmate, like any other man, is gone for ever; and I never met one of them again [...]. Good-bye, brothers! You were a good crowd. As good a crowd as ever fisted with wild cries the beating canvas of a heavy foresail; or tossing aloft, invisible in the night, gave back yell for yell to a westerly gale. (106–7, emphasis mine)

The “I” of the narrator materializes, effectively, only after the ship’s crew has disbanded and he is no longer part of it. A landed group of sailors are no longer a crew, but fish out of water, clumsy, lost, and profoundly out of place, their former vessel captured in dock, having “ceased to live” (102) after virtually having a mind of its own at sea: “She seemed to have forgotten the way home; she rushed to and fro, heading north-west, heading east; she ran backwards and forwards, distracted like a timid creature at the foot of a wall” (88). They are no longer a collective but a collection of individuals, or rather, of parts that will proceed to join other social machines, land-based and sea-orientated alike. Despite a clear sense of community and affection that the narrator expresses for them, they will never assemble again, and even if they were to, it would not be the same machine: “Even when the animal is unique, its burrow is not, it is a multiplicity and an organization.”<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, “Components of Expression,” 601.

There is something to be said about the crises that this ship-assemblage encounters, in their human forms more than the nonhuman crisis of weathering the Cape of Good Hope. The human crises are, obviously, brought about by James Wait and Donkin, the apparent antagonists of the collective. James Wait brings passivity and refusal of duty, while Donkin contributes an invitation to mutiny to this machine of labor. However, as Boes notes, “Perhaps the greatest paradox posed by the novel is that a community supposedly rooted in a common ethos, in a life of work and duty, in reality derives its coherence from its exact opposite, an outside figure who not only refuses to form his life according to the dictates of a communal compact, but who seems incapable of taking on any form whatsoever.”<sup>455</sup> Although Boes refers to Wait alone here, Donkin could certainly be seen to have the same paradoxically cohesive effect on the crew. From “conquer[ing] the naïve instincts of that crowd” at the very beginning, when he elicits their sympathy and generosity (*The Narcissus*, 7), to his failed call to mutiny (65–7) and the belaying pin incident when they all step aside one by one to leave him exposed to the captain’s discipline (83–84). Both Donkin and Wait could be characterized as “the Anomalous” within the pack that Deleuze and Guattari describe:<sup>456</sup> they are foreign elements that bring the crew together.

This brings us back to my earlier point regarding the alternating, yet simultaneous positions occupied by sea narratives: those between functions and individuated enunciations. Distinct as they are as characters, both Wait and Donkin are depicted as borderline human, or astride between the human and nonhuman world: Wait with his exoticized “black idol” (64), ghost-like presence, and Donkin described in highly racialized sub-human terms evocative of *Heart of Darkness* – “he stood there with the white skin of his limbs showing his *human kinship* through the black fantasy of his rags” (*The Narcissus*, 7, emphasis mine). Mustering the crew for first roll-call, the mate Mr. Baker reads aloud all names: “Craik – Singleton – Donkin ... O Lord!” (9). Donkin leaves a similar impression of familiar repulsion in the forecandle:

This clean white forecandle was his refuge; the place where he could be lazy; where he could wallow, and lie and eat – and curse the food he ate; where he could display his talents for shirking work, for cheating, for cadging; where he could find surely some one to wheedle and some one to bully – and where he would be paid for doing all this.

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<sup>455</sup> Boes, “Beyond the *Bildungsroman*,” 121.

<sup>456</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 268–69.

*They all knew him. Is there a spot on earth where such a man is unknown, an ominous survival testifying to the eternal fitness of lies and impudence?* (5–6, emphasis mine)

Every ship has a Donkin, and this Donkin is known to mates and crews across the community. James Wait is even more to the point when he says, appearing on deck at roll-call: “I belong to the ship” (10). Donkins and Waits are types, de-individuated compounds whose elements join other forces/vectors around which the collective gathers and breaks at the same time: labor routine (Chap. 3), meals/water/coffee (37; 51), mutiny, charismatic leadership, superstition – the albatross principle. Anomalous, they belong to the ship.

#### **4.4. *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness*: Imperialism and its delirium**

Andrea White and Linda Dryden both refer to Conrad’s modernist “double vision” when discussing the way Conrad employs the codes of imperial romance only to subvert them in *Lord Jim*.<sup>457</sup> Conrad’s deliberate use and subversion of the generic codes of imperial romance in the Patusan episode of *Lord Jim* have long been identified as indicators of his modernist vision of the Empire. Daniel Bivona says: “the Patusan episode of *Lord Jim* is self-consciously conventional in a Western literary sense, a combination of Stevensonian boys’ novel and island romance tacked onto the end of a piece of Conradian psychological fiction.”<sup>458</sup> Linda Dryden reads the world of Patusan against the romance formula: identifying the setting of Patusan as an isolated and regressive civilization “where the imperial adventurer can create a utopia in the knowledge that his is the most powerful voice for miles around” and assigning all the Patusan characters to their respective romance types, Dryden concludes that “apart from Marlow’s occasional grim warnings, and until the arrival of Brown, Jim’s Patusan experience is the stuff of imperial romance, and he is thus equal to any of the challenges he encounters.”<sup>459</sup>

My interest is to examine this double-coding in *Lord Jim* in the Deleuzian framework, paying attention to the role that seamanship plays in the interplay of codes in the novel. Starting with the collective and political as part and parcel of minor literature, the Patna

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<sup>457</sup> Andrea White, *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 7 et pass.; Linda Dryden, *Joseph Conrad and the Imperial Romance* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave, 2000), 137–38 et pass.

<sup>458</sup> Bivona, *British Imperial Literature*, 120.

<sup>459</sup> Dryden, *Conrad and Imperial Romance*, 178; 177.

incident is described by Marlow as collective property of the seaboard community from its outbreak:

You must know that everybody connected in any way with the sea was there, because the affair had been notorious for days, ever since that mysterious cable message came from Aden to start us all cackling [...]. The whole waterside talked of nothing else. [...] Complete strangers would accost each other familiarly, just for the sake of easing their minds on the subject: every confounded loafer in the town came in for a harvest of drinks over this affair: you heard of it in the harbour office, at every ship-broker's, at your agent's, from whites, from natives, from half-castes, from the very boatmen squatting half naked on the stone steps as you went up—by Jove! There was some indignation, not a few jokes, and no end of discussions as to what had become of them, you know.<sup>460</sup>

From the outbreak of the Patna incident and Jim's "jump," Marlow makes it his mission to perform damage control by attempting to reduce the horizons of collectivity that "own" the Patna affair. Identifying Marlow as a "bureaucratic functionary" or member of professional managerial elite, Daniel Bivona proposes that the "adoption" of Jim by Marlow "should then be understood not in descriptive but in prescriptive terms: Marlow takes on the job of prescribing Jim's behavior – binding him to a reparative narrative – under the guise of trying to explain him."<sup>461</sup> The reparative route, according to Bivona, comprises again the two codes of behavior, that of the marine officer and "the imperial code of the risk-taking white leader of a non-European people" or the "'white man's code' on land."<sup>462</sup> How does Bivona's concept of "reparative narrative" and his description of the European bureaucrat as holding dual subject positions (agent and instrument; author and character; perpetrator and victim; and master and slave<sup>463</sup>) connect with the way in which the law and agency are articulated in *Lord Jim*? What is Jim to Marlow, and to the imperial machine?

The perfectly-disposed, "one-of-us" Jim, the likes of which Marlow trained and sent out into the world as new agents of empire, turns out to be a failed promise (*Lord Jim*, 50); he is utterly unapologetic and Marlow gets no explanation or satisfaction in terms of codes that Jim has violated (34–35). Jim seems to be driven by a most inconvenient kind of negative

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<sup>460</sup> Conrad, *Lord Jim*, 25–26. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

<sup>461</sup> Bivona, *British Imperial Literature*, 108; 116.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, 112; 115.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

capability: while Marlow is reading him for signs that he is “one of us,”<sup>464</sup> Jim is concerned with not being mistaken for “one of them,” “they” being a fluid category. First it stands for his training mates in England: “he was rather glad he had not gone into the cutter, since a lower achievement had served the turn. He had enlarged his knowledge more than those who had done the work. When all men flinched, then – he felt sure – he alone would know how to deal with the spurious menace of wind and seas” (10; Chap. 1). Then, it is the Patna crew, as Jim uses the space of the ship, and then the rescue boat, to organize his perceived sense of difference from the collective: “He discovered at once a desire that I should not confound him with his partners in – in crime, let us call it. He was not one of them; he was altogether of another sort” (51). Finally, Jim shuns every community he lives in after the trial, up to Patusan. Not only does Jim fatally betray the merchant navy officer code, he is shown as fatally flawed from the start: in the first two chapters of the novel we are presented with an episode from Jim’s training in England where he fails to act in line with good seamanship, as well as another – his only test as a chief mate prior to the Patna incident – which results in his being left behind in hospital in “an Eastern port.” The very stuff that agents are made of, Jim’s disposition nevertheless refuses to be harnessed into the sanctioned code of action without remainder. Deleuze says, “Underneath all reason lies delirium, and drift.”<sup>465</sup> in this sense, Jim could be read as the delirium of imperialism, a flow that is made part of the imperial machine because of what it can do, but which is not subsumed in or exhausted by its participation in the imperial machine.

It is clear from Captain Brierly’s comment that Jim’s hearing is a show-trial, and that there is a futility to “tormenting that young chap” (43–44); Jim is only getting his certificate revoked, meaning he can no longer participate in the labor aspects of sailing (chaps. 14; 19), yet Marlow speaks of it as a legal death, exaggerating it into an “execution” and “the respectable sword of his country’s law” being suspended over Jim’s head, about to “smite his bowed neck” (93; 96–97). Two of Marlow’s friends to hire Jim post-trial seem to be curious, but not overly impressed with Jim’s trespass: “And who the devil cares about that? [...] And what the devil is he – anyhow – for to go on like this?” (118). Most importantly, the German skipper of the Patna, whose level of responsibility in the affair surpasses Jim’s, escapes trial

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<sup>464</sup> Thus Hampson: “‘One of us’ is a problematic term. See, for example, the note by Cedric Watts to his 1986 Penguin edition, which ends by suggesting that the phrase means variously: ‘a fellow gentleman’, ‘a white gentleman’, ‘a white man’, ‘a good sea-man’, ‘an outwardly-honest Englishman’, ‘an ordinary person’, and ‘a fellow human being’ (354). Whatever the meaning, the phrase operates by a process of inclusion and exclusion. The uncertainty of reference – the shifting senses of ‘one of us’ – is appropriate for a narrative concerned with the uncertainties of Jim’s identity and status” (*Conrad’s Malay Fiction*, 219, Note 10).

<sup>465</sup> Deleuze, *Desert Islands*, 262.

and disappears without so much as a tremor of remorse: “Where? To Apia? To Honolulu? He had 6000 miles of tropical belt to disport himself in, and I did not hear the precise address. A snorting pony snatched him into ‘ewigkeit’ in the twinkling of an eye, and I never saw him again [...]. He departed, disappeared, vanished, absconded” (32–33). The proliferation of language in Marlow’s narration of the skipper’s escape from justice underscores the multitude of lines of flight ready-made and available to white men who have betrayed non-white people as well as the purported standard of conduct of their country and industry. Yet, Brierly commits suicide shortly after the trial, while Marlow applies himself pedantically to establishing sole control over Jim’s fate after the trial, just like he established control over Kurtz’s legacy.

According to Deleuze’s exposition on modern law in *Coldness and Cruelty*, the Law may not be accessible in content but makes itself visible in the specificity of its punishments.<sup>466</sup> If we compare this to what happens in *Lord Jim*, it becomes evident that the law is not only visible but satisfied in the punishment; yet, Marlow is not, because punishment does not solve the problem of delirium for the matrix. However, if delirium cannot be punished, it can be directed “to a reparative narrative;” the meandering flow can be steered towards the mainstream, the language and the story can be amended. As an agent, the production of reparative narratives is Marlow’s job; he repairs Kurtz’s narrative, as well as Jim’s. But for whose sake? The “home” that Jim would not return to, but with which Marlow feels he must “render an account” (134), is disinterested, in fact: “The spirit of the land, as becomes the ruler of great enterprises, is careless of innumerable lives. Woe to the stragglers! We exist only in so far as we hang together” (135). The law has made itself silent, and the land does not care: Marlow’s agency has lost its reference point, opening him up to his own already-existing delirium, as part of a larger, collective “drift” “underneath the reason” of imperialism. The delirium of Jim is also the delirium of Brierly’s suicide, of Marlow’s ever-present doubt (in *Lord Jim* as well as in *Heart of Darkness*), of the absconding German captain, and of Stein’s maintenance of the enclave of Patusan. Bivona’s note of Marlow’s “adoption” of Jim should thus be amended to understand the joining and redirecting of tributaries of delirium.

In the silence of the land and the law, Marlow holds on to the (white/Western/British/seamanship) collectives out of which Jim cannot be allowed to fall, evident in his impetus to “hang together” and take care of the “stragglers.” If we read *Lord Jim* for its symptoms, its

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<sup>466</sup> Deleuze, *Coldness and Cruelty*, 84.

apparent focus on one central character actually uncovers the mobilization of multiple collectives on a global scale (the boundaries of which are not clear-cut or stable but in constant alteration in relation to one another), entirely in line with Deleuze and Guattari's statement that in minor literature everything is a collective and a political concern. Not only is the Patna affair the collective ownership of the entire supra-national, supra-racial community of people involved in the sea-business within the contact zone in the territory of Southeast Asia, but a collective of white Westerners abiding in Marlow's "Orient" is mobilized in creating the reparative narrative for Jim. The web of Western complicity in upholding each other's private and public interests involves Captain Brierly, the notorious adventurers Chester and Robinson, a series of ship chandlers employing Jim, and finally the German Stein, who will provide Jim's ultimate destiny/destination, Patusan.<sup>467</sup>

More relevantly for the concept of minor literature, a specificity emerges in *Lord Jim* with regard to other sea narratives examined in this dissertation so far: in contrast to the "cramped space" which renders every affair political according to Deleuze and Guattari, and which in sea narratives tends to manifest itself in the (in)tense collective dynamic of close quarters on a ship, in *Lord Jim* the political immediacy and effect of collective identity, solidarity, but also communal pressure and threat do not arise from a "confined space" but from the massive pervasive striation of globalized contact zones. The Patna chronotope starts with a single ship but spills over to span the globe and several years in time before dying down (84). Paradoxically, it is Jim's constant moving that spreads the word of the incident and defeats his purpose of leading an anonymous life after the trial: "To the common mind he became known as a rolling stone, because this was the funniest part: he did after a time become perfectly known, and even notorious, within the circle of his wanderings (which had a diameter of, say, three thousand miles), in the same way as an eccentric character is known to a whole countryside" (119). The playground of colonizers has been reduced to artificial, jealously kept controlled heterotopias, excess chutes like Patusan, where they hide and bury that which should be kept out of sight or at least out of earshot of the expatriated West's "home," which is not featured in the narrative proper but functions as a super-ego instance that requires a clean slate if one is ever to go back. The Marlow who had both craved the dazzling Orient in "Youth" and found a way to maintain sanity by limiting his horizon to his river steamer in Africa has never craved confined space so much:

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<sup>467</sup> Robert Hampson also notes: "Marlow's inquiries within the European community continually gesture towards areas of privileged discourse, professional contexts in which oral exchanges remain confidential, outside the circuits of gossip: the confessional; the lawyer-client relations; and doctor-patient relations" (*Conrad's Malay Fiction*, 131).

On all the round earth, which to some seems so big and that others affect to consider as rather smaller than a mustard-seed, [Jim] had no place where he could – what shall I say? – where he could withdraw. That’s it! Withdraw – be alone with his loneliness. [...] I steered him into my bedroom, and sat down at once to write letters. This was the only place in the world (unless, perhaps, the Walpole Reef – but that was not so handy) where he could have it out with himself without being bothered by the rest of the universe. (104)

More for his own sake than for Jim’s, Marlow drags them both into a burrow, a space outside of the outside, a closet, a temporal caesura similar to the “breathless pause” during which the plot of “The Secret Sharer” unfolds.<sup>468</sup> In *Lord Jim* it is the breath taken between the trial and the aftermath, between the jump and the controlled enactment of heroism in Patusan. Knowing that the anachronism of imperial romance that Jim is cannot be redeemed or rescued from itself, yet it continues to disseminate its presence, Marlow responds with trying to find a place for it. Faced with myriad lines of flight in a world of saturated scrutiny, they look for a line of conduct that is somehow still within bounds of the law, which “had done with him” (105). Allowing for Patusan to happen not after, but *despite* the unraveling of the British merchant marine as inadequate, is neither nostalgia nor redemption. As much as Marlow flaunts his search for “redeeming ideas” in all his narratives, redemption is never found; what is left is narrativizing as an attempt at normalizing.

Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow finds that the most successful strategies of white men’s survival bypass an outright exercise of military or administrative power, and are, in effect, minoritarian. The chief accountant at the Company Station is incongruously eloquent, adamant about his clerical work (despite the stuffy heat, flies, and sick agents lying in his office), as well as maintaining his physical appearance: “I respected his collars, his vast cuffs, his brushed hair. His appearance was certainly that of a hairdresser’s dummy, but in the great demoralization of the land he kept up his appearance. That’s backbone. His starched collars and got-up shirt-fronts were achievements of character” (*Heart of Darkness*, 18). At the Central Station, the General Manager’s only, yet crucial, talent seems to be his resistance to the local climate: “He had no genius for organising, for initiative, or for order even. [...] He had no learning, and no intelligence. His position had come to him – why? Perhaps because

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<sup>468</sup> Noted by Casarino, *Modernity at Sea*, 196–97.

he was never ill. He had served three terms of three years out there. Triumphant health in the general rout of constitutions is a kind of power in itself” (22).

It is clear that Conrad’s Africa in *Heart of Darkness* is not to become the kind of contact zone depicted in Conrad’s Asian-set narratives. Overdetermined semantics is cloying here: “lugubrious drollery,” “impotent despair” (14), “inhabited devastation,” “objectless blasting” (15), “imbecile rapacity” (23), “fantastic invasion” (33). The surface glide up the river leads to the threshold of anthropomorphic minimum, and Marlow describes what is being done to the continent, but there is no idea of conquest or rule: “Paths, paths, everywhere; a stamped-in network of paths spreading over the empty land, through long grass, through burnt grass, through thickets, down and up chilly ravines, up and down stony hills ablaze with heat; and a solitude, a solitude, nobody, not a hut” (19). Rendering defunct any and all attempts to establish points and lines, the earth refuses to become land; there is excessive striation, but no territorialization. In this setting, Marlow’s other reparative narrative – that of Kurtz – is enacted quite similarly to that of Jim. On the one hand, there is control of the discourse surrounding Kurtz, evident in Marlow’s interviews with multiple seekers of the Kurtz legacy: the Company representative; Kurtz’s purported cousin; a journalist; and Kurtz’s Intended (71–72). Kurtz’s Report gets handed to the journalist, whilst the Company receives the “Suppression of Savage Customs” report with the postscriptum torn off, and the cousin is allotted some “family letters and memoranda without importance” (72). Marlow takes it upon himself to write the official log of the voyage, and the received narrative of Kurtz (received by family and the power structures of business and media alike) becomes, if not entirely a fabrication, then a definite distillation from boots-on-the-ground events. On the other hand, there is Marlow’s own negotiation of what this reparative narrative does to him, in “trying to account to myself for – for – Mr. Kurtz – for the shade of Mr. Kurtz” (49), comparable to Marlow’s commentary on narrativizing Jim: “He existed for me, and after all it is only through me that he exists for you. I’ve led him out by the hand; I have paraded him before you” (*Lord Jim*, 136).

If it was possible to read Jim as the delirium underneath the reason of imperialism, this interpretation is further amplified by a reading of Kurtz along the same line. A fundamental question to be asked is, did Kurtz find and embrace his delirium in Africa, or did he take it there? There is no question that an assemblage is formed between Kurtz and the continent in terms of the effect that the “wilderness” has on him (*Heart of Darkness*, 48–49; 57), while the Doctor’s comment that “the changes take place inside, you know” (11) translates into Marlow’s acknowledgment of “becoming scientifically interesting” (20), testifying that other

agents end up being part of similar affects. But the patchwork-of-Europe Kurtz (“All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz,” 49), whose discourse was “vibrating with eloquence” before Africa (49), was – like Jim – chosen for agency precisely because of his dispositions: “a prodigy, [...] an emissary of pity, and science, and progress, and devil knows what else” (25), the “devil knows what else” being delirium. The case of Kurtz thus points to delirium as not only being harnessed into the rationale of imperialism as expounded in Conrad, but as constitutive of imperialism in the sense of its codes as well as of distributing the bodies involved in its practices. *Lord Jim* offers another clue in this direction: in Chapter 21, Marlow states that “there remains so little to be told of [Jim]” and that “the last word is not said – probably shall never be said” anyway (136), bracketing off the entire substantial Patusan part of the novel (chaps. 22–45) as separate. If we take the Patusan chapters to be Jim’s “reparative narrative,” the imperial romance that is acted out in a controlled environment, we can also read it as the narrative of the constitutive delirium of imperialism, allowed to enunciate itself in the spatial and generic interstice of Patusan, articulated by Marlow as follows:

They left their bones to lie bleaching on distant shores, so that wealth might flow to the living at home. To us, their less tried successors, they appear magnified, not as agents of trade but as *instruments of a recorded destiny, pushing out into the unknown in obedience to an inward voice, to an impulse beating in the blood, to a dream of the future*. They were wonderful; and it must be owned they were ready for the wonderful. (*Lord Jim*, 137, emphasis mine)

Kurtz does not go native so much as go rogue: he does not relinquish imperialist strategies of domination so much as take them beyond a condonable limit, beyond what has been defined as “reasonable.” He sheds the “restraint” (57) that would have been the mark of a Western imperial agent to pursue ivory with a violence beyond the pale of imagination of other agents (their methods, albeit equally violent, are sanctioned by the Company, whereas Kurtz’s “unlawful soul” was “beguiled [...] beyond the bounds of permitted aspirations,” 65), yet with more native complicity, because he has abandoned the code of the machine which authorized his presence to assemble his delirious drift with the one found in Africa.

Marlow is cut from the same cloth, being “of the new gang – the gang of virtue. The same people who sent him specially also recommended you,” he is informed by a fellow agent on the ground (25). Marlow fixates on Kurtz not only because he is the telos of his

mission, but because, in recognizing his own delirium, he becomes more “same” with Kurtz’s absolute deterritorialization, in the sense of a clean break that one “cannot come back from; that is irretrievable because it makes the past cease to exist.”<sup>469</sup> Yet, Kurtz’s kind of becoming is presented as something that the “wanderer” Marlow only skirts at, mediates, uses to make sense of his own relative deterritorialization in the aftermath, but ultimately avoids. The difference is, of course, the “restraint” as indicative of the “reason” of imperialism, an instrument to direct and shape the flow of delirium as it is assembled into imperial practice. Kurtz, in effect, cuts himself off from the reference point of “home” which Marlow evokes sentimentally in *Lord Jim*, becoming a “voice” and “hollowed at the core” (47; 58) – if “language compensates for its deterritorialization by a reterritorialization in sense,”<sup>470</sup> Kurtz has eliminated the sense he once produced through his pamphlets and has turned himself into a sound-box, capable of capturing, echoing and projecting any and all sense.

To explain the relationship between Jim, Kurtz, and Marlow, we can reach to Deleuze’s commentary on Melville and on Masoch: Jim and Kurtz could easily be described as “originals,” representatives of a primary nature, and Marlow as a “prophet,” one of the “Witnesses, narrators, interpreters” who have the “power to See” and who are “the only ones who can recognize the wake that originals leave in the world, and the unspeakable confusion and trouble they cause in it.”<sup>471</sup> This translates into a receivable narrative: as with Melville, originals telling their own story might result in something not recognizable as narrative, or as literature. Prophets also uphold the law, and Marlow’s narration is accordingly bound by another contract, signed in the sepulchral city: he speaks of being made to “sign some document. I believe I undertook amongst other things not to disclose any trade secrets” (*Heart of Darkness*, 11). Melville’s sea fugitives took lines of flight from contracts which governed their bodies, but Marlow is negotiating a contract of the mind: as a merchant marine captain, his role in imperial trade is bound by secrecy (he mentions not disclosing trade secrets once more, 57); as an agent whose subjectival positions are compromised, he is faced with narrating his own delirium in creating a reparative narrative for another’s.

Using the same logic with which we asked whether Kurtz took his delirium to Africa rather than found it there, we can question the sepulchral logic Marlow uses to describe his

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<sup>469</sup> F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up, with other Pieces and Stories* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), 146–47, quoted in Deleuze and Parnet, “On the Superiority,” 38. Deleuze and Parnet also add that the possibility of reterritorialization is always there: “A true break may be extended in time, it is something different from an over-significant cut, it must constantly be protected not merely against its false imitations, but also against itself, and against the reterritorializations which lie in wait for it” (39).

<sup>470</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 20.

<sup>471</sup> Deleuze, “Bartleby,” 81; 80; 83; Deleuze, *Coldness and Cruelty*, 27.

inability to reterritorialize into Europe after returning from Africa. On the one hand, we can take Marlow's entire narration to be marked with his African experience and his designation of the "sepulchral city" as post-hoc,<sup>472</sup> but on the other, his comment that Kurtz "looked at least seven feet long" (i.e. not "tall"), coupled with the death imagery at their first encounter (59) betrays Marlow's mission as that of an undertaker: he has come *from* and *in the name of* the sepulchral city to, literally, take the measure of Kurtz and reclaim his dead body and his narrative. This death returning to death, the empire claiming its delirium back, is a comfort Marlow does not have in *Lord Jim*. If we accept this collapse of a distinction between the living and the dead in the imperial center, i.e. that they can co-exist within the same flow, perhaps even in the same person (such as Kurtz, or even his Intended), then we can also read the unworkable light-dark opposition between England and Africa along the same lines, as not having to be distributed as separate across narrative space and time. Similarly, Marlow's lie to Kurtz's Intended can remain a lie without being opposed to "truth," since truth is many things for Marlow, least of all a matter of cognition, ethics, or epistemology. It is a primary position to be occupied, a ground zero from which everything else can be measured as a deflection. Thus Marlow is an "impostor" while African natives are "natural and true" in their environment (14), as is the "surface-truth" of seamanship (36). In the end, Marlow's journey and its aftermath are not so much about a quest for truth, but about how far one can be removed from possessing it. He is not interested in knowing the truth, but in how much of it he can withhold, distribute, edit, and control: his final lie is part of the same pre-existing delirium for which he reclaims Kurtz. Finally, it should be noted that Marlow's narration is in both novels framed by another narrator, another prophet, another container for the delirium: the proliferation of narrators increases instances of narrative control, but at the same time it allows delirium to proliferate in the multiplicity of narration.

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<sup>472</sup> Before departure, Marlow speaks of the "sanctuary" part of the Company Office, describing the office as "the house was as still as a house in a city of the dead" (*Heart of Darkness*, 10; 11). After his return, Marlow has visions of Kurtz (73) and describes his estrangement from people: "They trespassed upon my thoughts. They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating presence because I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew. [...] I had no particular desire to enlighten them, but I had some difficulty in restraining myself from laughing in their faces so full of stupid importance. I daresay I was not very well at that time" (71). Bonney, for instance, notes that in the phrase "heart of darkness" "both the vehicle and the tenor are themselves tropes devised by Marlow while reminiscing in a state of epistemological confusion from which he never escapes" ("Betrayal of Language," 127).

#### 4.5. Conrad's bad seamanship: The language of labor and the assemblage of the sea, ship, sailor

Bringing his own maritime knowledge and experience to his readings of sea narratives, Robert Foulke explores how seamanship figures in relation to (sea) language, labor, and the moral order Conrad builds in his writing. In his essay "Conrad and the Power of Seamanship," he notes two main features: first, there is Conrad's adherence to technical accuracy and precise sea argot (also noted by Bonney, as mentioned earlier). As Foulke finds in Conrad's fiction and essays alike, the author "was appalled by careless or sloppy use of nautical terminology:" seeing sea argot as "perfected speech," Conrad "extends this admiration for precision in sea language towards the ideal of perfect linkage between words and action sought by literary artists."<sup>473</sup> Secondly, seamanship has implications for morality in Conrad's writing inasmuch as "the value of work for the individual becomes the foundation of social morality:" human life is justifiable by (sea) work.<sup>474</sup> The remark that Conrad's texts seem to idealize sea labor into something morally redemptive and close to an art form, where action meets aesthetics, is not uncommon among other Conrad scholars, as mentioned in section 2.3.2. What Foulke notices, however, is a profound discrepancy between what Conrad *says* about sea labor and how he puts it to *use* in his narratives: combing through a number of Conrad's sea works, Foulke finds multiple instances of this purportedly ideal(ized) sea ethos breaking down, in parallel with scenes of maritime skill and fidelity. In *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, it is Captain Allistoun's righting maneuver that saves the ship in the gale upon weathering the Cape: however, Foulke provides a detailed naval argument of why Allistoun cannot be exonerated from two other blunders of seamanship – lugging sail in a rising wind and refusing to cut the masts against the judgment of other crew members.<sup>475</sup> "The End of the Tether" features a captain going blind who continues to perform his duty without informing anyone.<sup>476</sup> *Typhoon* and *Heart of Darkness* feature multiple instances of bad seamanship, including the commander in the former and inept helmsmen in both.<sup>477</sup> In "The Secret Sharer," the first-time captain takes on board a fugitive from murder and performs a ship maneuver of a close shave with land to release the fugitive – a clear act of endangering the

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<sup>473</sup> Foulke, "Power of Seamanship," 16.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.*, 16–17.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, 18–19.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*, 18; 24.

ship and breach of sea ethos.<sup>478</sup> In “Youth,” the captain’s obsession to reach Bangkok leads to a succession of neglectful acts regarding the endangered state of the ship bordering on absurdity.<sup>479</sup> Foulke says, “Nearly every one of Conrad’s fictional voyages contains either a mistake in seamanship or an abnegation of responsibility on the part of a seaman.”<sup>480</sup>

In “The End of the Tether,” the *Sephora* sinks and Captain Elliott commits suicide by going down with his ship: redemption lies in the financial security his daughter receives as the result of his death. More often than not, though, Conrad’s ship-assemblages complete their voyage and, despite their losses and/or visible scars, the errors of seamanship are not met with major consequences. The *Judea* in “Youth” burns at sea and the crew reach shore in rescue boats: the fact that only part of the machine reaches destination corroborates my thesis – that the assemblage can function, paradoxically, even without the vessel. The maneuver in “The Secret Sharer” can misguide readers unacquainted with seamanship into interpreting the captain’s act as a gesture of successful naval initiation.<sup>481</sup> The *Nan-Shan* survives the typhoon despite its literal-minded captain. The *Narcissus*’ “pilgrimage” may be “sordid” (18), but the ship-assemblage arrives in London and fulfills its mission, the land being none the wiser about what happened at sea: “what counts is the fact that bad seamanship prevailed in the crucial instance and that the ship was allowed to survive in spite of it.”<sup>482</sup>

Conrad’s specific sea ethos, the way he employs sea argot, and his penchant for technical precision in composing his art, seem to be doubly coded. For the nonspecialist, they offer a deceptive comfort of literalness and linearity, a minimalist protocol the main mission of which is to eliminate doubt, offering at least certainty of conduct (i.e. nothing could have been done better) if not always certainty of outcome (i.e. circumstances outside the vessel are part of the ship-assemblage). This comfort is, of course, false, and can mislead readers who do not venture to acquaint themselves with specialist knowledge into interpreting scenes which are problematic in terms of sea ethos as instances of good seamanship. At the same time, Conrad’s fiction is strewn with caveats that are only too obvious, but it takes a maritime specialist to decode them. Decoded, they deny the satisfaction of a stable ethos or a job well done: they reveal dislocated semiotic matrices and a gaping hole where redemptiveness of sea

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<sup>478</sup> Ibid., 19–20. As I mention below, although it does not engage in interpreting the short story’s breaches of seamanship in their own right, C. Casarino’s reading of “The Secret Sharer” as enacting the sublime of the closet within a male-male romance does list the “textual acrobatics” which Conrad undertakes at the expense of realistic motivation (*Modernity and the Sea*, 219), thus it could be applied here as a convincing explanation of the short story’s breaches of sea ethos.

<sup>479</sup> Foulke, “Power of Seamanship,” 22–23.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>481</sup> See, for instance, C. Benson.

<sup>482</sup> Foulke, “Power of Seamanship,” 19.

labor ought to be, such as Conrad evoked in his fiction and nonfiction (*The Mirror of the Sea*). Instead of leading towards a reliable epistemology, the language which is supposed to eliminate doubt turns out to be the gatekeeper to semiotic overdetermination.

What to do with this discrepancy between what Conrad tells versus what he shows, especially in the area of seamanship, which held such importance for him personally and was so defining in his shaping as an (English) author? On the one hand, his ship-assemblages respond with agility to having their functions disrupted one by one: ship space is traversed and converted, mechanical parts fixed and replaced, crew members change status and perform different functions on board – these are all successful transfigurations of a vigorous, adaptable machine-as-monad. On the other hand, when we look at Conrad’s ship-assemblages as fragments of land, i.e. of land-based interests that drive their operations, the vital dynamism of their transfigurations turns into instruments of territorialization. Conrad is not shy in providing details of the “sordid pilgrimages” to which these ship-assemblages are tied and which always lurk at the outskirts of the moving individual ship horizons: colonial exploitation, racism, instances of humans maltreated as cargo, deplorable conduct of Westerners in non-Western territories. We can thus no longer claim that, despite writing about the unjustifiable context of colonialism and trade exploitation, the interests of which are served by different industries of sailing, Conrad reserves a projected brightness and cleanliness for sea labor. His sea narratives compromise sea ethos beyond plausibility and contain far too many instances of breaching this supposed conduct of seamanship for us to believe that Conrad wrote them without irony, even if he upheld them at the same time.

Foulke’s analysis stops regrettably short at providing a specialist’s interpretation of Conrad’s subversions of sea ethos:

As a model for moral order or as a metaphor for human certainty in Conrad’s precarious world, seamanship is inadequate, yet it is all that his vision of the world allows. Some certainty is better than none in understanding the world, some power better than none in our efforts to control it. Thus the ability of men to design, build, and sail ships successfully on an unfriendly ocean becomes, for Conrad, a power to celebrate.<sup>483</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> Foulke, “Power of Seamanship,” 25.

Likewise, Bonney wraps up his brilliant readings by, unfortunately, shifting his analysis of narcissism in Conrad's narratives toward a temperate commentary of Conrad as author: "For the mariners, a stable but nonhuman figure is offered, the *Narcissus*, with which they can identify only in an unselfconscious way. For Conrad, no such redemptively distracting surrogate is needed, for in his humility he is not in danger of going proudly through the looking glass due to a naïve faith in language."<sup>484</sup> Bonney nevertheless offers entry points for further analysis, especially towards connecting his theses with Deleuzian concepts: I want to focus on his analysis of narcissism in seamanship (namely, in *The Nigger of the Narcissus*), and on the phrase "unselfconscious mental state" in exploring the relationship between language and ontics in Conrad.

For Bonney, *The Nigger of the Narcissus* points to a relationship between language and subjectivity different from that in the Marlow tales or in *Nostramo*. First, Bonney notes how Conrad deposes the idea of a traditional benevolent deity by "combining the ideas of Christian God and heartless ocean in such a way as to rob both of traditional and logical viability," "making the sea alone the measure of value precisely because it is harsh and godless."<sup>485</sup> What connects the sea with those who live by it is the fact that "The 'mercy,' 'pity,' and 'perfect wisdom' of the sea can 'reprieve' men by forcing them to work almost endlessly, thus never giving them a chance to develop any elaborate sense of self-consciousness."<sup>486</sup> In other words, the "redemptiveness" of sea labor that other critics refer to in Conrad is better explained by reference to the sea as that which "inject[s] value into human experience,"<sup>487</sup> rather than to a transcendental principle such as morality. At the same time, the sea is a reflective surface, evoking the water from the myth of Narcissus as an instrument of self-consciousness par excellence, beneath the surface of which lies the potentially deadly vortex (of water, language, metaphysics).<sup>488</sup> As was noted in Section 4.2., Bonney traces the correlation between the crisis on board the *Narcissus* and the proliferation of language tending towards "conceit" or "narcissism:" its rise, climax, and waning parallels the rise, climax and

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<sup>484</sup> Bonney, "Betrayal of Language," 153.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid., 140–41. The relevant passage from *The Narcissus* is: "On men reprieved by its disdainful mercy, the immortal sea confers in its justice the full privilege of desired unrest. Through the perfect wisdom of its grace they are not permitted to meditate at ease upon the complicated and acrid savour of existence. They must without pause justify their life to the eternal pity that commands toil to be hard and unceasing, from sunrise to sunset, from sunset to sunrise; till the weary succession of nights and days tainted by the obstinate clamour of sages, demanding bliss and an empty heaven, is redeemed at last by the vast silence of pain and labour, by the dumb fear and the dumb courage of men obscure, forgetful, and enduring" (*The Narcissus*, 55).

<sup>486</sup> Bonney, "Betrayal of Language," 141.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid., 142–43; 147–49. Bonney also notes the recurrence of mirror imagery in Conrad in *The Mirror of the Sea* (149), whereby "The mirror is generated primarily by a state of mind that Conrad terms "conceit" [...]" (145).

resolution of the crisis on board ship. Finally, Bonney notes that “Unlike the mythic youth, Conrad’s *Narcissus* cannot share human vulnerability to the echolalia of flattering reflections or verbal constructs.”<sup>489</sup>

What emerges here is a redefinition by Conrad of the basic geometry of the sea, ship, and sailor described in Section 1.5. In *The Narcissus*, the sea becomes an element that challenges the traditional conception of God, taking upon itself to confer meaning to human action; however, being “harsh and godless,”<sup>490</sup> the sea does not act like a transcendental signifier, but as a reflective surface which is at one and the same time a threat to survival should the sailor use it to generate “conceit,” and a potential line of flight should he stick to, literally, “surface labor.” The ship is a key element here: faced with the sea alone, sailors can get lost in exploring their own self-image – the “godlessness” of the sea could be interpreted as conducive to this, as an idea of God carries with it an idea of humility in the subject. Working on, or rather *with*, the ship as a human-manufactured but nonhuman element not susceptible to narcissism, sailors can deterritorialize (from language, from a “conceited” subjectivity) and enter into a new assemblage by virtue of labor, thus forming a new zone of proximity between the sea, the ship, and the sailor.<sup>491</sup>

Bonney’s use of the term “echolalia” in connection with narcissism and seamanship beckons consideration in relation to Deleuze (and Guattari)’s “delirium.” For Bonney, Marlow engages in conceited contemplation and lofty language, but is “equally complex and skeptical, eludes terminal descent and thus continues to communicate and sail about.”<sup>492</sup> As a compulsive repetition of language, i.e. repetitive reflection in terms of Bonney’s interpretation of Conrad, the echolalia of narcissistic language could be understood as another aspect of Marlow’s delirium, analyzed above. At the same time, the reduction of the language of sailors on the *Narcissus* that accompanies their focus on surface labor in order to save the ship<sup>493</sup> could also be described as a call towards a kind of delirium, in line with my description of a hypothetically “pure” state of sea argot in Section 1.8., which would strive to be nothing but representative and thereby extreme. Tending towards the vehicular yet pointing towards the mythic (the archetypal experience of self-consciousness, self-reflection as exemplified in the *Narcissus* myth), the reductive, parasitical, minor language of sea labor is

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<sup>489</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>491</sup> Deleuze and Guattari expound: “[Becoming] constitutes a zone of proximity and indiscernibility, a no-man’s-land, a nonlocalizable relation sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other – and the border-proximity is indifferent to both contiguity and to distance” (*A Thousand Plateaus*, 323–24).

<sup>492</sup> Bonney, “Betrayal of Language,” 146.

<sup>493</sup> Analyzed by Bonney in “Betrayal of Language,” 149–50; also in Section 4.3. above.

the saving grace of Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* as well, as he focuses on work to keep his sanity (33–34; 66–67) and reads *An Inquiry into some Points of Seamanship*: “The simple old sailor, with his talk of chains and purchases, made me forget the jungle and the pilgrims in a delicious sensation of having come upon something unmistakably real” (38). It is also a possible explanation of why Marlow sees the revocation of Jim’s officer’s certificate as a “death” of sorts – if Jim is not allowed to participate in the labor of seamanship, he loses access to the survival mechanism of sailors. Bonney concludes: “Conrad therefore clearly indicates that the dissolution of Self is necessary for the survival of an extreme situation, be it a violent physical assault due to an upheaval of the elements or linguistic aggression arising from a seductive conception of a transcendently adequate individual character.”<sup>494</sup>

A final remark regarding Bonney’s term “unselfconscious,” which should also address a potential argument that *The Narcissus* might be advocating for an impossible regression towards a pre-mirror-stage psychic state. One cannot escape the symbolic,<sup>495</sup> but the displacement of a deity-figure as conferring meaning by inserting the sea in its place, which in turn collapses traditional transcendental logic in *The Narcissus*, opens the sea world of the novel to different ways of establishing signification. Conrad’s summons from *The Mirror of the Sea*, “To forget oneself, to surrender all personal feeling in the service of that fine art, is the only way for a seaman to the faithful discharge of his trust” (59), read with the fluctuation in linguistic intensity among the crew in *The Narcissus*, explains Bonney’s use of the term as an “un-selfconsciousing” of sorts, a process of going back and forth, and not a hypothetical, or even desired, arrested development. “The children of the sea” – not only a phrase from the novel but the title of its American edition – is thus to be read as embracing the delirium of the labor and language of the sea as a line of flight: “They were the everlasting children of the mysterious sea. Their successors are the grown-up children of a discontented earth” (15). Finally, staple Conradian phrases like “the children of the sea” or the “fellowship of the craft” (or even “sea brothers,” which Bert Bender uses to describe a major sentiment in American sea fiction in his eponymous book) can now be decoded as standing for a collective of survivalists by labor, fathered by the sea in their dissolution of the self to assemble with the sea and the ship.

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<sup>494</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>495</sup> Thus Deleuze and Guattari: “The father is first in relation to the child, but only because what is first is the social investment in relation to the familial investment, the investment of the social field in which the father, the child, and the family as a subaggregate are at one and the same time immersed” (*Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane [1972; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000], 276).

## 5. CONCLUSION

This dissertation has provided a comparative study of Herman Melville's and Joseph Conrad's sea-themed writing, using the critical-theoretical framework of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of minor literature, the maritime model of smooth and striated space, nomadic and sedentary travel, assemblages, becoming, de/re/territorialization. This platform was chosen because of its compatibility with the paradigm of Anglo-American sea narratives which emerged at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century: tracing subversive practices from within dominant systems was suitable for studying the literature of a marginalized labor group whose contribution to global political and economic processes surpassed its empowerment; the collective and political facets of minor literature provided an apparatus for reading the regimented and codified world of the ship and its crises of legitimation; the element of deterritorialization of language highlighted sea argot in literature as an element of linguistic deterritorialization by default.

Sea literature, its narrative prose, and especially Melville and Conrad as two of its most prominent authors are part of a well-researched field ranging from maritime cultural history and comparative literature to interdisciplinary approaches such as American, Atlantic, or Oceanic Studies. Aiming to address the gap in comparative studies of Melville and Conrad that focus on the language, space, and labor of the sea required building a wide interdisciplinary background, yet being highly selective with research paths and sources relevant for the thesis: as a result, less attention was given to authors without personal sailing experience, such as E. A. Poe, and to narratives which would be suitable for a Deleuzian reading but did not focus on the chronotope of the sea, such as Conrad's "Amy Foster" or Melville's *Pierre*. In terms of secondary literature sources, preference was given to scholars who were both literary and maritime specialists, or who concentrated on nautical aspects of analyzed works.

It was also important to respect the material at hand: sea literature in general, and sea narratives of the nineteenth-to-early-twentieth century in particular, evince resistance to categorization in terms of literary periods, genres and national literary history, fact and fiction, and the analytical apparatus of narratology. At the same time, these narratives are highly aware of their status as a marginal form of literary enunciation and as a textual product, as well as of the expectations of their transatlantic, middle-to-upper class audience. These elements were reflected by punctuating dominant properties of individual narratives

throughout,<sup>496</sup> instead of confining interpretation to pre-assigned analytical categories, and by formulating an argument toward reading sea narratives as a specific form of textuality and narrativity.

Further, reading Melville and Conrad with Deleuze and Guattari entailed a bias in favor of Melville when it came to available readings of his works by Deleuze, with and without co-authors: not only is Melville well represented in Deleuzian thought, but his writing was used, among that of other writers, in formulating the very concept of minor literature. Conrad's oeuvre, on the other hand, is present in an increasing number of contemporary Deleuzian readings addressing the dearth of primary sources, though few focus on the theme of the sea. Engaging with Conrad within this framework thus allowed for more maneuvering space whilst reading Melville involved revising existing readings.

Reading sea narratives as minor literature detected a number of minoritarian strategies. Language is deterritorialized by fusing sea argot into the language of literature; literary and documentary discourse is challenged to the point of formulating a separate mode of textuality and narrativity. Sea narratives speak from the margins of human experience: a segment of the laboring class crafted its own literature from within existing forms, joining and transforming the major literature of captains, sea battles and conquests. Collectivity of utterance manifested itself in several ways: by including readers (specialists and nonspecialists alike) in the maritime community of storytelling, by direct invitation and by implication, and in the hypertextual manner in which sea-themed texts communicate with one another.

With Melville being featured in a number of Deleuze's interpretations (with Guattari, Parnet, as well as in individual texts), my approach was to examine in greater detail how sea ethos and the language of seamanship in Melville's oeuvre could be read in this conceptual framework. Up to *Moby-Dick*, a pattern emerged of speaking subjects from before the mast, formulating their enunciation from the margins of shipboard collectives (as bachelors or instances of the Anomalous) and a contractual relation with the ship enabling them to occupy both a majoritarian and minoritarian position, speaking from the language of power as well as that of the people. The paternal principle, relevant to Deleuze's "Bartleby," was found to be actively engaged in reconfigurations of subjectivity, capitalism, family, and nation. The pattern of male bonds between characters, i.e. minimal social machines of two, was detected

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<sup>496</sup> A non-exhaustive list of such properties would include: degrees of explicit and implicit negotiations between fact and fiction in individual narratives; adherence to or departure from analogous genres, i.e. anti-Bildungsroman, modifications of the imperial romance, tale vs. short story etc.; degree to which nautical matters are dominant in a certain text and how they are manifested, distinguishing those that focus on shipboard space from those that incorporate details of the voyage, from geographical crossings to negotiations of self-sameness and self-difference in encountering the other.

as a subversive alternative to the collective of ship crews as well as transformative of the character of the bachelor himself.

Reading Conrad with the Deleuze and Guattari framework detected an active practice of performing (re-)territorialization, as Conrad's inscription into English letters through his service in the British Merchant Navy created a supple boundary of Englishness. Conrad's writing spoke from within the English language and English seamanship as well as from the marginal position of deracinated subjectivity: upholding the codes of imperial agency, the imperial romance, and ideological complicity of seamanship with imperialism whilst at the same time exposing these codes as no longer tenable. Although Conrad's complicity with major structures and practices (the quarterdeck as opposed to the forecabin more prominent in Melville; the British Merchant Navy; the British Empire) was challenging for a Deleuzian reading, avenues of minoritarian thought were detected in Conrad's maritime literary world: unlike Melville's incognito fugitives, Conrad introduced protagonists as dwellers in colonial contact zones and imperial agents whose own subjectivity was affected by imperial recoil, seeking out minor spaces and strategies of survival. Finally, in terms of language, sea argot was detected as part of the bond of labor in the formation of a zone of proximity between the sea, ship, and sailor, to formulate a line of flight/survival.

Both Melville's and Conrad's protagonists strive for self-sameness and are threatened by difference and the encounter with the other: as Melville's heroes struggle towards an individuated enunciation, the threat of subjectival dissolution comes from the collective (of family, the ship, nation) as well as from the other; in Conrad's sea narratives, which function as individuated enunciations, subjectival instability occurs between the Home and the World, which is conceived as a territory where agents of imperialism experience being surveyed, and the international collective of maritime culture produces the effect of confined space on a global scale. Both Melville and Conrad present opportunities for becoming-other, as well as characters who have done so. However, the boundary is presented as a line of absolute deterritorialization from which one cannot return (with the exception of Taji in Melville's *Mardi*), and which is seldom crossed by characters of narrative and ideological authority. Contrary to the model of Western discourse traced by Islam from Marco Polo and Dante to Lévi-Strauss, which elides the boundary and registers only the self-sameness and self-difference on either side, the sea narratives of Melville and Conrad were found to foreground and problematize the boundaries of territorialization, including sea initiations, geographical crossings, limits of anthropomorphic minimum and contact zones.

As regards seamanship itself, Melville's perspective centers on the fore-castle and legitimation against positions of authority and dominant discourse; with the exception of *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, Conrad's optics remains entrenched in the quarterdeck and is consequently concerned with legitimation from self-justification to the capillary margins of power structures. Melville's protagonists perceive seamanship itself as a threat to subjectivity, whereas in Conrad seamanship is articulated as subjectification that functions as an empty signifier, enabling the formulation of ideological ambivalence as well as a line of flight in its labor aspect. Unlike the stereotypical rogue sailor present in English and American poetry, prose and drama up to the nineteenth century, both Melville and Conrad depict typical sailors as largely sedentary characters: Melville's rovers and flâneurs, as well as Conrad's Marlow, are described as exceptions to the norm.

In terms of treatment of geographical space, Melville's maritime world could be described as transitioning from smooth to striated as global processes of exploration, cartography, international commercial enterprise and colonial appropriation take shape; Conrad's sea writing, on the other hand, traces subsequent resistance to modes of Western territorialization and consequent transitions from hyperstriated back into smooth. Despite the fact that deepwater voyage and the high seas are articulated as spaces of freedom, they are not the most nomadic spaces in either Melville or Conrad. Both authors write at their most deterritorialized when depicting spaces where sea meets land: with Melville, it is the archipelago crossings (detected by Deleuze) present in *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Mardi*; with Conrad, it is the space of riparian meandering, such as in *Almayer's Folly* and *Heart of Darkness*.

The research space that was hopefully opened with this dissertation is vast and diverse. Not all sea narratives necessarily function as minor literature: exposing the degree to which certain authors or their sea-themed texts exhibit majoritarian or minoritarian tendencies would contribute to the study of literature as a cultural practice in terms of its complicity or subversion regarding structures of power and dominant discourse. As was shown in analyses of Dana Jr., Cooper, Melville, and Conrad, sea narratives can serve the interests of political and/or literary nationalism or internationalism, class and labor activism, individual and/or group (self-)legitimation. Taking into account that the paradigm of sea literature studied in this dissertation is implicated in global economic and political processes, further readings would contribute to both literary and maritime cultural history.

Secondly, Deleuze and Guattari's maritime model of smooth and striated space remains under-utilized in interpretations of sea narratives. In this dissertation it provided an

apparatus for a diachronic comparative reading of Melville and Conrad, as well as for uncovering minoritarian aspects of Conrad's writing which might have otherwise remained undetected. It also enabled a more distinctive reading of sea narratives in terms of sailing industries they employ (navy, merchant marine, whaling, etc.) and how their leanings towards a smooth or striated experience of space connect with their role in contemporary commerce, warfare or exploration. Further comparative interpretations could incorporate other authors, or map tendencies within Melville's and Conrad's sea oeuvres in terms of linear development, thematic clusters or differences between long and short fiction and nonfiction. Because it supersedes the binary division of sea and land, the maritime model would also welcome comparisons between treatments of the space of the city and the space of the sea and/or the ship, as both Conrad and Melville are authors of the city as much as of the sea.

Thirdly, the space of the ship in sea narratives is seldom explored in its own right and deserves more scholarly attention. It was important to revisit the six principles of Foucault's concept of the heterotopia and how they relate to shipboard geography in general, as well as to particular literary renditions of ships and their regimes of space and power. Horizontal and vertical spaces of labor and leisure, public and private activity, as well as heterotopias within heterotopias such as the brig and the sick bay, were mapped out for Melville's and Conrad's ships. It was also necessary to review the figure of the ship as microcosm in order to correct interpretations which equate the order of conduct on board ship with political order on land: the ship is neither a democracy nor a monarchy; it is always already an *other* space with its own regime. Finally, the theory of the ship as a machinic assemblage introduced in Chapter 2 could serve as a model for future readings of the geometry of ship, sea, and sailor in sea narratives.

Finally, the central question of studying sea narratives must remain language itself. In addition to Melville and Conrad, the works of other sea authors merit thorough examination in this respect. A uniquely defining trait of the paradigm of sea narratives examined in this dissertation, sea argot is the technical sub-language that grafts itself onto the language of literature. Studying sea argot as discourse of labor in sea-themed narratives reveals its various positions as complicit with and resistant to structures of power. It functions as a device of legitimation, of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, of collective cohesion or othering, of surface labor and survival, of performance and myth. In that respect, this dissertation is a contribution towards mapping the limits and overlaps between literary and cultural history.



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### Academic conference participation:

- 2014 “The (Self-)Legitimation of Sea Narratives by Herman Melville and Joseph Conrad.” Paper presented at the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the British Association for American Studies (BAAS), University of Birmingham, UK, April 10–13.
- 2013 “Herman Melville’s Maritime Narratives as Minor Literature: Reading Melville with Deleuze and Guattari.” Paper presented at the Spring Academy in American History, Culture and Politics, Heidelberg Center for American Studies (HCA), Universität Heidelberg, Germany, March 18–22.
- 2007 “Presence and Absence in Constructing Gender Politics: John Berger’s *G*.” Paper presented at the postgraduate conference *InVisibilities: Absence and Presence in Cultural Texts and Images*, University of Dundee, Scotland, UK, June 20.