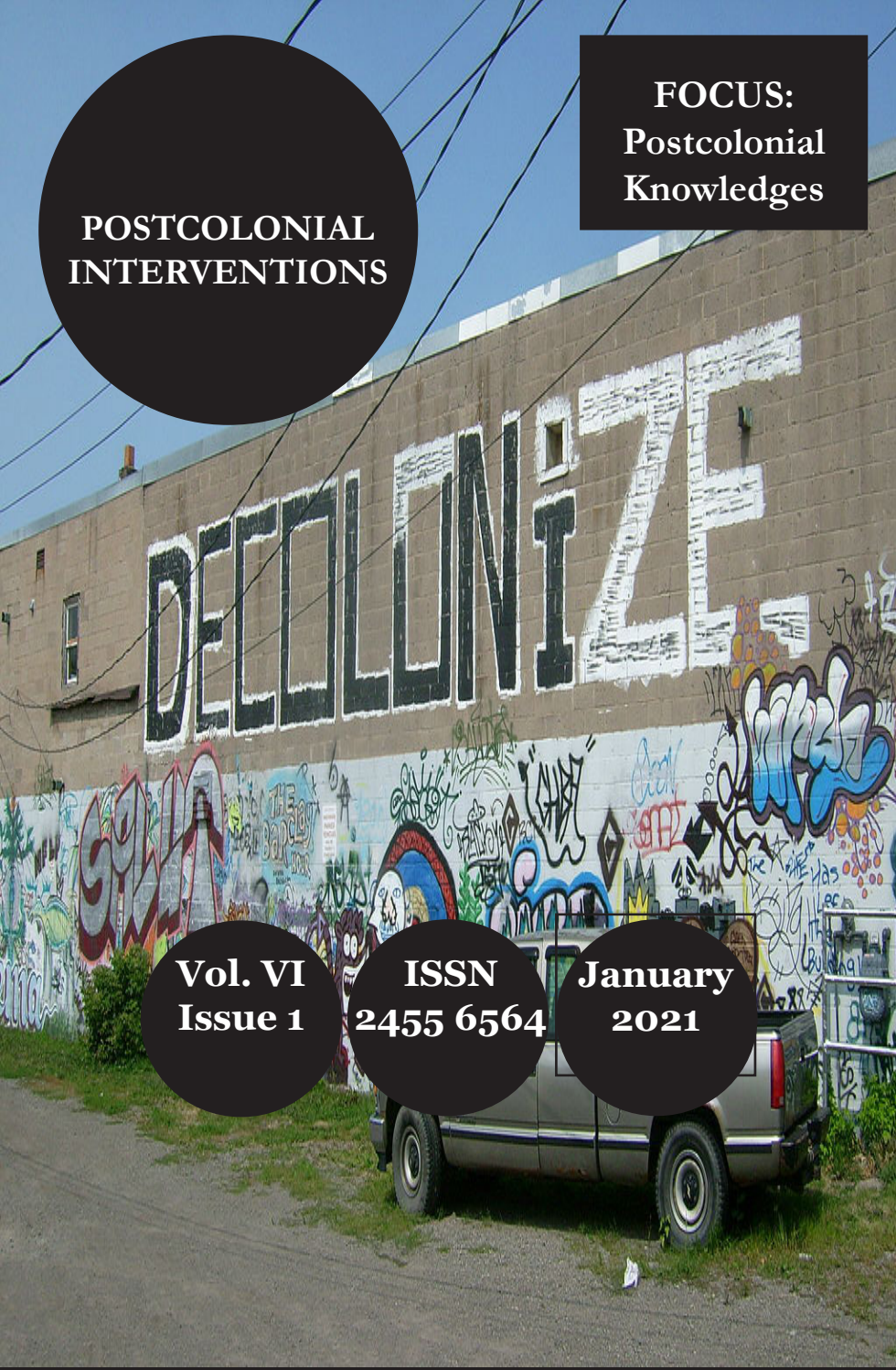
POSTCOLONIAL INTERVENTIONS

FOCUS: Postcolonial Knowledges



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EDITORS' NOTE

Another year, another issue of the journal and another episode of an ongoing struggle against all the bleak, confounding injustices and aberrations of the world, armed with frail saplings of hope, convictions and dreams which continue to be buffeted by the raging storms of our turbulent times. But rhetorical flourishes only make sense when they are supplemented by various material actions that contribute to urgent programmes for the preservation of ecological balance, indigenous cultures and histories, redistributon of wealth and resources, systematic subversion of entrenched socio-political hierarchies and continuous consolidation of trans-border solidarities. Of course such goals are as arduous and challenging as ever as the networks of empire, capital and the structures of division they foster continue to gain in strength as well. In fact, even as I write, thousands of farmers around the Indian capital remain steadfast in their opoosition to recently introduced farm laws aimed at ensuring greater corporatisation of the agricultural sector. While such a movement has invariably garnered a great deal of public support, various conspiracies, disinformation drives and a barrage of ideological villification is also continuing so that popular attention can be steered away from everyday realities and attendant forms of material deprivation.

How exactly should the academia engage with these and other multitudinous phenomena happening across the world? At times it does seem as if the entire enterprise of critical thinking about evolving socio-poilitical realities and their cultural ramifications is rather futile as the political spectrum continues to be filled with hateful, venomous voices of dullards and dispeakables who seek to professionally nullify facts and reason and scientific truth in favour of sadistic, parochial fabrications peddled by megalomaniacs and profitmongers of various shades and sects. In India, even the internationally acclaimed voices of scholars like Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen or Jean Dreze continue to be subjected to institutional stigma and vituperative accusations, simply because of their dissenting arguments. Over the past few years, not only have we seen the assassination of various rationalists and nonconformist public personalities such as Narendra Dabholkar or Gauri Lankesh but also the incarceration of academics, journalists, lawyers and human rights activists along with systematic stifling of such organisations as Amnesty India or Greenpeace. In such circumstances, with what hope and faith should we continue our interventions?

The answer is both obvious and difficult. Whatever the extent of the adversities that besiege us, we have a responsibility to our professions, our students and our posterity to explore innovative, critical avenues of

thought which will enable us to rationally explore the challenges that confront us and imaginatively envision the times to come. Through one, two, ten or scores of readers that engage with our interventions and share our insights we embark on a shared path that renews our commitments, widens our horizons and makes us just a little bit less alone.

This particular issue, guest edited by Dr. Kerstin Knopf, is particularly remarkable as an example of such a shared journey. Professor Knopf and the other scholars who have contributed to this issue have placed their trust in a young journal simply on the basis of the quality of the previous issues and what they consider to be the credentials of this enterprise. This is indeed a matter of pride and gratitude. On behalf of the young editorial team of this journal we offer them our thanks. The cooperation of such scholars, including those who have contributed to our previous issues, is indeed a heartwarming experience in the face of some of the derision and condescension we have received along the way. We remain committed to the standards we have upheld so far and will definitely strive to improve them in future.

The promise of the future, however, should not make us blind to the past. In fact, we must sincerely remember the sacrifices of countless individuals who have embraced enormous hardships to serve others across the whole of the last year and had to even lay down

their lives in the face of an unforgiving pandemic. While there is much about the future that we cannot control, we must make sure that we treat each other with compassion, that we do not allow governments to consign the toiling populations of the world to systemic misery in our name, that we keep on raising our voices with reason so that so-called leaders cannot silence others in our name, that we do not plunge ourselves into heedless consumption and instead learn to practice the virtues of sharing and preserving our resources for the posterity.

This is indeed a tall order and may well be a chimerical pursuit. But our only option is to try. As Albus Dumbledore once remarked, "Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light". Through our academic endeavours, despite disillusionment, cynicism and despair, let us also walk towards the light in our own ways.

Introduction: Postcolonial Knowledges

Kerstin Knopf

This curated volume of *Postcolonial Interventions* takes issue with the systemic marginalization of local knowledges throughout the postcolonial world and works toward a re-centering of local cultures, languages, literatures, and histories in academic enquiry, thus critiquing epistemological hierarchies and helping facilitate epistemic pluralism. This special edition brings together contributions from literary and cultural studies to explore how knowledge systems and traditions are affected by colonial and postcolonial conditions, which are in turn increasingly marked by asymmetrical power relations, heterogeneity,

and transculturalization. From postcolonial theoretical positions, the authors examine ways in which colonial and postcolonial constellations have been reflected, shaped, and negotiated through symbolic and discursive knowledge practices. This introduction discusses briefly processes of hierarchical ordering of knowledge systems in colonial eras and examines knowledge systems in the post/colonial era with examples related to diverse traditions, languages and practices of academic and literary knowledge production in changing societies. Furthermore, it looks at different strategies of decolonizing academic and literary discourses. The final section gives an overview of the contributions in this volume.

1. Epistemic Hierarchies

Postcolonial Knowledges aims to critically analyze historical and ongoing global knowledge production, hierarchical ordering of knowledge systems, and practices of domination and appropriation of the world's knowledge systems, discourses, and languages through ubiquitous European-centered intellectual traditions and languages. Walter Mignolo describes this as "an unconscious dismissal that has run through the history of the coloniality of power in its epistemic and ontological spheres: the self-assumed Eurocentrism (the world seen, described and mapped from European perspectives and interests)" (2015, ix)—a dismissal he has elsewhere termed "the coloniality of knowledge" after the Peruvian sociologist

Aníbal Quijano (Quijano 1992; Mignolo 2007). This dismissal has generated an almost complete primacy of Eurocentric[1] knowledge, discourse, and practice in academia, where both natural sciences and the humanities are largely founded on Western logocentrism and Cartesian dualism that tend to exclude other knowledge and knowledge practices. Accordingly, postcolonial, Indigenous, and other local knowledges have largely been viewed as primitive, unscientific, insignificant, and folkloric—a tendency that only recently started to gradually change as non-Western oral, geographical, or pharmaceutical knowledges have been consulted and acknowledged. This 'intellectual dominance' (Emeagwali 2003) of the West (the "Northwestern European tradition," Spivak 1999, 6) emerged and was legitimized by way of colonial histories as 'destined' trajectories that re-ordered the world, of 'naturalized' cultural hierarchies, and of thus 'grown' all-encompassing epistemologies rooted in the Greco-Romanian worlds. In conjunction, modernity was mainly thought of as a Western phenomenon and theorized from a European-centered perspective (e.g. Bauman 2000; Beck 1999; Giddens 1991), cementing the notion that modernity is an advanced stage of progress from traditional societies, while the growth of reason, rationality, and scientific consciousness is thought to be exclusively Western, and non-Western cultures are associated with the early stage of tradition and pre-modernity. Modern political practice, for example, is unthinkable without concepts such as citizenship, human rights,

equality, democracy, and scientific rationality born from the European Enlightenment, concepts that help critique Western capitalism and colonialism (Chakrabarty 2008, 4); and at the same time, these concepts are part of a dominant intellectual discourse. Enlightenment humanism, one must not forget, did not include non-European cultures in its understanding of man, whose image rather presented the "settler-colonial white man" (5; cf. Spivak 1999, 26). Reintroducing the "rejected Aboriginal" (Spivak, 26) and non-Western people into perceptions of the philosophical subject is only the beginning of a decolonizing project.

Postcolonial and Indigenous scholars around the world critique the construed dualism between Western and non-Western knowledges and, moreover, the pervasive notion that non-Western or Westernized cultures do not contribute to the relevant intellectual traditions and remain but passive recipients of Western science and technology (Battiste 2005; Kuokkanen 2007). In the same vein, postcolonial critics argue against a notion of modernity as Western phenomenon, stressing that Western and non-Western societies alike undergo processes of industrial and scientific development and rationalization, and centering postcolonial hybridized modernities that emerge from European and non-European intellectual and materialistic traditions (Ashcroft 2009, 2014; Chatterjee 1997; Chakrabarty 2008; Gaonkar 2001; Taylor 1995). The task is to delink, as Mignolo would have it,

"from the idea that there is a single and primary modernity surrounded by peripheral or alternative ones" (2011, 5). By "creative adaptation", people adjust themselves to global and local processes of societal modernization, which produces modernity and modern knowledges, if we interpret Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar correctly; "it is the site where a people 'make' themselves modern, as opposed to being 'made' modern by alien and impersonal forces, and where they give themselves an identity and a destiny" (2001, 18). Thus, "globalization may now be characterized by the multiplicity of its modernities" (Ashcroft 2014, 5; emphasis in original). Shifting toward the idea of pluralistic hybridized knowledge systems and practices in perceptions of knowledge production as well as including and integrating pluralistic knowledge systems and practices proper into the notion of global knowledge production is the interventional task of the postcolonial critic—critical work to which this special edition seeks to contribute.

2. Colonizing non-Western Knowledge Systems

Everywhere in the world we witness the displacement of Indigenous and local knowledge systems, as well as their accompanying social, ecological, political, and legal practices. This displacement and erasure can have far-reaching results in terms of global ecologies and politics—for instance, the effects of climate change, natural and human catastrophes, terrorism, and warfare. The pred-

atory appropriation of natural resources, corporatized agriculture, capitalist industrialism, and a mushrooming tourist industry have also resulted in large-scale environmental destruction, the loss of traditional medicinal and horticultural knowledge, and marginalized local languages (Chakravarty 2014, 2). Whole communities and cultures are threatened by the loss or destruction of land, from which they struggle, or have failed, to sustain themselves. For example, in Africa the gradual erosion of local technologies, science, and medicine through colonial legislation, diverse manipulative mechanisms, and overpowering colonial cultures has consolidated a culture of dependence which, in Gloria Emeagwali's words, "entailed subordinating knowledge systems and existing epistemologies of the colonized African to the logic and dynamics of colonial production systems and hierarchies" (2006, 12).

Much of the knowledge and discourse on various non-Western cultures was established within a pervasive Eurocentric knowledge system and self-appointed epistemological authority, particularly in the disciplines of anthropology, ethnology, philosophy, linguistics, literary studies, and history. These sciences, with their incessant studying, translating, collecting, and seizing of cultural artifacts and practices, have discursively (and politically) colonized, marginalized, and appropriated entire cultures, languages, and geographies. This is the Foucauldian "will to truth"/knowledge, essentially a "will

to power," with discourses of the academy and larger society operating as agencies of power (Foucault 1971, 10). From travelogues to scientific and pseudoscientific studies, European observers and academics established imaginaries of certain cultures that have become global myths, embedded in the semantics of exoticism, primitivism, and savagery. As Edward Said explains, "the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery, and practice. […] From the beginning of Western speculation about the Orient, the one thing the Orient could not do was to represent itself. Evidence of the Orient was credible only after it had passed through and been made firm by the refining fire of the Orientalist's work" (Said 1994, 73, 283). Likewise, Valentin Mudimbe argues that discourse and knowledge on Africa is fraught with continuing and pervasive exoticism, and Europe has invented the African, Native, Arabic, and Asian "savage" as representations of its own vilified and negated 'double' (Mudimbe 1994, xi-xii). Similarly, Europe has also invented the 'Imaginary Indian' in North America (Berkhofer 1978; Francis 1992; Momaday 1979).

Many postcolonial scholars from different regions point out similar colonial processes world-wide. For example, Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste holds that Western educational institutions have disclaimed Indigenous knowledges and nurtured the belief that non-Western cultures "contribute nothing to the development of knowledge,

humanities, arts, science, and technology;" she terms this attitude "cognitive imperialism" (2005). Sami scholar Rauna Kuokkanen argues in a similar way and notes that "the academy's structures and discourses are built on the assumption that there only is one episteme, one ontology, one intellectual tradition on which to rely and from which to draw" (2007, 3). Hence, as Cree scholar Margaret Kovach makes clear, prioritized Western-based research practices and policies reproduce colonial relationships in the academy (2009, 28). There exists, furthermore, the pervasive Eurocentric idea that thought and philosophy is "a specifically Western affair" (Nigam 2013, 4; cf. Dabashi 2013). As a consequence, postcolonial and Indigenous academics around the world have called for decolonizing and "Indigenizing the academy", for the equal inclusion of postcolonial and Indigenous epistemes, discourses, practices, and methodologies, and for interweaving Indigenous, postcolonial, and Western knowledges, education, cultural beliefs, and values in order to combine their respective competences (e.g., Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Mihesuha and Wilson 2004; Kuokkanen 2007; Wilson 2008; Kovach 2010; Gilliland 2009; Popova-Gosart 2009). But even this project is fraught with fallacies, such as the potential for appropriating, tokenizing, and exploiting such postcolonial knowledges—as can already be seen, for example, in the pharmaceutical industry. We also risk validating Indigenous knowledges and methodologies solely according to Western standards, further subjecting them to Western

control (Grenier 1998, 13, 55). If we cannot achieve a radical discursive shift, even the most liberal study in the name of cultural relativism will continue to use and reinforce categories and conceptual systems that are born in a Western epistemological order (cf. Mudimbe xv).

3. Decolonizing Strategies

Attempts to integrate Western and non-Western knowledge systems, or to recover postcolonial and Indigenous knowledges from the shadows of Western scientific discourses, are manifold. Worldwide, non-Western and Western scholars are producing alternative postcolonial visions of reality, embedded in their daily lives, ontologies, and philosophies. For example, the British theoretical physicist David Peat respectfully discusses integrated anthropology, history, metaphysics, cosmology, and quantum physics, arguing that Western ideas of quantum physics and Native American holism have more common premises and ideas than is generally assumed (1994). Gregory Cajete explores Native American science paradigms according to Western categories of knowledge: Indigenous philosophy, psychology, ecology, herbology, holistic health, relationships to land and animals, and astronomy. Richard Atleo (Umeek) develops an Indigenous philosophical theory integrating Nuu-chah-nulth and Western philosophies and knowledge practices (2004, 2011), while Cheikh Moctar Ba similarly compares Ancient Greek and African cosmologies in

order to crystallize philosophical structures of African oral cultures for their translation into print (2013, cf. Errington 2007). Jeannette Armstrong puts forth the Okanagan *Enowkinwixw* concept of governance and conflict settlement that might prove important for political science and law studies (2009). In South Africa, the Khoi-San concept of *ubuntu* is the basis for Desmond Tutu's endeavors to achieve reconciliation, healing, and renewal (Chakravarty 2014, 4). In the Himalayas, traditional practices for resource extraction and utilization are being scrutinized for their relevance as suitable technologies for natural resource management in particular climate and living conditions (Parihar et.al. 2014, 198 ff.), while in Hawai'i traditional ecological knowledge and land management practices are being re-applied as well (Gon III 2003). With the example of *Quechua yachay* (Quechua collective oral knowledge), Fernando Garcés V rearticulates the colonial idea of Indigenous languages being subordinate to Eurocentric languages and argues instead that subalternized languages indeed have epistemological power (Garcés V 2012, 86 ff.). Korsi Dogbe introduces Africa-centered perspectives on philosophy and the social sciences (Dogbe 2006, 115 ff.); and Gloria Emeagwali reviews African Indigenous knowledges, languages, scripts, history, mathematics and technologies and reintroduces them into academic discourses from where they were dismissed (Emeagwali 2006, 1 ff.). Some papers in this volume (e.g. Armstrong and Hayman) discuss similar concrete endeavors to decolonize

knowledge production, while others (e.g. Siriwardane-de Zoysa and Al-Janabi) outline examples to decolonize text and discourse production. "Decolonizing the academy" by including Indigenous, African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and other diverse epistemes, discourses, practices, and methodologies is central to postcolonial endeavors.

4. The Contributions to this Special Volume

The contributions in this edition discuss decolonial strategies that challenge neocolonial tendencies in institutions of knowledge production and probe the possibilities of integrating postcolonial knowledges into present popular and academic discourses. The contributions add to the many collaborations between postcolonial, Indigenous, and Western scientists and scholars already taking place, and their attempts to interlink these different knowledge systems, with a view to developing new ways of producing and disseminating knowledge and recognizing pluralistic and hybridized knowledge production. It is only by approaching our fields critically that we can work towards new decolonial methodological and theoretical approaches that contribute to decolonizing academia.

The question of whether we are past the point of studying the 'other' and are able to recognize pluralistic epistemologies is crucial to all of the contributions to this volume, and here we recast this question in light of col-

onization, neo/colonial knowledge production and connected policies. The first part of the volume, 'Towards Decolonizing Knowledge Production', outlines efforts to decolonize and reclaim traditional practices and language, and takes issue with the ways in which water and the sea as well as cultural geographies and stratification orders were epistemologically established and mapped from a Eurocentric perspective. The articles look at different geographical and cultural contexts and delineate strategies to delink, and possibly decolonize, knowledge practices, and thus engage in producing pluralistic knowledges[2].

Jeannette Armstrong, in the first article, describes several reasons for the threat of language loss in North America and illustrates how traditional Syilx knowledge is embedded in the Nsyilxcn language. She presents endeavors to revitalize her Syilx Okanagan culture and Nsyilxcn as decolonial strategies in order to recognize, preserve, and sustain Syilx Okanagan knowledge. These processes include reintroducing the traditional governance process *Enowkinwixw*, establishing the En'owkin Centre that facilitates cultural and language research and education, and promoting Nsyilxcn language use in governmental and everyday activities.

Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa critically discusses a Eurocentric genealogy of oceans, seas, and coastal spaces in post/colonial imaginaries of exploration, trade, and

conquest. She outlines the relation of the marine and maritime, and contests the constructed dichotomy between the terrestrial and marine realms, while providing readings of marine spaces from marginalized localized perspectives. With the example of Sri Lanka as an island hub, the article re-evaluates notions of islands, discusses oceans and coastal spaces as connecting spaces, and destabilizes established dichotomies of sea/land, the occidental/oriental, Nature/Culture, and the sedentary/the mobile.

Eleanor Hayman's article, written in collaboration with the Indigenous Tagish researchers Colleen James and Mark Wedge, looks at Western understandings of water as a resource and materiality as opposed to Indigenous understandings of water as a sentient being and part of human life. The article introduces concepts of Tlingit and Tagish ontological water consciousness and practices of water management, which are embedded in oral narratives, toponyms, and cultural practices. The authors critically discuss what they call 'hydrological violence', which includes the appropriation of water resources , the erasure of Indigenous knowledge about water (e.g., by overwriting Indigenous place names), and the introduction of fracking for liquid gas in water sensitive areas, all seriously inhibiting local life based on water and water epistemologies. The article furthermore outlines decolonizing strategies, such as developing digital counter maps with reintroduced Indigenous geographies and

names of places and waters, applying for place name recognition with the Yukon government, developing Tlingit and Tagish water legislation, and launching a Water Sampling Initiative.

The second section, 'Knowledge Production in Colonial, Neo- and Postcolonial Processes', focuses on unpacking Eurocentric discourses and knowledges established during the era of colonization as well as during neocolonial processes. The articles offer a rejoinder to hegemonic knowledge production and ask to understand supremacist ways of appropriating non-Western knowledges as well as constructing and disseminating universalizing and orientalizing knowledges as 'standard' knowledges.

The first article by Detlev Quintern comprehensively outlines that European seafaring and colonization of the Americas, Africa, and Asia was facilitated by Arab-Islamic cartographical and astronomical knowledge, nautical sciences, and technical knowhow assimilated into Eurocentric discourses; in general, Western development and modernity to a large extent was possible because of knowledge, agricultural practices, and inventions that came from non-European cultures and epistemologies. Quintern also makes clear that the *Reconquista*, colonization of the Americas, and enslavement of African peoples saw the similar brutal measures Europeans used against non-Europeans. He sums up: "the knowl-

edge of the *conquistadores* is to be seen primarily in the fields of ruthless warfare, while their astronomical, cartographic and nautical knowledge clearly had Arabic-Islamic sources."

In Elisabeth Reichel's article on Margaret Mead's poetical and ethnographic writing and plurimedial work, we learn that Mead understood alphabetic writing as a major step in the developmental trajectory of humanity and as marker of cultural and intellectual advancement. Despite the fact that she acknowledged a plurality of notation systems, Mead applied an evolutionist hierarchy to notation systems of encountered cultures that suggests linear development from no writing, to pictographic and ideographic symbols, to alphabetic writing as the most advanced stage. Also her poetry reveals such developmentalist notions, while Mead herself did not self-reflexively assess her own epistemic violence of studying and knowing the 'other' that cannot participate in the process that sustains her power position because it 'lacks' the very means that enable her to do so.

The last article, by Pierre-Héli Monot, outlines the discourse production of Romantic philosophers and writers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Johann Gottfried Herder, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, critiques their 'volubility' and the centrality of 'whiteness' in the production of 'meaning', and attempts to unpack the discursive practices of *affirmation* and *assertion*. Focusing on

American Romanticism and texts by Edgar Allan Poe, Monot argues that the volubility of Romantic discourse produced and cemented white privilege and whiteness as social capital. With the example of Frederick Douglass's affirmative hermeneutics, the article shows how to destabilize such a circulation of racial capital, while further suggesting their potential for self-reflexive evaluation of academic discourse production proper.

Taken together, these interdisciplinary articles show how knowledge production can be self-reflexively researched and possibly gradually decolonized through a variety of theoretical and practical approaches in different postcolonial settings. This collection shows different ways of systemically challenging Eurocentric ways of creating and disseminating knowledge, highlighting Indigenous and postcolonial perspectives in research and discourses, and contributing towards pluralistic knowledge production.

Notes:

1. This special issue employs the terms 'Eurocentric' and 'Western' as denoting political, cultural, economic, and intellectual thought and practice with roots in European societies and knowledge traditions that spread throughout the world during the colonial era, and 'non-Europe-

an' and 'non-Western' as denoting thoughts and practices generated in cultures, societies, and knowledge traditions that were understood as 'other' to centralized European traditions. These concepts, however, cannot be clearly defined and become increasingly blurred through transcultural and transnational dynamics in present societies. At the same time, it is assumed that there are unified or homogenous 'Western', 'European' or 'non-Western' and 'non-European' understandings of knowledge and knowledge practices.

2. I thank Janelle Rodriques for her initial editorial work on the articles as well as for writing the article summaries in this part.

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TOWARDS DECOLONIZING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Syilx Knowledges: A Decolonial Strategy

Jeannette Armstrong

Indigenous communities in Canada, such as the Sylix Okanagan Peoples have long been victimized by the hegemonic culture of the settler communities which has led to drastic linguistic erasure and extensive cultural dislocation. However, across the last few decades, significant strides have been collectively taken to redress the crisis as well. In over 30 years of work revitalizing Syilx Okanagan culture and language, achievements made

have been the result of implementing a decolonial strategy that privileges the knowledge of the Syilx Okanagan Peoples. The Syilx Okanagan Indigenous Peoples are one of 25 groups who speak the Salishan Language. As other neighboring Salishan groups, Syilx Okanagan is threatened by language and culture loss as a result of colonialist policy. Indigenous language and culture loss is not just the loss of the use of language in everyday communication, it is an erasure of Indigenous knowledge embedded in the language acquired over millennia and carried in the oral tradition of story.

The revitalizing of Indigenous languages reinvigorates communicating with one another, and, moreover, facilitates the reconstruction and recovery of the language into a modern framework. In a report for the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues by Lars Anders-Baer et al. (2008) the authors outline how dominant state language policies, whether by overt or covert means, result in language shift and loss and affect Indigenous peoples. They reiterate the position of an earlier expert paper by Ole Hendrik Magga et al. (2004) about the medium of instruction policies implemented by a dominant state and their extremely negative consequences. Anders-Baer argues that such colonial policies create linguistic destruction because they are directed toward rendering Indigenous languages to a state of being underdeveloped in formal knowledge areas and thus create linguistic, pedagogical and psychological barriers.

Fig.1 Salish and Neighboring Languages (Kuipers 2002, vii)

He holds that such policies affect rates of educational attainment, impacting income, and most critically, they contribute to high rates of depression and suicide among those subjected to such policies. Anders-Baer maintains that such policies result in social dislocation, psychological, cognitive, linguistic and educational harm. He characterizes such concepts as submersion education and, more importantly, framed the colonization of Indigenous languages through such biased education-

al policies as ethnocide, following Rodolfo Stavenhagen (1990, 1995), who framed such processes as forms of linguistic and cultural genocide. Anders-Baer uses such concepts as subtractive education to characterize the means by which Indigenous languages are erased through forced assimilation policies when the dominant official language is the sole medium of education. He makes clear that such policies are a form of force in the manner described by peace researcher Johan Galtung, who differentiates between three forms of force which he characterizes as power exerted by "sticks," "carrots" and "ideas," each with different effects (1969, 170).

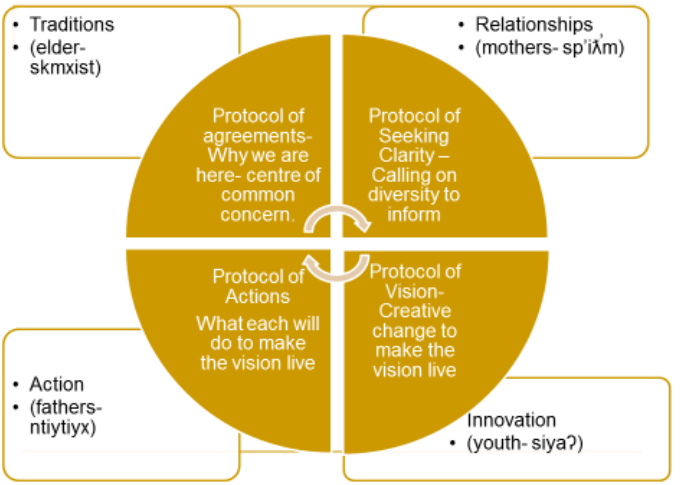
Canada's policy of assimilation includes all three forms of power exertion. Sticks included the physical removal of children by force from the community of speakers to residential schools. Punishment for language use, which produced alienation from community and hatred of one's culture, created mental and social dysfunction and rapid loss of language and Indigenous knowledge. Carrots included strategic economic reinforcements for colonizing language-use. Literacy, career and job training and higher learning, combined with negative reinforcements to dissuade Indigenous language use. Access to grants and programs for training in jobs only in mainstream society prompted mass relocations out of Indigenous communities. Proficiency and literacy in the colonizing language is promoted as the measure of success in the educational goal norm, producing profound

inter-generational language losses and cultural decline. The third form of force, through ideas embedded in schooling and academic study, is the continuous characterizations of Indigenous communities and individuals, who remain fluently unilingual in their own language, as "backward" "underprivileged", "under-developed", "illiterate", "uneducated", "disadvantaged" and "ignorant." For example, Webster's English dictionary, widely used in all educational institutions, defines "indigent" as "poor or needy", clearly connecting the idea of poverty with being Indigenous. Such ideas psychologically produce negative attitudes in the public discourse toward Indigenous languages, Indigenous knowledges, their cultures, customs and ways of living. The external harm also becomes fostered internally, obstructing efforts in the work to rescue language and cultural rights, compounding the profound social, economic and educational barriers faced by Indigenous peoples. Whether overtly under the guise of the Indian Act (originally enacted in 1876) in past residential school policy or covertly in the non-recognition of the rights to instruction in one's own language in the current forced public education policy, severe losses, declines and extinctions of Indigenous languages are the norm throughout Canada.

It is within this reality, in the context of every form of forced subtractive and submersion policy utilized in Canada, that the work of revitalization of the Syilx Okanagan culture and language was undertaken through

a decolonial strategy. Indeed, the work has not been without struggle. However, the purpose of this article is to focus on achievements of a decolonial strategy in the work going forward. It will also serve to provide insight into Syilx perspectives and approach. If the Syilx Okanagan strategy can be characterized, the central commitment is to rely on a Syilx knowledge method to engage the community rather than to focus actions on challenging the subtractive or submersion projects of government policy. The Syilx position was to transform the internalized effects of colonization by reinvigorating Syilx knowledge and language through the revival of the Syilx traditional governance process called *enowkinwixw* as a way of engagement. The enowkinwixw process is an excellent example of Syilx knowledge embedded in an Nsyilxcn story in the language. The word "enowkinwixw" describes a community dialogue protocol, embedded in the story, which seeks to include adversarial points of view in order to ensure a holistic strategy leading to actions that empower principles of collaboration. The process incorporates essential aspects of balancing divisive and polarizing views, into an empowering dynamic of solidarity in action[1].

The schematic below is a very simplified view of it as a four stage engagement procedure.



At the close of residential schooling, in the early 1970s, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs occupied and closed down all Indian Affairs district branch offices in the Province of BC. After that the Okanagan Syilx Chiefs and elders of the seven communities held planning meetings as to how to move forward to take control and implement changes. Their priority was to regain control over the education of their children. The dialogues introduced the idea that in order to reverse language loss the most critical actions were to recover the Syilx knowledge through engagement in Syilx cultural activities and normalize them into everyday life at the same time in order to implement education empowering language re-

vitalization and cultural revival. The En'owkin Centre, governed by the Chiefs and elders of the nation, was constituted to preserve and protect the Syilx language and culture. The long-term strategy is to revive Nsyilxcn. The knowledge of the Syilx is embedded in the Nsyilxcn language and is integral to Syilx cultural practice. Bringing the language back into the everyday norm within our communities required re-engagement in cultural knowledge practises within a modern life context. Although the work to decolonize education and promote cultural practice within our own communities was slow in the beginning, there are many outcomes that have evolved through persistence. Each of the seven communities now has robust culture and language programs and their own community operated schools. Traditional food harvesting has significantly surged and with it the culture and language practices are increasingly becoming a part of the everyday life of the Syilx. Many new young Nsyilxcn learner speakers are applying their knowledge in a variety of areas of work. Syilx knowledge embedded in the language is being sought by the leadership to help in the process of healing and reconciliation.

An example of Syilx knowledge embedded in the Nsyilxcn language can be demonstrated in a few words in common Syilx use. The word "tmix^{w}" for "all living things"; the word "tmx^{w}ulax^{w}" for "land"; the word "syilx" for "Indigenous people of the Okanagan"; the word "yilmix^{w}m" for "Chief"; and the word "sqyilx^{w}"

for "human being", each contain knowledge essential to being Syilx. These examples display the polysynthetic nature of the way Nsyilxcn words form knowledge. Root parts of the words carry essential meanings in the language and can be assembled in many different ways to construct words. Salishan linguists such as Aert Kuipers (2002) identified the root parts of words common in all 25 modern Salishan languages, including Nsyilxcn. The root parts in the example words are in fact common to all 25 and to the Nsyilxcn language. The examples show how the root parts are embedded and construct Nsyilxcn meaning evolved through thousands of years as Indigenous Salishan knowledge. They also show the difference of meaning from their common translations into English.

Root Parts

- mix^{w} (many spreading out from one source)
- ul (cyclic movement)
- ax^{w} (here place)
- yil (coil)
- qys (dream)
- Nsyilxcen words
- mix^{w} —common English translation: all living things—(mix^{w} - meaning above)
- tmx^{w} ulax^{w} —common English translation: the land—(mix^{w} and lax^{w} - meanings above)
- syilx—common English translation: Okanagan Na-

tion—(yil - meaning above)

- yilmix^{w} m—common English translation: Chief—(yil and mix^{w} - meanings above)
- sqyilx^{w} —common English translation: human—(qys and yil – meanings above)

One can appreciate the profound meanings of the words through the knowledge embedded in the root parts forming a whole word. For example the word for "Chief" actually means "one who coils (the people) with all living things" – "coils" referring to the yearly cycles of nature, while "sqyilx^{w} " actually means "the ones coiled (in yearly cycles) around dreaming."

As was stated in Nsyilxcn language by elder Tommy Gregoire in 1973 at a Syilx Chiefs and Peoples gathering in Penticton "Our language is who we are, everything that is known on our land is known by us in our language, all of our stories are like books, telling us how to live right as people as part of our land." His talk was focused on the importance of the knowledge in our language and the knowledge in stories we call captik^{w}l. The Chiefs' and Elders' strategy was to assert that our language is essential to our Indigeneity and that our knowledge is essential to all aspects of our communities' processes toward recovery. The En'owkin Centre was an outcome of the directive by the Chiefs and Elders of our nation, to rely on our knowledge in order to bring us out of the darkest of times.

Fig. 2 Interior of En'owkin Centre: Four Chief Poles © Jeannette Armstrong

Essential to the strategy, which is aligned with the rights of Indigenous people and universal linguistic rights (see appendix), was to develop a Syilx knowledge research process with an Elders' council, who guided the research in the language. The En'owkin project was created to

house and direct research and education activities in language, story and art as well as to incorporate culture, song and ceremony as a natural outcome of learning in the thirst for Syilx knowledge. An Nsyilxcn teacher training program was developed and has resulted in the certification of Nsyilxcn Language teachers, who now teach cultural and language curriculum centered in Syilx knowledges. Syilx teachers are employed in the cultural and immersion schools that are now a reality in all Syilx communities. Another essential component in the decolonial strategy was to research and develop a community-based adult language learning and culture program as foundational knowledge programming at the En'owkin Centre and delivered to the seven communities of the Syilx Nation. The program is currently adding many new knowledge keepers and speakers annually, who work in a variety of capacities in their communities in leadership, management, health and social services as well as in the assertion of the Syilx land caretaking.

A new initiative in the strategy is to support the Syilx Communities Chiefs' advocacy of language as an everyday practice and as essential for relying on the knowledge of language as an assertion of rights and title and legal protection of our sovereignty as Syilx Peoples. An excellent example is the successful collaborative effort of the planning and implementation to return sockeye salmon to the Okanagan river system. The Okanagan Nation Alliance fisheries program (2020) relied on tra-

ditional knowledge related to salmon held in the stories and in the language as a core component of planning and decision-making. The use of an enowkinwixw-style of consultation and collaboration ensured one of the most successful models of Syilx traditional knowledge. The En'owkin strategy is currently part of leading a province-wide initiative for an undergraduate degree in Aboriginal Language Fluency for all Aboriginal language groups in British Columbia in collaboration with the Indigenous Higher Learning Association, a province-wide organization of Indigenous-controlled adult education centers. That initiative has blossomed into a full program of adult learning in Nsyilxcn, through a partnership with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology for the first two years of a certificate and a diploma of Nsyilxcn, which then transfers to the University of British Columbia Okanagan Bachelor of Nsyilxcn Language Fluency. The courses are structured to gain full proficiency of the Nsyilxcn language and fluency in the Syilx knowledge embedded in the language. The approval of this degree by the Ministry of Advanced Education in October of 2020 represents the success of a strategy which centers on decolonizing both knowledge and cultural practice through the revival of language use in the everyday norm and its incorporation into the modern context of everyday life.

One of the Nsyilxcn prophesy stories speaks of Indigenous people as an older brother on this land and non-In-

digenous peoples as a younger brother. In the story the older brother is the teacher of good ways of being on this land. The story in the language has profound meaning in the work to transform the Syilx identity from the colonial "ideas" of self being "backward", "underprivileged", "under-developed", "illiterate", "uneducated", "disadvantaged" and "ignorant" to the decolonial certainty of being a Syilx knowledge holder and teacher to those responsible for destruction to lands and peoples. Such stories in the language are now at the center of the idea that the Indigenous knowledges are vital and necessary to all new generations to connect peoples on how to live in balance with nature toward creating better ways of being together.

Note:

1. For an extended discussion cf. Armstrong 2009, 164-66, 172-87.

Appendix

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

Article 13
1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing sys-

tems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

Article 14
1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

(Adopted by General Assembly Resolution 61/295 on September 13, 2007)

The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights:

General Principles: Article 7
All languages are the expression of the collective identity and of a distinct way of perceiving and describing reality and must, therefore, be able to enjoy the conditions required for their development in all functions.

Section II, Article 24
All language communities have the right to decide to what extent their language is to be present, as a vehicular language and as an object of study, at all levels of education within their territory, pre-school, primary, secondary, technical and vocational, and adult education.
(Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, Barcelona, June 1996)

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Decolonizing Seascapes: Imaginaries and Absences on an Island Hub

Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa

> [The Fijian] looks with pleasure on a globe, as a representation of the world, until directed to contrast Fiji with Asia or America, when his joy ceases, and he acknowledges with a forced smile, "Our land is not larger than the dung of a fly" but on rejoining his comrades, he pronounces the globe "a lying ball."
>
> Thomas Williams and James Calvert, Fiji and the Fijians (1858)

1. Introduction

The opening quotation of this chapter was penned by English Wesleyan missionaries Thomas Williams (1815-1891) and James Calvert (1813-1892), who developed a keen interest in ethnography during their stay in Fiji. Their material was amply illustrated with sketches, and upon publication in London, was widely accepted as an early colonial account of Fijian society before the conversion of Thakobau, the Chief of Bau, to Christianity in 1854. What remains intriguing about this snippet is not so much the familiar civilizing mission, nor the hegemonic cartographic representation that it reveals. Indeed, the spatialized representations here remain as hegemonic categories, if one were to think of the Heideggerian notion of "*Weltbild*" (or the "Age of the World Picture"), through the splitting of the world into object and subject, the observer and the seen. Yet what is arguably more interesting in this snippet is the relational response of the Fijian cosmological imaginary, of land and the sea as a unified whole. It is after all the terrestrially oriented "world picture" that draws these artificial distinctions.

Taking my cue from critical oceanic and coastal scholarship in the humanities and social sciences, it is hardly surprising that a plethora of postcolonial and indigenous work on seascapes[1], from E'peli Hau'ofa's (2008) work on Oceania to Nonie Sharp's (2002) writing on Aborigi-

nal seafarers questions the elemental distinction between the *terra firma* and fluid waterworlds, not only conceptually, but also in the context of everyday communal life. Moreover as Connery (2006) argues, drawing from the example of imperial China's longer maritime presence in regional mercantilist histories (in comparison with Europe), China never came to have an "elementally" dominated antithetical imaginary of the sea that was to be traversed, discovered, mapped, and occupied, unlike land. He argues that despite having one of the most sophisticated cultures of landscape aesthetics alongside its literary tradition, imperial China barely articulated meta-narratives of oceanic conquest or voyaging. Nevertheless, it is in the contemporary post-socialist context that marine territorial place- and claims-making have become all the more pronounced (see Roszko 2015). Implicitly this apparent historic "absence" could mean that the sea was never featured as something to be thought of as apart from human life, or metaphorically, as suggesting chaos, placelessness or timelessness, a non-civilizational space, a vast expansive nothingness as pre-Braudelian Western European philosophers and historians once imagined it.

Using this puzzle as a point of departure, this chapter engages with the question of how to reframe practical epistemic sensibilities related to maritime lifeworlds and encounters without essentializing and romanticizing the imaginative (terrestrial) Other. Put differently, it could be argued that the very quest in studying marine epistemol-

ogies and ontologies as bounded conceptual containers runs the risk of objectifying and polarizing the terra-firma. Owing to the fact that most humanistic disciplines did emerge from distinct continental, land-based imaginaries, an intellectual counter-hegemony appear futile. Arguably then, it might be worth contemplating ways with which to unlearn and de-normalize concepts, vocabularies and practices that are simplistically associated to territorialized seascapes, with readings and sensibilities of their fluid, watery spaces, voluminalities, depths, intimacies, and multiple encounters (Hessler 2018; 2019; DeLoughrey and Flores 2020; Sammler 2020).

It is here that the quest for un/picking so-called occidental and modernist interpretations becomes increasingly problematic. When considering the material spaces and historiographic retellings of oceans and seascapes, the question of whose voices, knowledge(s), encounters, and experiences matter becomes all the more salient. This assertion may seem self-evident, for these spaces and narratives also embody historical and contemporary readings of cultural *land*scapes—such as rainforests, mountain terrains, plains, and deserts for example. Yet the location of the "marine" (with its multiplicity of non-human lives, flows, teleconnections, and depths), is far more complex than the narrowly focused resource-centric "maritime" lens (i.e. suggestive of human-centered mercantile and military interests), that has overwhelmingly dominated the social sciences.

In many ways, studying the marine realm (in conversation with its terrestrial), enables the creative rupturing of a series of familiar dichotomies comprising the occidental/oriental, Nature/Culture, the sedentary/the mobile, among others. It potentially brings to the fore peripheralized forms of knowledge, their flows, and modes of knowing/being that diverse fresh and salty waterworlds may afford. By extension, it may not be wrong to speak of distinct marine and coastal cosmologies, not only of Austro-Aboriginal, Arctic First Nations, and Pacific Islanders, but also those of Gaelic and Icelandic stock for example. Indeed, the term "Western-centric" has never been singularly rooted to a particular cultural and geographic orientation, but rather a modernist one that privileges particular modes of dwelling and of "progressive" knowledge.

In particular I take into consideration the argument that decolonization ought not to be used metaphorically as a catchall to fit other strands of social-political critique—whether they constitute anti-colonial/neo-liberal struggles, critical methodologies, and other justice-related issues (Tuck and Yang 2012). While the decentering of settler perspectives (of legitimate presence, occupation and ultimately civilization and "liberation") serve to deepen decolonial critique, this chapter also draws attention to the inherent conceptual and empirical challenges when exploring narratives of arrival and presence, con-

nection and difference through littoral seascape imaginaries. Arguably much of this stems from the emphasis on terrestrial modes of being and knowledge-making, taking for example the lifeworlds of the agro-plantation or the neoliberal academy. This reading of decoloniality—as opposed to postcoloniality—complicates particular interpretations of land-sea encounters both spatially and historically, bringing into ambit a host of non-Western sea-borne influences and patterns of ascendancy, invoking for example the Indianization or the Sinicization of Southeast Asia, or the reach of the Persian and Ottoman Empires.

In turning to the limitations of perceiving marine encounters and lifeworlds through the triadic maritime trade-exploration-conquest lens, this chapter advances several tangents with which to conceptually decolonize oceanic and diverse seascapes. Sections 2 and 3 of the chapter locate the question of marine epistemologies—through the notion of a *mare imaginalis*—while further questioning the boundaries and contradictions inherent in thinking through/with the sea. The fourth section more concretely locates key questions on decoloniality and border thinking in the imaginaries and representations of coasts, seas, and oceans, before grounding these arguments in an empirical context. In the final section, I revisit recent writings on "islandness" and various critiques of its insularized or capsular imagination by drawing on postcolonial Ceylon/Sri Lanka for inspiration.

Rather than to pick out less discernible marine epistemologies, I center more on the ambiguities and contradictions that these littoral silences (that often privilege the grounded *terrene*) implicate. In particular, I draw attention to the curious figure of the island "hub" and its discursive meanings—particularly in the sense of reproducing and maintaining conventional land/sea-based distinctions and other kinds of discontinuities.

2. Oceanic Imaginaries: Towards a Mare-Imaginalis?

What are imaginaries, and why do they matter in the environmental humanities and social sciences? At its broadest sense, an imaginary refers to "that social domain of seeing, experiencing, thinking, fantasizing, discussing and enacting aspects of the material world" (Neimanis et al. 2015). Not only do imaginaries shape a sense of self and personhood, they also create expectations that guide everyday social interaction. While intricately interwoven with "value regimes" (Levy and Spicer 2013, 673), imaginaries form a crucial part of any sphere of governance or political reality—as they weave in and out of visions and discourses that are at the same time normative and performative, as well bearing marks of deep ambivalence and historic contradiction. For example, oceanic and coastal/littoral imaginaries have never been atemporal or culturally universal. Bearing in mind how the retributive seas of early Judeo-Christian narratives gave way to notions of imperialised oceans as spaces

of sojourn to be discovered, mapped, and claimed in a contemporary neoliberal context, the practices of mass coastal tourism, cruising, and private property development continue to transform seascapes into playgrounds of affluence and excess consumption.

While being intimately bound to particular socio-political configurations imaginaries are, for thinkers like Henry Corbin (1964, 1969) and Arjun Appadurai (1996), neither falsities, daydreams, nor abstract fantasies. Considering the powerful ordering, norming, practice and discourse-shaping forms and roles of imaginaries—or *mundus imaginalis* and the imaginal (Corbin 1964)—why do oceans, seas, and their diverse forms of coast-based, marine and maritime life matter? I argue that the "oceanic turn" across the social sciences and the interdisciplinary sustainability sciences (see Cordell 2007), together with less recent currents in New Thallasology (Horden and Purcell 2006), represent but a fragment of the puzzle. These disciplinary shards often come together to articulate what Lambert et al. (2006, 479) refer to as "putting the seas and oceans at the centre of [its] concerns" —taking the example of a revisionist historic geography for example.

This assertion in no way discounts the countering of multiple terrestrial or landlocked biases within the humanities and the social sciences, which in turn mark profound ontological, epistemological, and political depar-

tures. That is to say, departures in the ways in which seas, oceans, coastlines, microbial, animal, and other forms of marine life, tidal and wind circulations and more came to be interwoven into interpretive, constructivist, and embattled accounts of seascapes and the littoral seashore. At the same time, the marine also continues to prefigure multiple entanglements across these disparate contemporary contexts and domains—implicating flows of globalised capital, circulating orthodoxies around socio-environmental governance, practices of resource appropriation and exploitation, economic growth, overpopulation and fiscal austerity, together with the un/remaking of territories through regimes of boundary-policing and surveillance.

Rather than merely focusing on the diversity of marine imaginaries, I ask how multiple thematic, ontological and epistemological borders have been crossed within the last two decades at least, after scholarship within the mainstream humanities and social sciences increasingly started putting themselves "out at sea." Recent scholarly interest has paid lively attention to the intertwined material, relational and symbolic meanings of the sea and its corresponding coastal cosmologies. This gaze was further complemented (and complicated) by how oceanic and sea-based lifeworlds remained distinct from those of their hinterlands (see Astuti 1995; D'Arcy 2006; Cohen 2010). Indeed, at first glance, this buoyant thematic pluralism proved essential in countering early Enlight-

enment imaginaries of the sea as socio-culturally barren, ahistorical, unknowable, and at times feminised, as quintessentially remaining a *placeless* void (Irigaray 1991; Cocco 2013).

The second kind of border traversing concerns itself with epistemology, and more concretely, with overcoming a series of pervasive dualisms that haunted trope-based, theoretical and metaphorical distinctions between the marine and the terrestrial Other (see Ingersoll 2016). As previously mentioned, merely attending to the overemphasis on landlocked spaces—or the lack of marine-based concepts and sensibilities thereof—may prove insufficient. Thus, this category of border transgression took a form that was more deeply embedded in overcoming binaries, not simply between water and land, but their corresponding dualisms such as nature/culture, wilderness/civilisation, sea-borne/agri*cultural*, mobile/sedentary, fluidity/matter, *tabula rasa*/historic, femininized/masculinized, etc. The pre-Renaissance infiniteness of the sea had in turn been replaced by instrumental hegemonic discourses of the explorative *in*quisitive-*ac*quisitive "complex amongst which commerce, exploitation and empire have always been identified as prominent" (Mack 2011, 15). Recent geopolitical and neoliberal articulations for a "Blue Economy" and of oceanic literacy in which the epistemic project of financializing and privatizing coasts, oceans and seabeds are but continuities.

Yet, as those writing across the critical marine humanities and social sciences posit, "we" are only but beginning to dismantle the very land-b(i)ased imaginaries and conceptual tools at our disposal when reflecting on the sea, although often not very reflexively. For example, as Mack argues, much theory-work and empirical refocusing is needed in order to bring the study of "seascapes" to the same conceptual depth as the study of *land*scape geography or anthropology (2011, 23). Moreover, a new agenda warrants a deepening of scholarly work on the high seas (e. g. on volume and column-based cultural geographies, underwater ethnography), as opposed to merely engaging with the sea through its coastal fringes and margins, and with social groups such as fisherfolk and iterant tradespeople who still remain largely land-based yet liminal, and are often framed in terms of their alterity to more sedentary societies.

3.Beyond the lens of territoriality and re/presentation

As the previous section illustrates, historic and contemporary imaginaries of the marine and the maritime have had a powerful influence, not only in the ways in which sea-related spaces and maritime lifeworlds were envisaged and written. These meanings imply an artificial dichotomy between territorialisation and boundary-making of Empire on the one hand, and hybrid flows and fluid entanglements of socio-cultural borderlands on the

other. Scholarly narratives that continue to engage with meanings of the sea and encounters that the near-colonial past brings, for example, continue to embody the spatial configuration of oceanic spaces as resource frontiers, and of the high seas and coastlines as charted navigational realms. What this observation implies is that the sea is barely re-theorised as a socio-cultural cosmos, but rather lingers as a circumstantial subject to, for instance, the grand narratives of exploration, diplomacy, religious flows, trade, quarantine, exodus and exile (see Lee et al. 2008; Shell 2014).

What remains unsettling, however, is not this dichotomy itself, but rather the colonial/modernist configuration on which these imaginaries of the sea rest. Often such imaginaries foregrounded potent tropes of modernity, limitation and backwardness or, on the other hand, promised more empowering counter-narratives of pre-colonial sojourning and cultural connectivities that were specifically linked to local histories, communal fortunes and have, in diverse ways, historically shaped social identities. For example, if the sea was singularly perceived as territory and a medium to be crossed—as a transit passage—then oceans and seas irrevocably became and remain territories and sites of struggle, marking ambits of commercial and naval power. Similarly, a Braudelian (1949) reading of shared marine borderlands (e. g. the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, or the Indian Ocean) enlisted seas, oceans, straits, and more as hybrid sites of social interaction and

of commercial, diplomatic, knowledge and cultural exchange. The sea becomes a shared cosmos and a zone of liminality, a ubiquitous imaginary that has held sway since early maritime sojourning (Mack 2011, 24; D'Arcy 2013; Malekandathil 2010).

In an ontological sense, this brings us to the third site of border traversing that is increasingly being inspired by more post-natural theorisations (see Purdy 2015)[2]. The infinite, mysterious and often antagonistic oceans, waves, and watery depths of Daniel Defoe, Jules Verne, Herman Melville, R.L. Stevenson, Joseph Conrad and others are no longer dark expansive frontiers, a last wilderness, yearning to be discovered, sailed, named, and claimed. Indeed, an inherently anthropocentric ocean replete with deep-sea sound pollution and, marine litter, from bio-prospecting expeditions to deep-sea mineral mining have marked the high seas as a *civilizational* space, crisscrossed by a myriad of cargo vessels, tankers, icebreakers, and reefer ships to underwater submarine communication cables and more.

I turn to decolonial thought and border thinking as a means of theoretically attending to this lacuna As a start, it is imperative to explore the parochial character of arguments about the endogenous European origins of modernity in favour of arguments that suggest the necessity of considering the emergence of the modern world in the broader histories of colonialism, empire,

and enslavement (Bhambra 2014, 115). In this light, decolonial thinking (as both philosophy and practice) bore different origins from the diverse intellectual canon that characterises postcolonial studies, with its distinct roots from across the Americas. What prompts its radical differentiation from postcolonial currents is the distinct conceptual lens that decoloniality offers, not as an intellectual discipline but as an epistemological and praxis-centred movement that questions the artificial distinction between coloniality and modernity. The value of engaging in scholarly work through the lens of decoloniality and border thinking may seem evident. Yet the less definitive question of how a particular decolonial reading matters (as opposed to why) is further explored.

4.Marine epistemologies and ontologies: How decoloniality matters

Unsurprisingly, in the last decade the revival of decolonial and border thinking, particularly across academia, has been somewhat resounding. Indeed, much attention was paid to identity politics at the borders and fringes across diverse strands of feminist scholarship, racial identity, diaspora and critical black studies, thereby reshaping debates on queer theory and transgender politics, etc. This argument also applies to the marine humanities and social sciences—taking the case of museum studies, maritime history, maritime sociology and

anthropology, and coastal geography, which were richly advanced by currents in postcolonial thinking. Indeed, it was these very epistemological encounters that opened spaces for work and the further reimagining of themes such as Cis-Atlantic history, Black Atlantic and Black Pacific studies (weaving in not only genocidal and diasporic histories, but also of cultural artistic flows, black literary representations and shared connections, *redes* or networked socialities), and the study of "small places"—islands, archipelagos, liminal port cities, and shorelines in themselves (Gilroy 1993; Lambert et al. 2006; Escobar 2008; Shell 2014; Shilliam 2015; Bremner 2017).

Yet their discursive limitations remain most telling when it comes to a matter of articulating how the decolonial matters. As a start, one could begin to understand how islands themselves are reproduced, as Connery (2006) would argue, as figures and constructions of western thought, as spaces that are hybrid yet peripheral, possibly linked to former colonial empires, or at times being patterned by the complexities of the present (normed) political ordering of Foreign Overseas Territorialities. Decolonial scholars such as Frantz Fanon and Walter Mignolo would then posit that a self-contained conversation takes place circumscribed by the precincts of *a* particular colonial encounter—of both legacy and of multiple forms of dispossession (and disobedience) of epistemic dependence and of physical presence (Césaire 1969; Tuck and Yang 2012).

There are several interrelated points of departure from which to explore these imaginaries through the lens of decoloniality and border thinking. The first and my most visible decolonial vantage point is what I term the double bind of "*resource-determinism"* of sea- and oceanic epistemologies. Indeed, marine realms—as spaces—have come to be chartered and navigated through the entangled histories of trade, slavery, piracy, human and non-human conquest, taking for example market expansion, leisure, cartography, scientific discovery and species taxonomy as epistemic frontiers in their own right. These historic practices of course shaped ways in which the sea came to be imaginatively reconfigured—as resource frontier, a highway, as passage or lifeway (e. g. as exodus or exile, rite of passage etc.), territory and as a tourist playground. The potency of these imaginaries can be acutely seen not just in contemporary policy templates, but also critical academic constructivist scholarship on seas, oceans, and marine depths that are often perceived through the lens of capital circulations, vessel-bound mobilities, and practices of resource appropriation and extraction (Steinberg 2001).

Thus, a critical oceanic gaze, as seen in the work of scholars like Steinberg (2001), Helmreich (2009), and Peters (2010) explore crucial historic turning points and contemporary ubiquitous socio-environmental processes which pattern the way in which coastlines, seas,

oceans, their beds, and other depths are being rendered knowable, classifiable, manageable, and exploitable. Indeed, these processes do not emerge as a single, totalising narrative in terms of a marine politics and as a distinct ethics of life[3]. Certainly none of the meanings they hold—not only of alterity, the mystical and the romanticised, but also of the microbial and the genomic—are universally defined and shared. For example, writers and scholars originating from Oceania—who were among the most vocal adherents of advancing a decolonial re-reading of islandic, archipelagic and oceanic spaces and sea-patterned lifeworlds offered a timely point of departure in deliberating upon cultural specificities that mark seas as life, as opposed to an encircling space that must be chartered (Hereniko 2001; Hau'ofa 2008). Land then, is more than just a parallel cosmology that is at the same time interrelated and complementary.

The third point of departure rests on implicit tensions between the *maritime* and the *marine*, prompting a rethinking of these two categories without reinforcing a binary opposition between them. The key epistemological challenge here rests in a more ubiquitous dichotomy that undergirds scholarship within the environmental humanities and the social sciences—the marine-terrestrial divide. Thematically, the "maritime" has often engaged with the commercial-military-technological nexus of navigation and trade, territoriality, and boundary/place-making. This foregrounds a modernist preoccu-

pation with the control and mastery over the sea and other salty spaces. The *marine* implies a more expansive notion comprising shared relational spaces, circulations and embodied practices between the human and the more-than-human (i.e. microbial, sentient, mechanistic, metallic and geological etc.).

Contemporary coastal and maritime ethnographies, for example, have shown how the marine and coastal lifeworlds (and lifeways) continue to be marked by difference from relatively more sedentary and bounded, grounded life (see King and Robinson 2019), particularly by exploring the very cognitive lenses, emic terms and vernacular theories through which people express their state of being—either ashore or at sea. Hau'ofa tellingly terms and re-frames Oceania as "Our Sea of Islands" (2008, 27-40) as opposed to recognising these borderlands as a land-bound mass, or as a string of islands in the sea. Similarly, one could speak of "ocean worlds," rather than "world oceans." What this implies is an imaginative rendering the other way around—from the sea to the shore. Yet, particular attention must be paid to un-privileging either of the two material-ontological domains, if one is to engage with border thinking. Therefore the next and final section of this chapter turns to the island-state of postcolonial Ceylon/Sri Lanka for ethnographic insight, with which to question modes of *terra*/marine un/privileging, and their broader material and symbolic implications with reference to

both historical narrations as well as to everyday life.

5. (Is)land Geographies, Littoral Silences? Notes from an Island 'Hub'

As previously mentioned, islands—in both senses of the material and the metaphoric—serve as microcosms of colonial encounters and sensibilities. Often the figure of the island (whether a speck in an archipelago or a continental land mass), features prominently in imperial imaginaries invoking hackneyed representations of Colombian landings, and "Natives" on pristine shorelines. Islands also fell under the same binary-laden reductivist gaze, for example when depicted in Cesaire's postcolonial Caliban in his critique of the Shakespearean character symbolizing the tribal, the beastly, and the primitive inhabiting terra nullis, an imaginatively remote peripheral space that history left behind. It is this notion of "geopolitical belittlement" (n.p) that Hau'ofa (1993) writes of, which not only legitimates and reinforces perceived island imaginaries of smallness, insularity, and isolation. Indeed, the fictitious nature of remoteness and of capsular "island dependency" has been well revealed throughout histories of empire, land dispossession, resettlement as they have long been possessed as military bases, turned into reservations, spaces of quarantine, sites of post-war nuclear testing[4], as well as offshore (jurisdictional) zones of exception and internment. As

recent multidisciplinary developments such as island studies, together with research on urban archipelagoes and aquapelagoes have been gaining increasing traction (see Baldacchino 2004; Bremner 2017), the expansive range of often ambivalent and multistranded meanings of islands—in all their diversity—are yet to be more comprehensively explored. As John Gillis posits, "islands evoke a greater range of emotions than any other land form" representing continuity and separation, paradise and hell, connection and isolation, vulnerability and freedom, being as it were "the West's favorite location for visions of both the past and future […] origins and extinctions" (2004, 3).

Within this frame, the notion of the "island hub" potentially complicates the remote and virginal meanings of island spaces as the civilizational Other of larger continent-based landmasses and their historiographies. Indeed readings of island peripherality barely hold much resonance in contexts such as Mauritius, Jamaica, and Singapore that were geo-politically and administratively rendered as islands as a result of colonial expansionism. Yet in many such cases contextualizing their identities as oceanic "hubs," particularly as islanded ones, potentially complicates container-like fixities of place by drawing attention to the multiplicity of crisscrossing movement, flows, and circulations between people, animals, microbes, goods, ideologies, foodways, spiritual practices, lifestyles, institutions, and more. At the same time, their

role as nodal positions across various networked trans-local relations of trade and enmeshed political interests still reinforce particular readings of openness and insularity, connectivity and disconnection, reproduced materially through border-making processes and imaginatively through discourses of cultural uniformity and difference (see Alpers 2018).

By no means have *imaginaries* of/as island hubs been merely constructed in an imperial sense, for many have constituted pre-colonial trading and cultural centers. Yet what characterizes the layering and folding over of these knowledges are not simply that they came to be muted, written over, co-opted, or hybridized during the colonial encounter. The peripheralized (narrative) presence of the sea and of intergenerational collective memory comes to be read against a pervasive land-sea dualism. In this context, the carving out of particular imaginative categories comes to redefine and totalize the very terms in which seascape meanings are produced, filtered, remembered, or forgotten. Selective questions on whose hub and memories of/around "hubbing", why and how it matters melds into the very singularized meta-historical narratives that privilege particular historic relations of power and vested (contemporary) socio-economic interests.

As an Indian Ocean island having had three sequential colonial encounters (Portuguese, Dutch, British),

Ceylon/Sri Lanka appears to be no different. Official historic narratives call attention to its strategic location housing a series of pre-colonial trading ports along the maritime Silk Route, as a garrison Crown Colony governed separately from British India (and latterly as an Allied regional military base during World War II), to an island-state during times of civil war, with a brief postcolonial history of socialist politics. Indeed the sea and its contested coastlines have featured prominently in Lanka's multi-stranded history. While the armed conflict transformed coastal and maritime spaces of postcolonial Sri Lanka into resource frontiers and territories that were to be primarily fought for and fought over, the everyday imaginaries of littoral communities whose lives were intimately bound to the sea have seldom been given much recognition in the island's meta-histories and geographies.

Since the 1950s, the images that were being touted by cruise companies and the Ceylon Tourist Board alike were of vapid palm-fringed lagoon-laced beachscapes—of an islanded nodal tourist stopover *en route* to the Asia-Pacific, a fleck on the Indian Ocean where "summer never ends." The straw-hatted stilted fisherfolk that graced its early posters and brochures—as in the case of today—were but figures in a shadowy aqua-azure backdrop, where sea meets sky. Indeed, the strategic hub-borne trade-military-leisure complex, while offering interrelated tropes, continues to weave through distinct

seascapes by singularizing or flattening other meanings and socio-spatial identities. My curiosity in these relatively less discernable and muted marine knowledges is not simply a matter of historical narrative forgetting. Invoking Bremner, a more expansive decolonial perspective would not simply concern itself with "the history of the sea" as opposed to "history *in* the sea" (2014, 18). My interest then lies in mapping the historic contours that produce and sustain these omissions and silences as much as their echoes.

For a start, the sea and its concomitant forms of littoral life hardly reveal themselves in everyday cultural imagination. This is not in the least to state that regionally diverse local mythologies have not implicated the sea. As a polemic Buddhist legend beholds the tale of a great tsunami-like wave that flooded the island after an irate king condemned an innocent monk to death by boiling him in oil. Somewhat predictably, a princess had to be subsequently offered as a sacrifice to appease the raging waters. Yet tales such as "Vihara Maha Devi" still depict marine and shore life against an obscure backdrop, if at all, indicating one of the few metanarratives of its kind. In such accounts, the sea carries socio-cultural meanings of concealed danger and dark retribution, as an asocial void bereft of human history, a place that is best avoided. Everyday folklore among diverse communities in Sri Lanka makes remarkably little reference to the sea, its creatures (both mythical and biological), or its agency in

shaping human life, unlike in the context of coastal Nusantara or other parts of Southeast Asia, for example.

By the same token, most historians, explorers, and missionaries in then Dutch and British Ceylon seemed to have summarily bypassed the cultural histories of fishing and other maritime communities in their diverse accounts of the island. For example, in R.L Brohier's historical writing in volumes such as *Seeing Ceylon* (1965) we witness a single-minded interest in rural pastoralism, of "tank-country" and paddy farming, lionized by his nostalgia for the historic *Rajarata*,[5] with its seemingly golden past, marking ancient pre-colonial hydraulic pastoral kingdoms dating back to approximately 377 BC-1310 CE. Indeed, this thinking was remarkably characteristic for (primarily) men of his time who reimagined a renaissance of the Dry Zone, a call that was later legitimated through extensive state-funded irrigation and land colonization schemes. Its symbolic triad comprising the irrigation-tank, temple *stupa*, and paddy field, offered a trenchantly static and orientalist image of "village republics" that not only formed the basis of modern colonial Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, but also the very microcosm of the utopian albeit singularly terra-rural imaginary of the postcolonial nation-state (Mohan 2014, 132-134). The inclination was therefore to look inwards, towards the land, to privilege agrarian life and settlerhood, thereby erasing or flattening a plethora of crisscrossing histories of mobility, coasting, and other forms of marine sojourn.

Moreover, another salient bias that influenced the apparent invisibility of fishing and maritime communities in general has had more to do with the seeming non-discernibility of seaborne lifeworlds within Ceylonese postcolonial writing. One of the rare volumes (more biographical and literary) that dedicates a chapter to marine fishing collectivities can be found in Vijayatunga's *Grass for My Feet*, a collection of vignettes of village life in the deep-South:

> For an island race fishing as a pursuit is inevitable, but it would be interesting to know how far back fishers became a caste. The question becomes all the more interesting because, unlike the fisherman in India, the fisherman in Ceylon is also a farmer-man. At one time we must have all been farmers. (1935, 28-29; emphasis added)

What this passage in part draws attention to is not simply the idealization of one state of being over another (i.e. agrarian versus the littoral), but the very inconsequentiality of fishing lifeworlds as a world *apart*. Moreover, the inevitability of fishing as a livelihood practice (for an "island race") stands in stark contradiction to its agri-*cultural* salience.

More recently, a number of scholars have called to question the very constructedness of Ceylon/Sri Lanka as an "island" container space, by tracing its making as an

imperial project and postcolonial construct. As Tariq Jazeel writes, "like all geopolitical facts [...] the Sri Lankan island is also a mapping; a way of seeing and imagining space that itself has a representational history" (2009, 400). The seeming naturalization of Ceylon as an island is further questioned in Sujit Sivasundaram's (2013) historic volume on British state-making, drawing attention to how Ceylon was "partitioned and islanded", not only in terms of the ways in which it was ruled, but also in relation to how "native" knowledges of those that were governed came to be co-opted and naturalized as privileged imperial knowledge. If knowledge was a means by which to govern, the dizzying "cosmopolitanism" of Ceylon, as evidenced by one of the earliest British travel writers Robert Percival (Sivasundaram 2013, 21), stands in stark contrast to the racialized identities by which its islanders—many of whom have had long-standing biographical histories of inter-coastal sojourn and seaborne mobility—were counted, classified and *sedentarized* into less than a handful of ethnic groups. Moreover, as scholars such as Sivasundaram argue, the rigid separation between the hilly hinterlands and its flat littoral spaces barely prefigured in the pre-colonial imaginary, as landward kingdoms invariably had coastal connections through which trading and the appropriation of crucial resources such as salt were facilitated.

Imaginaries of precolonial seascapes featured just as much in the hinterlands of the Central Highlands, taking

for example the unusual cosmological pre-colonial referencing of the Kingdom of Kandy's primary artificial freshwater lake as its "*Samudra*"—the Great Sea. Yet the "maritime" hub in the context of the contemporary island-state bears predominantly Euro-colonial references, as local coastal museums that historicize narratives of the sea invariably comprise more Euro-imperial artifacts—parts of vessels and sea-based technology, canons and other kinds of weaponry, and the odd pre-colonial maritime artifact. It may seem as if it were the oceanic meta-histories that mattered, through representations of a singularized maritime sensibility of colonial encounter, with little reference to the far-reaching networks from both the West and East, whether from the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago, the Swahili coast, the South China Sea, or the Arabian and Persian Gulfs, despite a plethora of emerging scholarly work under the rubric of Indian Ocean Studies. Moreover within the contemporary context of historic knowledge production in Sri Lanka, the predominance of Eurocentic epistemes and interactions are being progressively challenged through nascent research on maritime sojourn and transcultural "connectivity in motion" (Schnepel 2018, 24). The recent transnational establishment of Colombo's Ibn Battuta Foundation marks a significant juncture, named after the 14th century-Moroccan traveler whose writings of the island were barely known outside academia (see Wahab-Salman 2016), in comparison to the knowledge of European sailors and castaways from Marco Polo to Robert Knox.

Yet to map the diversity of oceanic island and littoral perspectives in ways that allow for more multivocal articulations in turn beckons the need to acknowledge the different kinds of terrestrial and marine entanglements that come to be—taking it well beyond the imaginaries of colonial and neoliberal socio-economic connectivities. What do contemporary Lankans make of seascapes and the waters that hem in its coastlines that are so decisive in defining this project of an island nation-state? How markedly do the socio-spatial identities of the oceanic and the littoral differ—when one is to invoke the resource-rich, benevolent seaboards and the sandbanks of the Northeast and West, the capricious waves of the inter-monsoonal seasons, the UNESCO maritime heritage sites of Galle, its "boutique fortress" and its extension of upper middle class Colombopolitanism as coastal distances between commercial capital and getaway are bridged? Or the dimly lit clandestine shorelines of the deep provincial South and the North where the bodies of assorted political victims were made to disappear during subsequent neo-Marxist struggles and separatist movements since the 1960s?

While historic erasure of the marine has been one of the most potent forms of island colonization with respect to its submerged oceanic and littoral imaginaries, the long-standing contention in how to problematize "cultural islands" remains another question. With this el-

emental dualism (and the historicized postcolonial prevalence of the terra firma) comes the insular reification of communal purism, akin to the taxonomic "endemicization" of biodiversity species, popularized by 19th century-ecological paradigms such as island biogeography. This parochial form of unique nativism often translates itself into the modernist, statist construct of ethnicity, for as Eriksen writes, cultural islands have barely existed in time, making the prevalence of ethnic boundaries one of its most striking features of insular imagination (1993, 143). Yet I beg to differ that in the case of island hubs, insularity—as both sensibility as well as a social identity—is not simply produced into being through seemingly "objective processes of isolation" and marine/terrestrial otherness.

Here, contemporary narrative interpretations of the *Mahavamsa* chronicle's founding myth of Lanka's majoritarian Sinhalese ethno-linguistic group stands as a case in point (see Strathern 2014). The narrative entails that of seaborne advent and settlerhood, featuring Vijaya, a prince who arrives at its shores after having been expelled from his kingdom (now constituting a part of modern-day India), for the crime of patricide. As popular retellings go, the visitor subsequently tricks Kuveni, often portrayed as the island's ruling "enchantress" into handing him her queendom, while further strengthening his power through maritime reinforcements and the importation of an Indic noblewoman to continue his

royal bloodline. Pictorial depictions of the grotesque demon-like island "tribes" of Kuveni's time also invoke a distinct land-bound ethic, further accentuating a sense of disconnectedness and candor, for as the legend goes, when expelled the people of Kuveni were said to have run interior "into the forests." While the Vijayan narrative(s) have been richly analyzed for their seemingly contradictory re-scripting of outsiderliness and its emplacement within the discursive canvas of proto-Sinhalese nationalism (and island endemicization), it is not simply the figure of the stranger that marks its particularity as a founding myth. As Salgado writes, the paradox of island space—in terms of both its simultaneous isolation and openness becomes "central to an understanding of the construction of the islands as a place of compromised belonging" (2012, 1). What mythico-histories like these do is to separate teleological trajectories of arrival and settlerhood, sojourning and islanded presence in which the sea (as opposed to grounded land) becomes an ambiguous figure of primordial angst, given its myriad flows, possibilities for flux and impermanence through its ability to carry away and to morph communal identities, identities that are otherwise re-scripted by the nation-state (and its competing nationalisms) as static categories.

Yet at the same time it could be argued that the compelling metaphor of the oceanic island hub is one that celebrates precisely narratives of arrival and encounter,

potentially disrupting the mythos of bounded homogeneity and cultural purism. Highly ethnicised islands such as Mauritius, Penang, Madagascar, and Sri Lanka relay their postcolonial multiculturedness not through the porous articulations of historicized hybridity. It is the stocks of ethno-linguistic, physiological, and religious markers that define island pluralism, by implicitly having communal selves identify with distinct seaborne arrival narratives—whether they be those of the Straits-born Peranakan Chinese, or of more recent post-Partition Muslims or Sikh Indians. Any project of decolonizing histories and imaginaries of the marine/littoral also brings into view the imperative of not merely unpicking the patterns of self-sameness and purism, but of border thinking through the very fringes and thresholds which creatively rupture such articulations. Thus the elemental land-sea divide ceases to hold much imaginative sway if marginal visions of the island hub and of hubbing were enlivened through more transgressive yet inclusive acts of *mongrelization*—of personhood, and of entire social collectives.

Here I turn to the Lankan-Australian scholar, novelist and playwright Visakesa Chandrasekaram's *The King and the Assassin*, a futuristic narrative in which a 15-year old child prodigy Faizal, who is relentlessly tormented for being born fatherless, begins to ponder about questions of ancestry, otherness, belonging, and ethno-racial purity. And so, in finding a way in which he could "dispel the

myth of purity and settle the question of his bastardry once and for all", embarks on what came to be known in the novel as the Dirty Blood Project, making public a form of knowledge through DNA tracing that would be transgressive as much as it would be emancipatory. As Chandrasekaram writes: "no one would see themselves in the mirror in the same way again. Their invisible ancestors from the past would haunt them," for not "all who landed in Lanka left no traces" (2014, 146). While I do not endorse the biopolitics of what could be referred to as the cult of DNA ancestor worship, moments like these do enliven dissonances within the context of the bounded, insular(ised) island-state. They bring to fore the many hybrid entanglements through both land and sea, offering further possibilities of dismantling perilous myths—through varied experimental means from literature, fine art, theatre, and music to public anthropology.

6. Conclusion

When considering ways with which to perceive oceanic, littoral, and island-borne imaginaries through the lens of decoloniality (and indeed its very efficacy), this chapter began by exploring two intertwined tropes. First, the prevalence of antithetical "elemental" readings that marine and the grounded *terra firma* as one form of epistemic knowing/privileging the other, which may not necessarily be an entirely "Eurocentric" one. Second, the possibility of venturing beyond historiographies that primarily

focus on the exploration-trade-conquest triad, through plural means of knowing and experiencing marine spaces. In particular the overwhelming resource-centrism in epistemologically defining, territorializing, and utilizing oceanic and littoral milieus can be critiqued, in tandem with this elemental privileging in reducing seascapes into capital assets and resource bases.

In turning to the island-state of Ceylon/Sri Lanka for ethnographic insight and by drawing on recent scholarship on the historic and socio-political construction of its "islanded" presence, I show how silences and omissions relating to seascapes as *other* than a colonial material realm has played out in a number of ways, both historically as well as in a contemporary context. In particular I draw attention to the notion of the "island(ed) hub" in which littoral/hinterland and land/sea distinctions play out in a number of ways, often with regard to peripheralizing particular littoral and marine-related social histories and epistemologies. Yet one is left asking: if the embodied and cognitive littoral/hinterland and marine/terra are by no means culturally universal, does it still matter both conceptually and politically to study their essentialisms for what they are, and for what they imply? I answer this question in the affirmative, for if decolonial border thinking serves to dismantle dualisms of the exterior and of otherness, it also provides potent tools with which to trace the re-assembling of antithetical imaginaries in ways that serve hegemonic power interests in a contemporary world.

While drawing attention to hierarchies of knowledge, knowing, and being, the question of "decolonizing" seascapes—for whom, how, and to what extent remain key questions. It is here that I go back to Tuck and Yang's forewarning of the tendency to domesticate decolonization, as a bland form of inclusion, and thereby as enclosure and "foreclosure, limiting in how it recapitulates dominant theories of social change" (2012, 3). For *knowing* oceanic depths and littoral seascapes (through cartography, maritime navigation, and sailing), and by materially *utilizing* it as a "resource base" (via a plethora of practices such as territorialization, industrial fishing, deep-sea mining etc.), calls to question particular forms of legitimized presence, occupation, and dispossession that seemingly replicate land-based settler trajectories, although bearing significant differences.

Therefore as a point of departure, the epistemological parallels between the terrestrial and *mare-imaginalis* might be drawn—on the one hand by tracing normative "frontier" discourses (for example through the monetary valuation of oceans), through to their seemingly antipodal narratives of shared "global Commons", particularly in the context of the high seas and of world maritime heritage. Yet historically, the politics of place-making—even within the ethics of deep ecological conservation—have hardly been "commoned", given the diverse ways in which they continue to be perceived, accessed, and experienced, mediated by geo-politics, "race", het-

eropatriarchy, class, speciesism, and more. Therefore a line of inquiry that warrants further exploration is the sense-making of *elemental difference* (and of hierarchies), between terrestrial and marine modes of knowing, being, and claims-making. It calls to question ways in which such distinctions derive their meanings (or do not), in collective imaginaries. Moreover these concomitant questions draw attention to the urgency of mapping flows of knowledge, the very institutional practices and circumstances that facilitate newer, contemporary trajectories of marine and littoral possession (of coastlines, oceanic surfaces, depths, the seabed etc.), in ways that mark historic continuities in comparison with earlier forms of *landed* settlerhood, together with their inherent differences and ruptures.

Notes:

1. I use the term "seascape" not merely in tandem with how the aesthetic-affective and multi-sensory representative imaginaries of sea/landscapes are re-theorized by cultural geographers, coastal historians, and anthropologists (see Brown 2015). To take it beyond its visible and symbolic pictorial nature would also mean defining seascapes in terms of their relational qualities, as fluid borderlands and as liminal, interactional zones that are essentially lived—rife with myriad socio-ecological dy-

namics that unfold between land, sea and air that create distinct materialities, rhythms, and lifeworlds of their own.

2. I refer to a body of diverse literatures from philosophy, environmental history and multi-species to science and technology studies which seek to explore diverse socio-natural entanglements, particularly by paying attention to hybrid lives, objects, processes, and modes of being. To echo Arias-Maldonado "paradoxically, this does not mean that there remains no separation between human beings and nature. […] It is the delusion of naturalness that fades" (2015, 2).

3. One of the most telling moments here can be found amid the varied exhibits of older maritime museums, which bear a penchant for displaying ships and largely water-borne vessels. Over time, the exhibits of maritime museums have been growing in diversity, in acknowledging the more-than-representational, relational and emotive aspects of life out a sea, the body-politics of the tattoo for example, or underwater exhibiting in the case of the Lampedusa migrant tragedy.

4. For example the islanders of Banaba and Bikini were both dispossessed: Banaba for phosphate mining, and Bikini to be transformed into a nuclear testing ground. The Trust Territories of Micronesia supported a flourishing aid industry, being forced to receive thousands of

migrants from Europe while its own inhabitants were denied border-control free access into Europe.

5. A historic-territorial space in the island's agricultural interior. The label itself conflates a number of successive pre-colonial agro-hydraulic urban centers governed by kingly and feudal rule.

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Decolonising Water— Decolonising Personhood— Decolonising Knowledge: A Tlingit and Tagish perspective

Eleanor Hayman (Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Carcross, Yukon Territory, Canada). In collaboration with Colleen James / Gooch Tláa (Daḵl'aweidí Clan of the Wolf moiety) and Mark Wedge / Aan Gooshú (Deisheetaan Clan of the Crow moiety, both Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Yukon Territory, Canada)[1]

> "When our ancient people talked about water, what the Western world calls H20, they would say *Haa daséigu a tóo yéi yatee*: Our Life is in the water ... Our

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breath is in the water" (Coastal Tlingit Elder David Katzeek/Kingeisti, Per.Comm. 2013).

"There are other entities in the world that we think of as animate such as the mountains and glaciers. Yet the Tlingit thought of these two peoples with intelligence and with moral values […] they [the people of the trees] had wars with us, they threatened us, they gave their lives to us. The Tlingit people did not think they were resources to be managed." (Coastal Tlingit Elder Elaine Abraham, presentation at the Traditional and Scientific Ecological Knowledge in the Pacific Coastal Temperate Rainforest conference, University of Alaska Southeast, 19 April 2012)

"Modern knowledge and modern law represent the most accomplished manifestations of abyssal thinking" (De Sousa Santos 2007, 46).

"First, the understanding of the world by far exceeds the Western understanding of the world. Second, there is no global social justice without global cognitive justice. Third, the emancipatory transformations in the world may follow grammars and scripts other than those developed by Western-centric critical theory, and such diversity should be valorized" (De Sousa Santos 2015, viii)

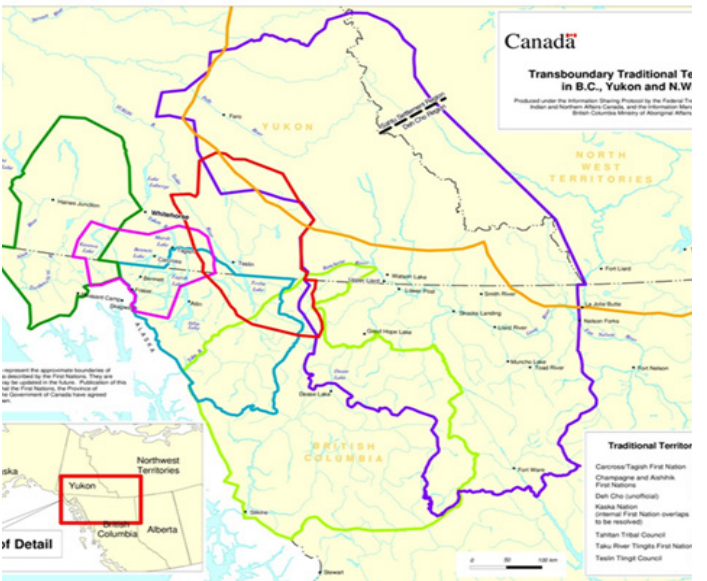
Introduction

This article explores notions of decolonising personhood and decolonising water, and aims to expand the

tenets of decolonising knowledge. Drawing on current collaborative water research with the inland Tlingit and Tagish peoples of the circumpolar north, Carcross/ Tagish First Nation (CTFN) community consultants Colleen James and Mark Wedge, together we evaluate what decolonising strategies might mean within a CTFN context through the evolution of water legislation rooted within a Tlingit and Tagish worldview. This resonates globally with the powerful and evolving "Rights of Nature" international legislative discourse(s) as well as the evolution of the global "Water Ethics" charter.

CTFN is one of eleven self-governing First Nations in the Yukon Territory, Canada, whose traditional territory embraces the headwaters and Southern Yukon Lakes of the 3,000 km Yukon River. By signing the Final Agreement with the Yukon and Canadian Governments in October 2005, CTFN is legally responsible for lands, resources, governance and programs for over 1,000 citizens within its traditional territory. Furthermore, by formally re-establishing the traditional Tlingit system of governance through the Wolf and Crow moiety structure, CTFN's nuanced self-determination project challenges modern Western-styled systems of governance, adding a significant voice to decolonial theory and practice by developing the first Indigenous water legislation in the region. This water legislation will be rooted in a Tlingit and Tagish philosophy, evolved from traditional oral histories, toponyms and cultural practices. To date

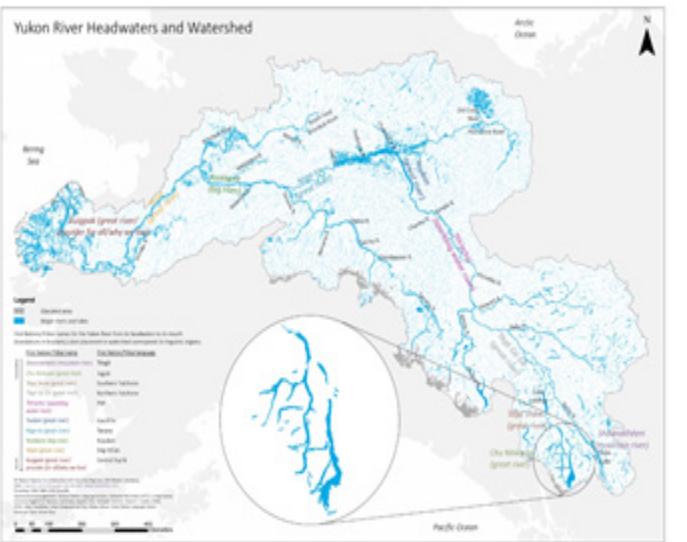
a Tlingit and Tagish water declaration, and four first-of-its-kind counter-maps have been produced, providing baselines for legal discussions, and cultural revitalisation.



Location of CTFNs traditional territory straddling the Yukon Territory and British Columbia border
© Yukon Government, Canada

While the Tlingit legislative model and forthcoming water legislation may very well set a precedent in contemporary Canadian legal history, there are grave concerns that to be fully functional and operational, this Indigenous Water Act must work seamlessly within a Western systemic worldview coupled with its neo-liberal rheto-

ric that emphasises the "individual", "ownership" and "resources" that need to be "managed". Former Chief Judge of the Territorial Court of the Yukon, Barry Stuart, made these concerns very clear in a discussion with the CTFN government at the CTFN government offices in Carcross, Yukon Territory, in September 2014, where he recognised that First Nations often fall into the trap of utilising Western-styled legal rhetoric to have their voices heard.



Counter-map of the Yukon River Watershed including enlarged map of the headwaters (First Nations and Tribes' place names for the Yukon River)
© Eleanor Hayman[1]

Ecological Epistemic (In)Justice

These discussions and concerns are not new. Scholars of postcolonial, feminist, Indigenous and border thinking theories, from Western academic institutions to First Nation and Tribal community governments, are aware of these issues and have been highlighting the bias and privilege afforded to Western-styled thinking, rhetoric, and value-systems for some time (Said 1978; Code 1995, 2006; Smith 1999; Mignolo 2001, 2013; Mignolo and Escobar 2007, 2010; De Sousa Santos 2007; Bennett 2007). All are united in their commitment to de-centring, de-stabilising and de-familiarising the mono-culture of knowledge. Various terms have been employed to profile this strategy. From "cognitive justice" (De Sousa Santos 2007) to a "knowledge democracy" (Global Assembly for Knowledge Democracy 2017), to a "pluriversality" (Mignolo 2007). In fact, in the last ten years there has been a concerted effort to appreciate and legally recognise non-European forms of knowledge(s), driven by the publication of Western scientific papers that focus on environmental "tipping points" or "thresholds", now known as "planetary boundaries", that all implicitly or explicitly link (mainly Anglo-American) human behavioural patterns with various forms of "ecocide". Specifically in this article we focus on "aquacide". We relate this to Indigenous legal scholar Boaventura de Sousa Santos' term "epistemicide" which

he describes as a "predatory discourse" which silences and swallows up other forms of knowledge (De Sousa Santos 2007, 46).

International institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the World Water Forum (WWF), and a plethora of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) since the latter end of the 20th century have been engaged with not only general water-related issues in an attempt to meet millennium development and sustainability goals (Garrik et al. 2017), but are now coupling water stress with gender discrimination, poverty, livelihoods, and human rights. The last decade has seen water issues enjoy and benefit from an emerging theoretical and activist legal revision of the way nature is perceived at the constitutional level. The "Rights of Nature", or "Earth Jurisprudence" movement gives recognition and legal standing to ancient wisdom, Indigenous knowledges and ontologies. In August 2016, the United Nations resolution on "Harmony with Nature" attempted to align human-governance systems with an earth-centered perspective to inspire and achieve UN sustainable development goals with the report titled Harmony with Nature (UN General Assembly 2016).

Critical for the relevance, timing and application of this article is the United Nations General Assembly's unanimous resolution that determined 2018-2028 is the "Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Devel-

opment". This article contributes to conversations not only concerning the UN water decade, but also the Canadian project to explore water governance within First Nations' customary law which will run from 2018-2026. Following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report on the genocide inflicted on First Peoples in Canada (2016), the attention paid to Indigenous customary laws and practices is increasingly sensitised. To complement these subtle changes in international legislation, the International Labour Organization's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Convention (ILO convention Number 169, 1989) has been ratified by 22 countries and is the most important element of international law protecting Indigenous peoples' rights (SIWI 2017). The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP 2007) is a development of the ILO convention and like the ILO is a comprehensive treatise on the rights of Indigenous people, including the rights to their lands and waters. UNDRIP was endorsed by the Canadian government in May 2016 and has sought to align federal policy with the legal and normative implications of UNDRIP's content. UNDRIP is highly relevant for the future of Canadian water practically, ethically, and epistemically, especially as First Nations in Canada face increasing water insecurity (Askew et al. 2017, 14).

However, one characteristic and still dominant feature of the mono-cultural imaginary is the narrow anthropocentric definition of nature's value embedded in many

approaches to environmental protection and conservation, particularly the ecosystem service model. This so-called "neo-liberalisation of nature", or treatment of nature as a form of capital or commodity, is exemplified globally by the privatisation of water and the recent trend in carbon accounting used in the Paris Conference of the Parties or the United Nations Climate Change Conference in December 2015. This not only privileges a particular way of thinking, understanding and describing the world but even predetermines solutions and answers (Kill 2015). In contrast, a Tlingit and Tagish relationship with nature (water) is based on a fundamental reciprocal and respectful relationship. This is showcased most powerfully by oral histories and toponyms, and not simply by economic evaluations. When for example the hydro-electric dam was built in Whitehorse (Yukon Territory, Canada) to provide cheap electricity to the region, it effectively disrupted salmon spawning in the Southern Yukon Lakes. As the Tlingit and Tagish cultures have depended on this key stone species for thousands of years, not just as a food source but also for its huge cultural and spiritual significance, the decision to build the dam can be seen as a form of cultural, humanitarian, and epistemic injustice. The next section shall briefly comment on the shift in thinking about water from what we call "Tlingit waters" to colonial or "modern water(s)" (Linton 2010).

Modern Water and Its Gendered Narratives

Geographer Jamie Linton (2010) argues that over the last one hundred years water has been framed as an abstraction, resulting in the creation of a new kind of water that he calls "modern water". Modern water is a reduction, a narrow, essentialised chemical formula—H2O with new meanings of social and cultural access and control. This concept of modern water is further abstracted through terms such as "water footprints" and "virtual water", which attempt to make water economically visible on the one hand, but on the other, destroy and exclude other notions of water's meaning and value, so-called alternative water knowledges. This is characteristic of De Sousa Santos' epistemicide—modern water exemplifies the attitude that "we can only manage what we can quantify numerically" (Kill 2015). However modern water is, in addition, an extremely complex blend of gendered and historical narratives that have been persuasive, violently or otherwise, in defining and influencing at the global level, discourses about water control, management, and governance. Water became increasingly invisible and abstracted with the technological manipulation of water and urban water infrastructure provision in Western European cities in the 19th century (Illich 1986; Linton 2010). Ecofeminist Greta Gaard (2001) makes a further link between the positions and treatment of women and the treatment of nature (water) in Western culture.

In "Environmental Orientalism's" anthropologists Suzana Sawyer and Arum Agrawal trace how this thinking further exposes a form of labelling within the colonial imagination, which ossifies the gender/water/race nexus when they write "native topographies and peoples [were labelled] as feminine spaces to be violated, and thereby instantiated a sexual/racial hierarchy between colonizer and colonized" (Sawyer and Agrawal 2000, 72). Environmental historian Donald Worster's concept of "imperial water" illuminates the hydrological violence (Hayman 2012; Hayman with Wedge and James 2015) imposed on pre-modern waters in the form of the Western hydrological discourse (Worster 2006, 5-17). Imperial water is intimately linked to Sawyer and Agrawal's narrative of gendered and sexualized "virgin waters", and highlights, through a reading of both water and gender, fractures across new lines of race, class, and ethnicity. One could describe this as hydro-orientalism (Hayman 2012). By bringing colonial waters under a Western epistemological and material control, colonial powers forced the development and diffusion of the ontology of modern water on lands and waters they "discovered" (Linton 2010). In the following sections, we illustrate the impact of modern water on the Yukon River watershed.

Decolonising personhood and the "rights of nature" discourse(s)

> "Decolonisation is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For re-

> searchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices" (Tuhiwai Smith 1999, 20)

At its heart decolonialism is about shifting, unsettling, and interrupting assumed, normalised patterns of usually exploitive behaviour and thinking. It directly challenges the mono-cultural imaginary, and the marginalising or silencing of alternative voices. Shifting the geography of reason works on a number of complex levels and as Latin American scholar Nelson Maldonado-Torres makes clear "decolonising knowledge necessitates shifting the geography of reason, which means opening reason beyond Eurocentric and provincial horizons, as well as producing knowledge beyond strict disciplinary impositions" (Maldonado-Torres 2011, 10 in Radcliffe 2017, 330). However, as Indigenous scholars Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang point out, decolonisation is not necessarily about taking an activist stance, although many forms of activism can be powerful (Hayman et al. 2015). For Tuck and Yang "decolonisation offers a different perspective to human and civil rights based approaches to justice, an unsettling one, rather than a complementary one" (Tuck and Yang 2012, 36). Human geographer Karsten Schulz on the other hand starts from the premise that "there is no western modernity and progress without coloniality and its exploitative relations" (Schulz 2017, 129), asking for a closer analysis of the patterns, rhetoric, and now standardised systems of power and control at local and

global scales. It is against this background that we unpack what decolonising personhood might look like for the fraught relationships between international law and the current dominant understanding of nature.

Recent political and activist action in Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2011) attempts to displace a constructed neo-liberal economic value of nature (water) and instil a very different notion of value. One option is the legal value of "personhood" usually attributed to humans and corporations within Western-driven assumptions of international law. By extending the moral concept of personhood to broader earth communities that include forests, rivers, mountains, and whole ecosystems, and therefore attributing rights to these "earth communities", the "Rights of Nature" or earth jurisprudence movement(s) can be understood as a powerful decolonising strategy at both the institutional and constitutional level.

In New Zealand, having campaigned for the legal status of the Whanganui River to hold the same rights as a person since 1873, the Māori won their legal battle on March 15, 2017. The Whanganui River Claims Settlement Bill marks a unique moment in New Zealand's legal history, not only for the Māori who claim that "I am the river, and the river is me". Equally, Mount Taranaki (a sacred dormant volcano in New Zealand) has similarly been granted a legal personality and will remain un-

der the guardianship of eight Māori tribes (2017). From a legal perspective both the physical and metaphysical properties of the Whanganui River and Mount Taranaki are protected as a collective, integrated whole—a much expanded definition of personhood under New Zealand law. Although there is as yet nothing similar in Canada, the fundamental philosophy and premises of the way the Māori understand the world are very similar to the Tlingit and Tagish, who consider themselves "part of the land, part of the water". On August 2, 2018 Māori Chief Jamie Tutta and five other Māori knowledge keepers were hosted on CTFNs traditional territory for a workshop precisely on these pressing themes. At the end of the workshop, the Māori, the Tlingit and the Tagish all joined together on the shores of *T'aslay Mené* which is the Tagish name for Nares Lake, for a water ceremony led by Colleen James and Mark Wedge. It is clear that decolonising water and personhood takes on many forms and works on multiple levels as Tuhiwai Smith suggests in her epitaph at the beginning of this section.

Anthropologist Erin Fitz-Henry (2014) charts shifts in consciousness about personhood within the "Rights of Nature" discourse within Ecuadorian constitutional change in 2012. However, she critically asks what kind of decolonisation is actually taking place. Fitz-Henry's concern lies with the tension between different understandings of decolonisation. She suggests that the gap between understandings of decolonisation of Indige-

nous and radical environmentalists and others bent on an aggressive anti-neoliberalism, or what anthropologist Arturo Escobar has called "alternative modernisation" (2001), can have damaging and paralysing consequences. Earth jurisprudence allies well here with feminist and post-colonial epistemological projects by collaboratively exposing blind spots within the dominant mono-cultural imaginary, as well as the tensions between Western science and other knowledges. In *Rhetorical Spaces* (1995) for example, feminist philosopher Lorraine Code argues that feminist epistemological projects have been less concerned with advocating a "different voice" and more concerned with revealing whose voices have been muffled, marginalised, or even silenced. However, Code importantly highlights that telling the stories of the experiences that produce various knowledges "locates epistemology within the lives and projects of specifically situated, embodied and gendered knowers" (1995, 155). Taking up Code's call to "reveal muffled voices" exposes a very different set of responsibilities when the voices are the more-than-human world. Within a Western worldview, nature is generally perceived as "an insignificant other, a homogenized, voiceless, blank state of existence" (Hall 2011, 1-3), the imaginary of which is intimately bound up with a capitalist mentality. Collaborative water research with the inland Tlingit and Tagish peoples of the circumpolar north reveals a fundamentally different understanding and epistemology of "nature", and in particularly water. Empirically grounded

water research with CTFN situates Tlingit and Tagish oral histories and oral narratives firmly within the decolonising (water) project, and suggests that shifts in dominant understandings of personhood can be accelerated by evolving and then involving Indigenous (water) legislation in global water debates.

In contrast to Western worldviews, the inland Tlingit and Tagish aqua-centric, ecological philosophy centres relationships and even kinship with a sentient nature. Many Tlingit and Tagish oral narratives speak of human marriages with all of the non-human world, for example bears, spruce trees, and fire sparks (Swanton 1909; De Laguna 2007; McClellan 2007). The idea of "marrying" in this context has the express function of gaining alternative visions of reality through the eyes of the Salmon People or the Tree People. Precise empirical scientific knowledge about various bodies of water, including human relationships with sentient glaciers, is preserved in many of these oral narratives (see also Armstrong 1998, 2009). This not only explodes narrow Western perceptions of the agency of water (in all of its forms), but more importantly challenges the narrow definition of personhood in Western legal thought.

A core concern for Western environmental philosophers engaged with the moral consideration of humans and non-humans has been the question of who gets to define "sentience" (Singer 1975; Callicott 1997). West-

ern thought is rooted in a hierarchical style of thinking based on the premise of exclusion. What is categorised as "alive" or "dead", sentient or not, determines action in all sectors of current Western society, be it economic, political, medical or legal. Taking the lead now on debates about the nature of sentience are the academic fields of animal studies and plant neuro-biology. These have already impacted legal shifts in the definition of pain, critical for animal husbandry practices, that now is also extended to industrial fish farming. Also within Western discourse, there were moral considerations of nature; the first serious argument for non-human personhood began with legal scholar and lawyer Christopher Stone's paper "Should Trees Have Standing: Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects" (1972). As a highly significant contribution to environmental law, Stone generated a critical intellectual, legal, and moral dialogue for a seemingly voiceless nature within Western environmental legislation. Arguing that corporations have legal rights, so why not nature (trees), Stone advocated a reconsideration of personhood within the context of justice for future generations of humans, paving the way for earth jurisprudence discourses where nature has agency, and corresponding legal rights.

Within the rhetoric of Indigenous challenges to Western legal thought there is often little or no common ground. The Western legal concept of "rights" is contested on a number of levels. James F. Weiner, for example, is worth

quoting at length, as his analysis highlights the problematic "rights" issues (Western notions of individuality) with far older "respect and reciprocity" issues (Tlingit and Tagish notions of "law"):

> I suggest we also see evidence for the attributing of specifically Western forms of subjectivity, individuality and autonomy not just to indigenous persons but to the entire domain of contemporary indigenous action, intention, deliberation and production, forms which may very well be in marked contrast to the pre-Western manner in which indigenous people revealed aspects of the world to themselves. Even as anthropological involvement with indigenous people is becoming more and more linked to global political movements for indigenous rights—that is, as the notion of the Western legal persona increasingly underwrites the global political discourse of indigenous autonomy and survival—politicians and legalists seem to assess the task of describing non-Western forms of personhood, intention and subjectivity as less important than contriving arguments in support of such global legislation. (Weiner 2008, 80)

As Weiner highlights, Western forms of individuality and autonomy are bound up in the notion of a Western conception of rights, something that is contested by CTFN community consultants Mark Wedge and Colleen James. Equally, Indigenous scholars and lawyers Virginia Marshall (*Wiradjuri Nyemba*) and Aimee Craft (*Anishinabee*)

advocate powerful decolonising positions regarding First People's conceptualisations and valuing of water, the intersections with Indigenous customary law and practice, and settler state epistemic violence. Marshall (2015) and Craft (2014) focus on Australian and Canadian colonial water models respectively, revealing through their work the inherent social and ecological injustices of settler colonialism through superimposed legal frameworks that marginalise or even silence First People's ancestral water rights and heritage. Based in an entirely different First Peoples' ontology perspective and relationships with water and water bodies in both Australia and Canada, they reveal that Indigenous water rights and heritage are not yet conceptualised within Western water governance strategies or water management models. Craft's collaborative research in understanding *Anishinaabe nibi inaakonigewin* (water law) is particularly concerned with the use of the word "rights" that prompts alternative wording in the Anishinaabe water report[2]. This report echoes a Tlingit and Tagish cosmology where respect, responsibility, and reciprocity are key words that reflect a very different approach and understanding of water within a far older conception of Indigenous water legislation embedded in traditional oral histories, and respectful relationships.

In the circumpolar north, there is no attempt as yet to put any sort of earth jurisprudence into action at the Western governmental level. However, many Indige-

nous governance systems, as illustrated, have always recognised nature as sentient. Remarkably, CTFN may well be one of the first Yukon, even Canadian, First Nations to challenge Western notions of personhood. Alternative visions of moral consideration for the non-human are for example both implicit and explicit in the evolution of the forthcoming CTFN Water Act. The concept of "perspectivism" is useful to introduce at this point to illustrate these alternative visions of moral consideration. The anthropologist Viveiros de Castro's perspectivism and multinaturalism has been picked up by anthropologists such as Philippe Descola (2013), Descola and Bruno Latour (2013) and Julie Cruikshank (2012), and we too use it to better showcase the Tlingit and Tagish ontology and relationship with water within a wider Indigenous context. Indigenous perspectivism aims to dissolve or go beyond the dichotomies of nature and culture. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's definition of perspectivism is worth quoting at length. Perspectivism is

> the conception according to which the universe is inhabited by different sorts of persons, human and nonhuman, which apprehend reality from distinct points of view. This conception was shown to be associated to some others, namely:
> 1) The original common condition of both humans and animals is not animality, but rather humanity;
> 2) Many animal species, as well as other types of 'nonhuman' beings, have a spiritual component

> which qualifies them as 'people'; furthermore, these beings see themselves as humans in appearance and in culture, while seeing humans as animals or as spirits;
> 3) The visible body of animals is an appearance that hides this anthropomorphic invisible 'essence', and that can be put on and taken off as a dress or garment;
> 4) Interspecific metamorphosis is a fact of 'nature'.
> 5) Lastly, the notion of animality as a unified domain, globally opposed to that of humanity, seems to be absent from Amerindian cosmologies. (Viveiros de Castro 2015, 229-230).

Perspectivism is a good concept to employ within this water research. It works on an ontologically plural level without privileging one ontology. Western science and philosophy have extraordinary merits, but so too do the Tlingit and Tagish cultures. Perspectivism is about acknowledging worlds, and not worldviews, but it also supports the sort of shapeshifting understanding connected with water so often articulated in Tlingit and Tagish oral narratives. A Tlingit ontology for example acknowledges four ways that refer to "spirit". According to coastal Tlingit Elders, one of them *Yakgwahéiyagu*, is "the living spirit inside of all things (human, nonhuman, inanimate) that senses and feels the world around them" (Katzeek in Twitchell 2017). The title of geographer Eleanor Hayman's PhD thesis (2018) "Marrying the Water" honours these ideas of perspectivism within the Tlingit ontolo-

gy. In many Tlingit and Tagish oral narratives, humans shapeshift into other animals as much as animals disguise themselves as humans. What occurs frequently in these narratives is that humans marry bears, spruce trees and fire sparks. This is so that humans through "marriage" might have the opportunity to experience and understand other worlds. These marriages are grounded in listening, sensitivity, and place-based pedagogy (see Hayman, James, Wedge & Katzeek, 2017). Something very different to the forms of epistemic violence often experienced today. The metaphor of marriage works powerfully within a decolonial context, appealing to the storytelling imaginary which opens up spaces to reimagine who gets to define "rights", and within which contexts. The next section looks closely at hydrological violence within a decolonial context in the Yukon Territory.

Hydrological Violence

The inland Tlingit and Tagish citizens of Carcross/Tagish First Nation live, trap and hunt on, in, and among the Southern Yukon Lakes—the headwaters of the Yukon River. The colonisation of these waters has taken many forms over the last century, something that we call "hydrological violence" (Hayman, James and Wedge, 2017). This hydrological colonisation is revealed through a variety of geographical contexts and aquatic discourses. These include the superimposition of Euro-American place names denoting male military and

academic figures on ancient Tlingit and Tagish place names, over 75 % of which are water related and containing precise hydrological and cultural knowledge (see Hayman, James and Wedge 2015, 2017, 2018.) For example Bennett Lake is *Shaanakheeni* (waters that come from the mountains) in Tlingit. It was renamed in 1883 by Frederick Schwatka, US Army officer and explorer, after James Gordon Bennett Jr. (1841–1918) sponsor of Schwatka's Franklin search expedition and editor of the *New York Herald*. Equally Nares Mountain is *Watsix Shaayi* (Caribou Mountain) in Tlingit, but was renamed after Admiral Sir George Nares, British naval officer and Arctic explorer (1831–1915). The river and lake at the base of the mountain are also named after Admiral Nares.

As previously mentioned, the most damaging to the Tlingit and Tagish salmon culture has been the hydro-electric driven damming of the Yukon River just south of the capital Whitehorse, which prevents salmon from returning to the Southern Lakes to spawn[3]. Secondly the local energy provider Yukon Energy is proposing to artificially keep the level of Southern Yukon Lakes (CTFNs traditional territory) raised during the autumn to provide extra hydro-electricity for the winter months. However environmental impact assessments have predicted further disruptions of local ecologies such as the muskrat and frog, and increased bank erosion for First Nation graveyards and homes. Lastly, in the relentless

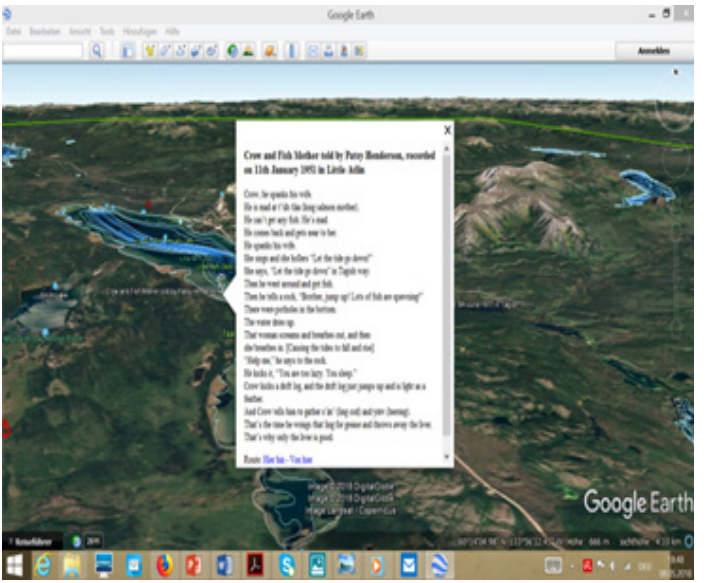
quest for energy sovereignty that "strategically" trumps all other considerations, there is increasing pressure from the Canadian government to frack for liquid natural gas within CTFNs traditional territory. All aspects of this hydrological violence have been and continue to be accomplished by framing water as an abstraction, as discussed earlier. This rhetoric of Western-idealised water management approaches has effectively silenced "Tlingit and Tagish" understandings of water.

Resistance to such colonial philosophy and systems of law that allow hydrological violence[4] on this scale is part of the decolonising research these authors are undertaking through the evolution of CTFN water legislation. By opening up new, fertile, and living legislative spaces, Tlingit customary laws have the potential, and hopefully serious opportunity, to occupy these spaces and flip the script of dominant legislative and water imaginaries. As has already been suggested, modern environmental laws with the philosophical basis that nature (water) is only valued as servile, as capital (wealth), and resource to be controlled, bought, and sold as object and property, is highly destructive for long-term planetary health and indeed the survival of not just the human species, but many life-forms. In the so called 6th mass extinction, creating opportunities and spaces for a multi-species future is critical for planetary (water) health. Therefore connecting Tlingit and Tagish principles and relationships with the more-than-human world within water

legislation shifts dominant water imaginaries and supports a 'new' (re-*newed* in Indigenous terms) global water consciousness.

Practically, decolonial shifting of water imaginaries is being achieved through participatory action research with the CTFN community with various endeavours such as counter-mapping or re-mapping projects that focus on re-membering and revitalising Tlingit and Tagish placenames, for example the toponym counter map "*Haa saaxú, haa latseení* (our names, our strength)" below. Applications to the Yukon Geographical Place Name Board for Tlingit and Tagish toponym recognition are currently pending, whilst the formulation of a Tlingit and Tagish Water Declaration rooted in Tlingit and Tagish oral histories and traditional oral narratives is evolving. Finally, a Water Sampling Initiative (Hayman with Wedge and James 2017) of the Southern Yukon Lakes puts CTFN hydrological baselines into conversation with the hydrological power embedded within Tlingit and Tagish toponyms and traditional oral narratives. This has been achieved utilising a Google Earth platform, allowing for a greater democracy of water knowledges (Hayman with Wedge and James 2017).

Screenshot of the "Deep Chart" on the Google Earth platform showcasing CTFN water knowledges
© Eleanor Hayman



Screenshot of part of the CTFN toponym counter-map.
Red circles are the villages of Tagish and Carcross
© Eleanor Hayman

However, as we have written elsewhere, water continues to work powerfully within decolonising discourses in two important ways. Firstly, the Tlingit and Tagish culture can be considered aqua-centric. From a linguis-

tic, cultural practice, and storytelling perspective, water behaves and acts as a cultural, even ethical model for CTFN. Secondly, water is both a physical and metaphorical medium that offers profound connections in an inter-generational context. Water carries the debris and DNA of past civilisations and species, as well as the seeds of future civilisations and ecologies yet to come. Ethically and legally, there is a complex range of inter-generational responsibilities. As the source of life on the planet and the element that physically connects all things with the deep past and a possible deep future, aqua-centric thinking may well prove a vital and fluid framework for imagining inclusive legislative futures. Indeed aqua-centric thinking is an empirically grounded approach that is beginning to have purchase in (Canadian) water policy circles. "Watersheds 2018" is the most recent publication by the POLIS Institute and focuses exclusively on Canadian watersheds in terms of governance, conceptual basis, and collaborative management (Brandes et al. 2018). Thinking *like* a watershed encourages holistic thought, but more importantly privileges the hydrological and biological sciences that show water as the foundational and ultimate matrix of life on this planet. As the search for water at the interplanetary scale becomes increasingly serious (the moon, Mars etc.), foregrounding policies on earth that recognise the critical significance of how all bodies are networked, symbiotically or otherwise, combats hydrological violence and supports serious forms of hydro citizenship.

Conclusion: Multifaceted Chartings—Multiepistemic Fluencies—Multiepistemic Literacies

In summary, this article showcases the evolution of Tlingit water legislation, the first of its kind in the Yukon Territory, Canada. In so doing, this water research provides arguments and builds into conversations that re-imagine the mono-cultural imaginary, whether it relates to legal notions of personhood or dominant neo-liberal perceptions of nature (water).

The evolution of CTFN water legislation can be seen as applied postcolonial theory, but must proceed with caution in light of tensions between different cultural constructions of water in addition to debates and negotiations surrounding different notions of personhood. As Canada's as well as global water consciousness is increasingly sensitised "There is also growing recognition of the need to comprehensively examine Indigenous relationships to water at a broader scale, and to address Indigenous water governance" (Askew et al. 2017, 4). However, the process and practice of the evolution of a Tlingit- and Tagish-based water law can only support the necessary movement to fundamentally transform the ways in which water (nature) is imagined. This is in itself embedded into the broader call for a decolonisation of knowledge.

Notes:

1. PDF version available online at https://www.dropbox.com/s/ja3jgclxizc2jbd/Yukon%20Watershed_17_11_600dpi.pdf?dl=0 and http://documents.routledge-interactive.s3.amazonaws.com/9781138204294/13_Figure1_Yukon_Watershed_18_11.pdf.

2. For further reference on Anishinaabe nibi inaakonigewin see Craft 2014.

3. The broader philosophy of the practice of erecting dams has led to over 142 salmon stock extinctions in British Columbia and the Yukon combined (Slaney et al. 1996, 20)

4. The concept of hydrological violence expands and develops environmental scholar Rob Nixon's "slow violence" (2013). Hydrological violence is clarified in Hayman et al 2017.

5. https://www.dropbox.com/s/aty0262uryivafz/CTFNposter_03_02_600dpi.pdf?dl=0 and http://documents.routledge-interactive.s3.amazonaws.com/9781138204294/13_Figure2_CTFNposter_03_02_600dpi.pdf.

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Knowledge Production in Colonial, Neo- and Postcolonial Processes

How to conquer the world? Cartographical knowledge in an early colonialist context

Detlev Quintern

Introduction

It is no coincidence that Edward Said dated the rise of Orientalism towards the end of the 18th century, nor that he prefaced his study of this phenomenon with a quotation from Karl Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*: "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented." (Quante and Schweikard 2016, 130; Bartolovich and Lazarus 2002, 207).

From the very beginnings of European cartography, maps epitomized imperial representations. After Christo-centered world-views, having Jerusalem / Al-Quds in Palestine to its eschatological center, early, less mythological European ecumenical cartographies introduced a new world view that came nearer to geographical figures of the so-called old and so far, only roughly known world. A more rationalized Eurocentrism towards the 15th and 16th centuries took the place of "the holy city" as the world's center.

Early 16th-century maps, representing also parts of the "new world", not rarely projected monstrous imaginations on the territories that were known more or less in outlines of their coastal shapes. Territorial mappings were not rarely permeated with images of horror, among which "cannibals" (anthropophagy) can be traced back to ancient Greek-Roman legends. The anonymous world map, drawn probably in Italy around 1502/06 (Kunstmann II, Bavarian State Library, Munich) is one of the oldest maps showing the "New World" (Bischoff, Lüpkes and Schönlau 2015, 200). Westwards of the Brazilian coastline the map shows a white man roasted over a fire. The stereotype of cannibalism was inscribed as a kind of archetype in European imagination for hundreds of years. Unknown territories were, while being mapped, suffused with fear. Legends of cannibalism continued into the image of Terrae Incognitae up to the new wave of colonial conquest of the first half of the 20th centu-

ry. But, how did the knowledge evolve, which was necessary to draw maps and to sail open seas? More or less precise maps in Europe are only of a recent date.

Till the present day, cartographical world views are under debate, not least when it comes to the necessity to decolonize the understanding of the mapping of the world. A decolonial initiative in England recently demanded the replacement of Eurocentric maps with the *Peters Projection*. Arguing with the historian and cartographer Arno Peters who emphasized "that Mercator maps were giving White Nations a sense of Supremacy over Non-White Nations" (Blake 2018), the initiative demanded the replacement of the use of Eurocentric maps in schools with world maps based on the Peters Projection. Arno Peters has introduced the cartographic projection based on the undistorted size of the continental areas in *Der europa-zentrische Charakter unseres Weltbildes und seine Überwindung* [The Europe-centered Character of our Geographical View of the World and its Correction] (1976).

In *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* Walter Mignolo discusses the "early modern" Dutch geographers, among them Abraham Ortelius whose cartographies were adopted by famous Gerhard Mercator—the Mercator projection is until today the mathematical basis of Eurocentric world maps. He underlines that "the cartographic breakthrough of the 16th century was to displace and replace, on the one hand, the ethnic center with the geo-

metric center, by which coexisting territorialities beyond Western intellectual history were relegated to the past. (It appears as if only Western cartography continued its historical march.)" (Mignolo 2011, 186). In his study *The Idea of Latin America* (2006), Mignolo has already shown that mapping the world corresponded with the colonial matrix of power, going hand in hand "with the triumphal march of European, supposedly universal, history" (26).

In the following I will focus mainly on colonial robberies and adaptions of sciences mainly of Arabic provenience-es, enabling European mapmaking to advance to mathematical geographies of the world, which were nearer to realities. In this context a differentiation between sciences in the North or West and knowledges in the South and the rest of the world is misleading. Enrique Dussel emphasized that discontinuity, in the sense of the rise of new spatial particularities, Europe's self-differentiation from Africa, the Maghreb, the Byzantine Empire and the Middle East was introduced by the crusaders and the European attempts to dominate the Mediterranean. Europe's imagined splitting off from a wider embeddedness in the Mediterranean and its hinterlands went hand in hand with the adoption of Arabic-shaped philosophy (Aristoteles), which reached Paris from Toledo by the end of the 12th century (Dussel 2000, 466). Sciences did not have their offspring in Europe as Eurocentric master narratives make believe, for which astronomical, nau-

tical, geographical, and cartographic sciences will serve as an example outlined in this article.

The fall of the Roman Empire has led to a disappearance of ancient sciences in Europe, and they were reinvented mainly by adopting Arabic sources via Latin translations. In the fields of geography, cartography, and nautical sciences, the early colonial soaking up of all knowledge, useful to conquer by sea and by land, enabled Spanish and Portuguese crusaders to set foot on the coasts and islands of the Americas. Against this background I will, elaborating on the necessary decolonization of the history of science—here especially of so-called European discoveries and related scientific disciplines—introduce a counter-universal approach to the Eurocentric master narrative. While decentering arrogant European self-assertions, claiming that "early-modern" sciences arose out of a mysterious self-creation, my discussion of decisive contributions of Arabic sciences to geography, cartography, and nautical sciences will shed new light on the conditions and necessary premises for the colonial crusaders to sail open seas and find lands to conquer. This also holds true for orientation on the lands that were desired for colonial possession. And, I argue, the colonialist appropriation and adaption of science and knowledge in the South was a continuous process that did not end in what Eurocentric periodization of history calls "modernity".

When "exploring" the Caspian Sea in 1829, Alexander von Humboldt was aware that precise geographical coordinates trace back to Arabic sources from the 11th to the 15th centuries (Quintern 2018, 434) As in the first half of the 18th century Central Asia was among many other territories of the world still unknown lands to Europeans. Alexander von Humboldt had originally planned to participate in the French so-called "expedition" in Egypt in December 1798, which should give rise to European practices of studying and mapping, and thus knowing and colonizing the "other" that Said has so astutely described as Orientalism (1978). Because of diplomatic-political considerations in the context of the acute situation in the Mediterranean as a result of the French military campaign, Humboldt changed his travel plans at a short notice.

The French colonial invasion of Egypt in 1798 was prepared in Paris by a group of orientalist scholars who intensively studied Arabic sources, among which was *al-Khiṭaṭ*, a history and geography of Mamluk Egypt/ Cairo written by al-Maqrīzī (1364-1442). The book *al-Khiṭaṭ* was translated into French and then compiled for the French *Description de l`Égypte* (Brett 2015, 245).. The Description served as a kind of manual for the French conquerors who were unfamiliar with the country along the Nile and depended on such indigenous Arabic written knowledge while invading Egypt. Assimilating Arabic history, topography and geography into their own

early canon of knowledge, the invaders began to represent Arabian knowledge cultures at the same time. In his groundbreaking study *Orientalism* Said deciphered the orientalist and Eurocentric discourse of the 'Orient' as an imagined geography (Said 1979: 49-73). The imperial knowledge system became not only a monologue but claimed for itself authorship of scientific writings and maps.

Now, it is necessary to research the contributions of the Arab world, and the Global South, to a pluri-universal cultural heritage in literature, philosophy, art, music, medicine, humanities and the natural sciences[1]. In order to overcome Eurocentric self-assurances, postcolonial knowledge production needs interdisciplinary efforts, for example regarding the history of so-called discoveries, sciences and values, such as humanism, and, indeed, the history of modernity itself (cf. Dussel 2000). The Renaissance, to which early modernity and humanism are assigned, is a destructive period from a non-Eurocentric, decolonial point of view. The conquest of America, Asia, Africa and Oceania was possible thanks to the adaption of mainly Arabic knowledge, particularly geography and cartography, besides nautical sciences, shipbuilding and other disciplines. After the so-called Crusades from the end of the 10th century onwards, first of Al-Andalus and, less than a hundred years later, of Palestine, it took centuries before a new colonial wave was initiated to cross the open seas towards 'unknown'

worlds. The assimilated Arabic knowledge empowered the Europeans to cross the Atlantic; furthermore, agricultural techniques, for example the plantation of rice, which came with enslaved people from West Africa to the Carolinas and the Mississippi Delta, helped the early settlers to survive in the New World.

In this article, I will focus mainly on geographical and cartographical knowledge and mention only some aspects of agricultural knowledge and techniques that are related to the early colonial plantation system. Sciences and techniques were mainly handed down from Arabic sources after being translated first into Latin and Hebrew, then into upcoming Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. Arabic was the *lingua franca* in Al-Andalus, the Iberian Peninsula, for nearly seven hundred years, especially in science and philosophy.

From Al-Andalus to Abya Yala

When the Spanish *conquistador* Hernán Cortés landed on Mexico's eastern coast of Yucatan in 1519, he came across inhabitants wearing *almaizales, albornoces, and alquizales,* items of clothing with typical Moorish styles ("*en la manera Moriscos*") (Cortés 1985, 31; Cereceda 2012, 98; Gerbi 2010, 98). In his letters to Charles V he described the sacred buildings of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan as mosques (Cortes 1908, 216). While recalling the sacral architecture of Al-Andalus, Cortés

could not imagine being anywhere else than in Arabic-Islamic lands. When reaching the Mexican coast he still believed to be in Arabic-Islamic lands. Ironically, it were the conquistadores who brought Arabic and Islamic architecture to the so called New World. The Spanish chapel of Cholula is one of the earliest examples of such architectural mixing before 1529. It was built on a sanctuary dedicated to the Mayan-Aztec deity Quetzalcoatl and based on a plan of a mosque that was inspired by the Great Mosque of Cordoba.

Christopher Columbus had already speculated in his diaries about the gracefulness of the Caribbean while often comparing it to the climate, the fauna and flora of Andalusia, which was familiar to him. It is obvious that the Spanish conquerors had only a very rough idea where they were. The early colonial imagination of the geography of the Caribbean Sea and islands was based on spheres and maps, as Columbus noted in his diary on Wednesday, October 24, 1492: "es la ysla de Cipango, de que se cuentan cosas maravillosas, y en las esp[h]eras que yo vi y en las pinturas de mapa mundos es ella en esta comarca." (Pérez and Quintana 1995, 159) ("On the spheres that I saw and on the paintings of world maps it is this region, Cipango is in this region.") (Columbus 2003, 128). Columbus assumed that his trans-Atlantic voyage would lead him to Cathay (China), Cipango (Japan), the Spice Islands (the Moluccas), and India or, more generally, to the 'Indies'. But how and from where might these

spheres and world maps have reached Columbus? Or, to be more precise, how can the geographical, astronomical and cartographical knowledge Columbus was referring to be characterized and historically contextualized?

When Columbus left Granada on May 12, 1492 with a small fleet of three vessels, only three months had passed since the Arab city conceded victory to the conquerors, having been besieged for three years—a strategy the conquistadores would soon enforce on the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan in 1519. A larger number of the Arab inhabitants of Granada fled to the surrounding Alpujarra (*al-bušarāt*) mountains. Archbishop Jiménez de Cisneros commanded, in an *auto-da-fé*, the burning of theological, philosophical and scientific Arabic-Islamic literature—interestingly he left out medical works. This sparked the Arabic uprisings lasting for around 75 years. After Jews were forced to convert to Christianity and become so-called *marranos*, compulsory baptism followed hard on the Muslims who were already 'tamed' by the religious authorities, being called accordingly *mudéjares* (from Arabic *mudaǧǧan* = tamed). From now on they were called Moriscos (Hottinger 1995, 342). The Arabic population had been given the ultimatum in 1502 to either convert or be exiled. While some fled into the nearby mountains, resisting racist persecution, others converted. These crypto-Muslims formed a new social class of 'counterfeited' Christians, who were suspected to secretly follow Islam. In 1526 all Islamic rituals and daily practices, such

as ritual slaughter or the wearing of amulets, were forbidden and racist laws were installed. For example, in case a foster mother of a new born was a so-called New Christian (*Morisca*), it was believed that her milk would make the baby's blood impure (Torres 2006, 174). Up to the fourth grade of the family tree ("*en el quarto grado*"), the 'Holy Inquisition' required 'purity of blood' (Castillo 2005, 735). These racist laws of the purity of blood *(limpieza de sangre*) extended later their scope of validity also to the New World.

Lost knowledge's pathways in early Western Europe

The Inquisition paved the way for a second large wave of deportation of the Moriscos (moors) from Spain in 1609. As a consequence of the expulsion of Moriscos, mainly to North Africa (Maghreb), Islam largely disappeared from Western Europe from 1615 onwards and Muslim communities did not reappear before the 20th century. An affluent crypto-Muslim community might have survived in Grenada until a final inquisitional 'purge' of 1727 (Catlos 2014, 303). Braudel emphasized that erasing Arabic-Islamic knowledge and culture had serious consequences also for the Spaniards. "Who will farm our land, the lords of the 'lugares de moriscos' were no doubt thinking. The expulsion, it was realized in advance, would leave serious wounds" (Braudel 1995, 795). Not least because of the lacking maintenance of

hydraulic irrigation techniques, agricultures in Spain suffered a set-back. To the contrary, the olive cultivation was improved in certain regions of Tunisia to where the Moriscos had been expelled (Glick 1996, 116). "The Moriscos", Américo Castro wrote, "were hard and skillful workers, and it is a commonplace to lament the disaster that their removal brought to agriculture and industry" (Castro 1971, 237).

The *conquistadores* would soon use slave labor and knowledge coming with enslaved people from West Africa to compensate their losses. The Portuguese had already begun to plant sugar on Madeira by 1420, and extended the plantation system to the Canaries, Azores and Cap Verde Islands in the following decades. Sugar was brought to Al-Andalus and Sicily by Arabs in the 9th century. It is another example of the assimilation of Arabic agricultural knowledge and technique, which the specific terms related to sugar weights bear witness to. For example, the Portuguese *Arroba* (one quarter) is derived from the Arabic *al-ruba*' (Lippmann 1890, 248). In the 16th century sugar mills and refinery introduced an early industrialization into Western Europe based on agricultural products. The knowledge of how to produce spirits, which became essential for later rum production, also goes back to Arabic expertise, as the distilling process was introduced for medical purposes already in the 9th century ((al)cohol = Arabic *(al)-Kuhul*,) (Poppe 1837, 71). The extension of sugar, rice and cotton plantations, based on

Afro-Arabic agricultural knowledge traditions, paved the way for the proto-industrial revolutions in Europe. Later, the shipping of huge quantities of cotton produced by slave labor from the so-called Black Belt in the United States of America (since 1776) to the early European industrial centers, e.g. Lancashire in England, brought the mass production of textiles to a high level. This was important, especially after the Indian hand-woven textile production was destroyed by the British colonizers in the middle of the 19th century (Wolf 2010, 290). The forced south-north transfer of knowledge, science and techniques, which is only touched upon here, needs further and more extensive research in order to help understanding early appropriation of non-Western knowledge and its contribution to colonization, enslavement and Euro-centric industrialization and modernity.

With the forced deportation of a major sector of the Arabic population—a process that began with the conquest of Toledo by the crusaders in 1085 and that lasted for centuries—knowledge was also expelled from the Iberian Peninsula. It seems that the 13th century Alfonso the Tenth, who was born in Toledo in 1221 and later called The Wise (*el sabio*), intended to halt this early brain-drain; he founded a scientific center for translations mainly from Arabic into old Spanish (Castilian) and Latin. Although it seems that he had to hide his endeavors, the Catholic king had a deep respect for Arabic culture and knowledge (Walter 2016, 233). Between 1262 and

1272 Alfonso ordered the compilation of Arabic tables of geographical places, mainly based on the Toledan Tables (astronomical tables written by az-Zarqālī (1029-1087) in Toledo) along with the methods for calculating the degrees of latitudes and longitudes. A multi-confessional team of scholars created an encyclopedia for astronomical studies (*Libros del Saber de Astronomía*), which became significantly important throughout Europe. The tables of coordinates in the encyclopedia are based on three Arabic tables (al-Ma'mūn, al-Battānī and an Al-Andalusian one) (Sezgin 2005, 212). The Ma'mūn astronomers were able to define the inclined ecliptic[2] nearly as precisely as we do nowadays, without having—as Johann Heinrich Moritz von Poppe notes—a telescope at their disposal (Poppe 1837, 456). Following to a certain extent an Arabic-Islamic culture of tolerance, under the reign of Alfonso the Wise sciences did not come to a halt. Later colonial ideology broke with this tradition when sciences became functionalized for imperialistic purposes.

Sciences at colonialist services

In his log-book entry for October 29, 1492, when sailing along the Cuban coast, Columbus compared the beauty of the hills with the Peñas de los Enamorados, which had become familiar to him when marching towards Arabic Malaga, taking part in the campaign of its conquest (Bucher 2006, 101). In his early journeys along the West African Cost at the service of Portuguese crusaders, Co-

lumbus compared his arc measurements with those of Alfraganus (Ibn Kaṯīr al-Farġānī) (Bucher 2006, 84). The astronomer worked in the team of geographers under Caliph al-Maʾmūn in the first half of the 9th century in Baghdad. His book on the history of geography, translated into Latin, enjoyed great popularity among Italian scholars especially. Alfraganus had deep influence on Robert Grosseteste, Ristorro d'Arezzo, Dante Alighieri and Hermann of Reichenau (Hermanus Contractus) (Sezgin 2011, 233). The question is how it was possible that a 9th-century astronomer from Baghdad could have provided Columbus with his astronomical data.

Columbus based his calculations on the determinations of a team of Maʾmūn geographers, among them al-Farġānī (Alfraganus). The Maʾmūn geographical and astronomical research group determined the length of one degree in the meridian as 56 2/3 Arabic miles (Sezgin 2005, 94; Sezgin 2011, 3). The measurements handed down by the Alexandrinian Ptolemy (ca. 100-160 AD) where not precise and comprehensive. Corresponding to 111.31 km along the Equator and multiplied with 360 degrees, this new measurement of the Maʾmūn geographers was nearly as precise as the equatorial circumference measuring 40,075 km (Kohler 2006, 46). The Arabic scientific world did not doubt that the earth was a globe. Columbus was probably also not aware of the difference between Arabic and Italian miles. The Roman-based Italian measurement of one degree in the

meridian was around 80 km (compared to 111 km and 56 2/3 Arabic miles) (Sezgin 2000, 95; Starr 2015, 9). While underestimating the size of the earth by around one third, Columbus might have believed that it is quite easy to reach the Asian coast. This once again proves that precise mathematical and astronomical methods, which are necessary to determine geographical locations and are much more difficult to obtain at sea than on-shore, were more or less unfamiliar to Columbus.

We find many traces of Arabic heritage all over Central Europe, thus also in the cultural fields, e.g. in the wood-carved figures of 1480, the Morisco dancers, by the Bavarian artist Edmund Grasser. The original figures remained in the old town hall of Munich till the early 1930s. The travel of knowledge and culture as a consequence of the conquest (called Reconquista) of the mainly Arabic-Islamic Iberian Peninsula (al-Andalus) has not yet been sufficiently researched. Arabic lands, with the most western Al-Andalus (Maġrib al-Aqsa), were centers of flourishing science, culture and daily life from the 9th till the 13th century. This holds true also for the cross-cultural and multi-confessional Sicily under Arabic influence. Sicily was first under Abbasīd then under Fātimid rule (9th and 10th century). The Norman King Roger the Second (1095–1154) and the Emperor Frederic the Second (1198–1250) followed a societal model of tolerance and learning. Not only sugar cane, dates, citrus fruits, cotton and olives were cultivated by

Arabs in southern Italy (Schlicht 2000, 44). In contrast to the long tradition of crusade-conquest of Al-Andalus, the Normans in Sicily incorporated Arabic-Islamic culture and daily life. As a consequence, also sciences, philosophy, medicine and architecture, based on a culture of tolerance, were not declining in southern Italy.

Again, this chapter is not able to discuss the general impact of Arabic science and culture on European developments in further detail, nor to excavate the historical context of early colonialism in more depth. However, any postcolonial and critical history of the conquest of Abya Yala needs to be aware of these continuities, here the overlapping of the so-called *Reconquista* with the conquest of the so-called 'New World.' From a Native American perspective Jack Forbes has studied possible pre-colonial interconnections between the Americas and Africa, among them early seafaring across the Atlantic (Forbes 1993, 10). Against the background of the historical inter-connectivity and continuities between the general impact of Arabic science and culture on European developments, the so-called Reconquista and the conquest of the so-called 'New World', it becomes obvious that the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors in the 'New World' followed the same warfare strategies that were used earlier, be it the strategy of besieging cities or massacring the encountered people. When Hernán Cortés viewed the important trade city Cholula for the first time, he was overwhelmed by its beauty. He also

adored the city's architecture, believing that all the impressive buildings were mosques. Texoco was another city where he assumed large buildings to be mosques. The rumors about the Alpujarra Mountains around Granada, where the Arabic rebels around Grenada 'eat their enemies', were projected onto the indigenous people of the area, now in the central Mexican highlands (Beck 2013, 178). Whether or not Cortés might have assumed that the population of Cholula was Islamic, there were no moral scruples against killing 'non-believers' in the 'New World', e.g. the Cholula Massacre in late October, 1519 (Sahagún 1905; Del Castillo 1844; Levy 2008, 68; Thomas 1993, 258). Cortés estimated the number of dead as 3,000 in two hours, while De Tapia puts the number of victims as high as 20,000 (Cortés 2001, 466). This was a kind of massacre-based warfare hitherto unknown to the people of Abya Yala. It seems that especially the brutal warfare of the *conquistadores* made Spanish settler colonialism possible. This holds true also for the Maya and Aztecs, with more centralized states. But some people, like the Cuna (Panama) and the Mapuche (Chile and Argentina), put up effective resistance against the conquerors and were never subordinated by the Spanish crusaders. As the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors had come upon Arab-Islamic shaped lands whenever they left their familiar environment, be it in North or West Africa, they were probably caught in an imagined geography when reaching worlds new to them. Another reason for this might have been the maps that they used.

Mapping the world

The 15th century marks the emergence of a newer cartographic worldview in Western Europe. With the introduction of the Ptolemaic worldview into Latin Europe, the visualization of the world became an incontestable authority. Main characteristics of the Ptolemaic world maps—even if many historians agree that Ptolemy did not draw maps himself in the middle of the 2nd century (Sezgin 2011, 170-173; Dilke 1987, 177-178; Brotton 2012, 20)—are the representation of the Indian Ocean as an inner lake (often also the Atlantic was shown as a lake, or the ecumene surrounded by a *terra incognita*), the depiction of the Caspian Sea in a melon shape and the over-extension of the Mediterranean Sea to around 60 degrees. Even Ptolemy provided around 8,000 coordinates of the known world, latitudes further south of the Equator (Meroë) are lacking (Sezgin 2005, 34-36). The largest parts of Africa were unknown to Ptolemy. If we compare several Ptolemaic maps from the 15th century with, for example, the world map of Gerhard Mercator (*Universalis Tabula iuxta Ptolemeum*, 1578), we become aware of Mercator's more precise version of the course of the Nile, even though many inaccuracies remain, for example the melon shape of the Caspian Sea. Cartographical knowledge did not develop in linear and progressive fashion. The knowledge about certain geographical shapes and figures seems to have been lost for

centuries, when we compare the more accurate shape of the north-south aligned Caspian Sea in the world map of al-Idrīsī of 1154 with Gerhard Mercator's melon shape (1578).

For a long time there existed the mistaken belief—represented on dozens of printed Ptolemaic Maps from the 15th century onwards—that the Indian Ocean is a lake and Africa and the Indian Sub-continent are connected by a land-bridge. It seems that this mistaken belief is to be blamed not only on cartographical misinterpretation but on sheer ignorance. The Europeans at this time did not have the faintest idea of the cartographical figures of the Indian Ocean, the Pacific, the Islands, and the coastal lines etc. Alexander Humboldt emphasized that it was Arabic cartography of the 12th century that mapped for the first time the triangular shape of Africa, showing the possibility of circumnavigating Africa (Quintern 2018, 343). From the 8th to the 16th century the Indian Ocean was mainly an Arabic-African-Persian-Indian-Chinese sea. It was connected by long-distance trading and communicating routes, be it the Silk Road from China via Central Asia to the Mediterranean, the Incense Road from Yemen via the Arabian Peninsula to Antioch and Gaza in Palestine and the African trading roads, which connected East and West Africa via the trans-Sahara routes in the North and from the East-African port cities via the Central African water streets (e.g. along the River Congo) to the Atlantic. When Carl Peters con-

quered Tanzania in the 1880s, his self-perception, while speaking about his conquest, still followed the ideology of the crusaders (Wehler 1976, 338). After the Maji Maji uprisings were brutally crushed, Peters became the commissioner of so-called German East Africa, and thus began one of the darkest chapters in German colonial history. Carl Peters' colonialist vision also included the annexation of the area of the Nile headwaters (Perras 2004, 133).

Granted that there may have existed world maps during the life time of Ptolemy in the 2nd century, we have to ask whether there had been any development of cartographical knowledge from then until the 16th century. The 19th-century myth of the Renaissance connotes the rebirth of a flourishing, mainly Greek-inspired, scientific era in Antiquity. But, when studying the sources of many of the works translated into Latin, be it in mathematics, optics, medicine or philosophy, an Arabic template comes to light. Interestingly, the adaptation and incorporation of cartographic knowledge took a longer time, compared to other scientific disciplines. Recent studies by Fuat Sezgin revealed that Maximus Planudes plausibly adapted Arabic-Islamic expertise, mainly coordinates and specific geographical figures and shapes, into his own scholarship. The Byzantine monk established a team of geographers and cartographers in Constantinople at the end of the 13th century. Planudes, also copyist of Ptolemy's Geography of the 2nd century, described mainly methods for projecting and drawing maps beside the coordinate tables—and mentioned the

Fig. 1 Gerhard Mercator, Universalis Tabula iuxta Ptolemeum. World Map in the Ptolemaic Tradition, probably Cologne, 1578, copperplate engraving.

existence of 26 maps at the end of the manuscript of Ptolemy's Geography.

The late 13th-century Mappa Mundi or so-called T-O-maps—named after orbis (orbis terrarum) with the letter T depicting the waters inside the circle of an O (orb), the circle for the lands—are far less realistic than the Ptolemaic maps. They reveal more about mythologies and eschatology than the geography of the known world. Beside the English Hereford T-O map, the world map of Ebstorf is one of the best studied samples. The body of Jesus frames and carries the world at the same time. The world is displayed with the East at the top ('East-up'), with the paradise in the East also at the top, Jerusalem is shown at the center. Faceless human-like beings, monsters, cannibals and wild animals and sceneries of violence are displayed on the Asian-African periphery, which suggests that the unknown caused anxiety.

With Brunetto Latini's *Livres dou Trésor* in 1310, an astonishingly new cartographical worldview emerges, nearly parallel to the apocalyptic visualizations. It shows a 'South-up' world map, surrounded by a dark ocean, the circumnavigation of Africa, the course of the Nile etc. Early Latin-European world maps, because of their characteristical shape called T-O-Maps, were oriented Eastwards (e.g. *Mappa Mundi*)—we still find this in the term ORIENTation—and put Jerusalem into the center (the world map of Ebstorf serves as one example). In contrast, Arabic maps were —directed towards the South and did not contain an identifiable center (for example the maps of Latini and Idrīsī depicted below).

Also, the Brunetto Latini World Map uses the typical Arabic South orientation, possibly because the Florentine diplomat Latini, who was a teacher of Dante, had been on a mission in 1260 to the Castilian ruler Alphonso the Wise, where he probably came into contact with Arabic cartographic knowledge

Both maps can be traced back to an Arabic cartographic tradition which flourished in Baghdad from the early 9th century onwards, after the translations of Ptolemaic works, Indian astronomical tables, Middle Persian texts etc. had been reworked and enhanced. Arabic-Islamic map making was often based on mathematical-astronomical methods (trigonometry); drawing precise maps without it is therefore virtually impossible. The world map of al-Idrīsī of 1154, designed for Roger II, King of Sicily, is a good example, handing down older precise cartographical knowledge, for example the course of the Nile probably based on the Ma'mūn geographers and a new, more realistic, form of the Caspian Sea. Al-Idrīsī's map clearly shows the circumnavigability of Africa, and the Indian Ocean as an open sea.

The Venetian Marino Sanuto (ca.1260–1338) represented a world map in his handbook *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis Super Terrae Sanctae*, written around 1321, in order to facilitate the conquest of Palestine. It is based in large parts on the world map of al-Idrīsī, especially when it comes to the geography of Africa. Also mistakes of al-Idrīsī, for example the inaccuracies depicting the Atlas Mountains as a continuous mountain range, were reproduced. This is an early example for the appropriating and colonialist usage of cartographical knowledge.

Fig. 2 Ebstorfer World Map, ca. 1300, T-O-Design, probably elaborated at the monastery of Ebstorf, Northern Germany. The original map was destroyed during Second World War bombings but a reproduction from a facsimile survived. In clear contrast to the so-called Ptolemaic maps, the European Mappae Mundi (World Maps) were far from rational approaches.Accessed October 8, 2016. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ebstorfer-stich2.jpg

It should be taken into account that the so called old world's long-distance sea trading centers from the 8th to the 16th century, before the Portuguese crusaders appeared, were located mainly along the Arabian-African and Indian and Chinese coasts of the Indian Ocean, as Janet Abu-Lughod has shown in her ground-breaking study *Before European Hegemony* (Abu-Lughod 1991). Joseph Needham demonstrated that Arabic-Chinese trade relations were soon extended to the coast of East Africa when Arabs began to establish trading posts in Somalia, Sofala, Zanzibar and Madagascar in the 8th and 9th centuries (Needham 2007, 494). In the 9th century the historian and geographer al-Yaqʿūbī (d. 897 or after 905) described in his Kitāb al-buldān (Book of the countries) the long-distance sea trade from China to Morocco at the Atlantic coast.

The report from the last quarter of the 9th century tells us that boats built in Ubulla on the Tigris regularly anchored next to the Baḥlūl mosque in the North African port of Māssa (south of Agadir) on the Atlantic coast and transported goods to China (Sezgin 2005, 565). The famous Tang Annals, edited in 945 AD, mentioned approximately 2,000 Arab and Persian merchants trading in Canton. Precise geographical, cartographical and nautical knowledge was required in order to circumnavigate the southern tip of Africa.We do not have an Arabic monograph on the compass at our disposal, but know from a later treatise by al-Ašraf from Yemen written in (1291 AD) that navigators were aware of the phenomenon of magnetic variation, which they took into account when plotting their courses.

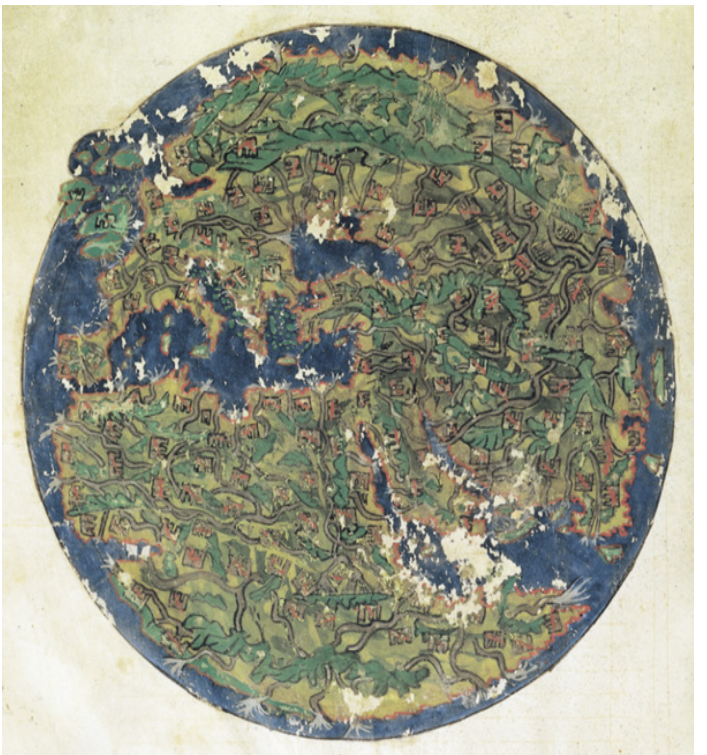

Fig. 3 World Map in Brunetto Latini's Livres dou Trésor (Treasure-house of knowledge), an encyclopedia, which included a universal history and ethics beside sections on geography. Only one surviving manuscript, dating back to 1310, includes the "World Map." Digital reproduction © Institute for Arabic-Islamic History of Science, Frankfurt a.M.

Fig. 4 Copy of the World Map of al-Idrīsī designed for Roger II, King of Sicily, in 1154. The world map is included in a manuscript, dated to late 13th / early 14th century, which is now preserved at Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS. Arab 2221, fol. 3v-4r. Accessed October 8, 2016. https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000547t/f14.image.

Fig. 5 'Liber secretorum fidelium crucis' by Marino Sanudo with maps by Pietro Vesconte, created ca. 1321. British Library, Public Domain, Add.MS 27376* Accessed July 15, 2018. https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/liber-secretorum-fidelium-crucis-by-marino-sanudo.

He mentioned that in the Indian Ocean the compass needle does not point exactly in the direction of the polar star, but only approximately (bi-t-taqrīb) (Sezgin 2010, 233; Sezgin 2000, 237). Most probably the compass, beside other nautical instruments, reached Mediterranean seafarers from these seafarers on the Indian Ocean.

When the Portuguese under Henry the Seafarer conquered the Moroccan Atlantic port city Ceuta in 1415, they were surprised to find Chinese porcelain and Arabic maps. From 1422 to 1434 the Portuguese tried over twenty times to sail beyond Cape Bojador ('The Cape of Fear'), which is south of Morocco, finally succeeding with Gil Eanes in 1434. When the Portuguese entered what is now Senegal for the first time in 1444, they believed they were close to the Nile, flowing into the western sea (Baker 1967, 65), probably as the map of al-Idrīsī shows a Western arm of the Nile flowing into the Western-African Atlantic. These Portuguese sea 'journeys' went hand in hand with hunting for Africans to enslave, whom the Portuguese described as 'Moors.'

It is typical for the creation of Eurocentric legends and master narratives that Henry, the Portuguese pretender to the throne, who never or not more than once went out to sea, is mythologized as 'Henry the Seafarer' (Bucher 2006, 78). In 1483 Columbus sailed along the West African Coast to Elmina (Arabic al-mīnā'= port) in Ghana, thereby always having land in sight. Cristobal and Bar-

tholoméo Colon both lived in Lisbon since 1480, where the younger brother worked as a sea cartographer. It is well known that the Italian Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli (1397–1482) sent a map to Portugal, which showed Atlantic Asia towards the West. The map, which did not survive, had reached probably the nautical school in Lisbon. It cannot be ruled out that it was this map that Columbus and his son mentioned when sailing in the Caribbean. A report on another map, the Map of Fra Mauro from 1459, is astonishing. The Venetian monk probably accessed cartographic information necessary to draw the map through Niccolò de Conti (d. 1469), a traveler who left Venice for Damascus, where he started to learn Arabic. De Conti then travelled via Baghdad, Basra, Persia to India, Sumatra, Java and Vietnam, before returning to Venice in 1444 via Aden, Jeddah and Cairo. One report among around 3,000 legends on the map tells of an Indian junk (*zoncho de India*). While crossing the Sea of India towards the Ilse of Men and Women and driven by a storm beyond the Cape of Diab, it went "through the Green Isles, out into the Sea of Darkness towards the Algarve in the west. For forty days they found nothing but sky and water." (Sezgin 2011, 116)

Fuat Sezgin analyzed the legend about the Fra Mauro map in the context of a possible pre-Columbian 'discovery' of America, collecting all possible historic testimonies, which sustain the hypothesis of a journey to America by Muslim seafarers (Sezgin 2013). The Fra Mauro

Map shows the shape of Africa quite precisely at a time when the Portuguese had not yet reached the tip of Africa. Without expanding the debate on a pre-Columbian 'discovery' of America, the extensive studies by Fuat Sezgin enable a deep insight not least into mathematical, astronomical, and nautical backgrounds, an essential key to grasp maps.

It has to be emphasized at this point that the capacity to sail the Indian Ocean seems to be a key for the decryption of a possible crossing of the Atlantic before Columbus. Furthermore, the colonial conquest of Africa, Asia and America is to be studied transcontinentally and comparatively. Not rarely do we find a personal union when it comes to central figures, e.g. Pedro Álvares Cabral, the famous 'discoverer' of Brazil, who was the successor of Vasco da Gama. After 'discovering' Brazil in spring 1500, Cabral already defeated an Arabic-Islamic fleet near Calicut (Planhol 2000, 394). Fuat Sezgin has shown that Brazil was most probably known to Afro-Arabic seafarers long before the continent was known to Europeans (Billig 2017, 260-262). Other early cross-Atlantic contacts were the undisputable Newfoundland journeys by the Vikings via Greenland and the reverse crossings of the Atlantic by Native Americans—researched by Jack Forbes in his prominent study *Africans and Native Americans* (Forbes 1993).

Fig. 6 Fra Mauro World Map, 1459 or 1460, 2.4 by 2.4 meters, Museo Correr, Venice, Italy.
The original map is orientated southwards (here northwards). Public Domain. Accessed October 8, 2016. http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/95/Fra_Mauro_World_Map,_c.1450.jpg.

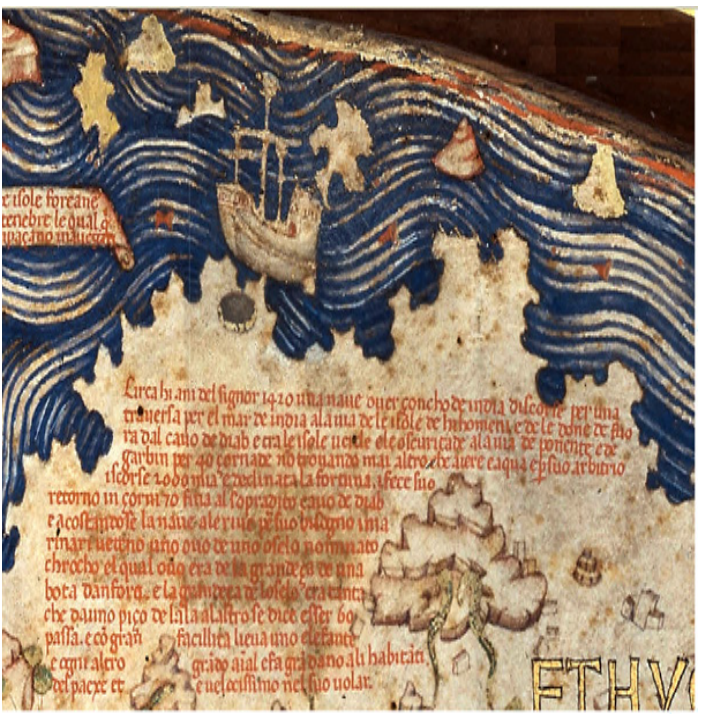

Fig. 7 Legend on the Fra Mauro World Map telling the route of the Indian junk (zoncho de India).

While the Native people of the Pacific were very experienced in orienting themselves with the help of the Southern Cross, the course of birds and cloud formations, for example, the Portuguese and Spanish crusaders did not have sufficient experience, nor fundamental knowledge to precisely apply astronomical nautical instruments. Still, in the 15th century the Portuguese believed that the world did not extend beyond Cape Bojador. Columbus imagined the world in a pear shape; his latitude 'measurements' of Cuba deviated by 21 degrees (42 degrees compared to actual 21 degrees) (Sezgin 2005, 142).

In short: the knowledge of the *conquistadores* is to be seen primarily in the fields of ruthless warfare, while their astronomical, cartographic and nautical knowledge clearly had Arabic-Islamic sources. When the Portuguese finally circumnavigated the southern tip of Africa at the turn of the 16th century under Bartolomeu Diaz and Vasco da Gama, they were piloted by Arab navigators (Sezgin 2005, 37). From da Gama's diaries we learn about the usage of graduated sea maps and advanced nautical techniques used by the Arab navigators, who might thus have unintentionally paved the way for early colonialism in India. The Portuguese term for a navigator who masters to sail on the open Indian Ocean was 'Malemo' from Arabic 'Mu'alim' (teacher) (Agius 2009, 130). Such experienced pilots were often also taken hostage and forced to sail with the Portuguese, thus enabling European colonialism (Da Gama 2006, 63). A historical account of events in the year of 1415 illuminates contrast-

ing developments along the African coasts. While on the African East coast Chinese ships arrived with presents, e.g. porcelain, before returning with gifts, among them a giraffe, the Portuguese conquered the Arabic port city of Ceuta on the Western coast at the end of the trans-Saharan trade route. They also looted Arabic charts, portolan maps and nautical instruments, which probably enabled them to sail further south (Salentiny 1977, 33). After hard negotiations with Spain, the Portuguese succeeded in the treaty of Tordesillas (1494) to claim Brazil for domination, raising the question whether or not they might have known about lands along the coast of Southern America much earlier.

Conclusion

In the context of a much-needed decolonization of the history of science and technology, it is preferable to discuss the beginnings of a more systematized colonialism in relation to the early prerequisites, such as the appropriation of non-European knowledge, which enabled Europeans to reach as far as the shores of the Americas and the Indian Ocean. The history of astronomy, geography, cartography, and nautical sciences, beside shipbuilding and other fields of knowledge, are to be challenged by decolonial studies from a Global South perspective. Regarding especially the modernization of colonialism in the long 15th century—compared to preceding crusading movements—it is obvious that the appropriation and integration of Arabic science and

techniques took around five centuries. The waves of Arabic knowledge that reached Europe introduced what in Eurocentric historical thought is often called 'the Renaissance' (ital. *rinascimento*). But did the travel of Arabic knowledge stop in South-Western Europe? Or, was it taken along the transatlantic colonization of Aby Yala to the other side of the ocean? Walter Mignolo discusses the impact of the Latinization on Indigenous science and knowledge, with the example of Amerindian medicinal, botanic knowledge transmitted orally into Nahuatl, which then had been written down and visualized with botanic drawings by European missionaries (Mignolo 1998, 57).

The high standard of Arabic systematization of medicine was one of the reasons why the notorious Ximenes, head of the inquisition, abstained from burning Arabic medicinal books following the conquest of Grenada, the last remaining Arabic city on the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. Not least Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) had systemized and broadened medical knowledge, based on ancient Galenic, Dioscuridian, Rufus and other sources. The Perso-Arabic Ibn Sīnā became the Latinized Avicenna. His 11th century's Canon of Medicine was one of the most important teaching books for medicine up to early 20th century. In *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (2007), George Saliba has discussed the Arabic revision of Greek, specifically astronomic, science. Also, science does not have a religion, a long-term and universal approach to the history of science verifies that

the travel of knowledge flows—embedded into social, cultural and religious milieu—through time and space[4]. But, knowledge is not pure knowledge. In the context of colonialism, science is far from being embedded into a constructive and peaceful travel and exchange of knowledge between peoples, cultures, and continents, but instead immersed in a colonial power matrix that has produced a certain hierarchized epistemological ordering system. Decolonial research will have to go to the bottom of sciences, analyzing the ethical and wider milieu in which knowledge is embedded.

After the completion of the so called "Reconquista", on the periphery of the Spanish Empire new knowledge began to take shape, be it in Italian Florence or Bologna. The adaption of mainly Arabic scientific sources into the early European knowledge canon needs to be included into the debates regarding any 'rethinking of humanism'. Hans Belting has shown exemplarily with the history of the discovery of mathematical laws and their application in optics, which enabled the construction of the central perspective in early modern painting, that this know-how traces back mainly to Arabic expertise. Leonardo Da Vinci, who based his knowledge in this regard foremost on the Latin translation of the book of optics (Kitāb al-Manāzir), written by Ibn al-Haitham (d. 1040) in Cairo, is just one example. Da Vinci was also inspired by this insight to experiment with the *camera obscura* (Belting 2012, 142). Furthermore, the historical layers of a new understanding of the human

body, health, medicine and pharmaceutics will have to be taken into consideration, as much as the spreading of Averroism to the universities of Padua or Bologna in the 16th century. Averroism is a philosophical school based on the Arabic-Islamic tradition of Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), emancipating philosophy and the autonomy of the idea of 'human beingness' from theological narrowness. The rejection of the philosophy of Averroes (Ibn Rushd) at the University of Paris from mid-13th century onwards had initiated a long lasting animosity towards humanistic thought and sciences. The Bishop of Paris had decreed in 1270 that it is wrong "to assume that human beings know", i.e. that human beings strive for knowledge. On the contrary, sciences, philosophy, literature and culture were flourishing when embedded into humanistic world views. The preeminent culture of tolerance, be it in Bagdad, Cairo or Cordoba, was a precondition for any unfolding of sciences. To sail the open sea, be it the Indian Ocean, the Pacific or the Atlantic, required first and foremost geographic positioning, which in turn necessitates profound knowledge of fix-star astronomy together with special skills to operate and orchestrate different navigational instruments (compass, hourglasses or the Kamāl)

Late 15th-century European *conquistadores* assimilated Arabic astronomy, nautical ciences and cartography, before being able to reach the shores, where they hoped to find the long-desired treasures. The European colonisers first had to appropriate knowledge, before being capable of looting the Global South.

A critical re-reading of the so-called European Renaissance requires the study of the historic fundaments, written sources and philosophical meta-dimensions on which science and technology were based at the turn from the 15th to the 16th century, in order to decolonize the history of science. Arabic astronomical and cartographical knowledge was able to offer geographical orientation far beyond the early mythological and apocalyptic visions in European maps. When Columbus crossed the Atlantic, the more ethical foundation of knowledge, sciences, navigation and seafaring was thrown overboard, and knowledge was transformed for colonialist purposes. In order to achieve a more ethical foundation of history of science and knowledge, the task of postcolonial and decolonial scholarship is to re-evaluate the history of science, disentangle Eurocentric appropriations of non-European sciences, and assign non-European sciences their appropriate achievements and role in the development of science proper.

Notes

1. Here pluri-universal means plurality in unity. Human Beingness shares only one globe which is not separable into many worlds. This holds also true for the one universe even though there might be many. Contrary to hegemonic Eurocentric narratives, dominating the understanding of history since the globalization of colonialist-enlightened master narratives over a long time

even beyond Europe, universalism, which I take as a theoretical basis (Quintern 2020 [1996]), has Asia and Africa as point of departure for the long east-south-north travel of science into Europe. In this context Enrique Dussel differentiated imperial from what he calls "Muslim" universalism, emphasizing that Muslim "universality" reached from the Atlantic to the Pacific. "Latin Europe was a secondary, peripheral culture and up to this point had never been the 'center' of history" (Dussel 2000:466).

2. The inclined ecliptic is the ca. 23.4° inclination of the axis of the earth to its orbital plane, resulting in greater heat and more hours of daylight in one hemisphere. The inclined ecliptic is responsible for the cyclic change of seasons over the course of a year.

3. I have seen so far three different translations of the legend. The original Old Italian legend has to be proven again. "Circa hi ani del Signor 1420 una nave over çoncho de india discorse per una traversa per el mar de india a la via de le isole de hi homeni e de le done de fuora dal cavo de diab e tra le isole verde e le oscuritade a la via de ponente e de garbin per 40 çornade, non trovando mai altro che aiere e aqua, e per suo arbitrio iscorse 2000 mia e declinata la fortuna i fece suo retorno in çorni 70 fina al sopradito cavo de diab. E acostandose la nave a le rive per suo bisogno, i marinari vedeno uno ovo de uno oselo nominato chrocho, el qual ovo era de la grandeça de una bota d'anfora, e la grandeça de l'oselo era tanta che da uno piço de l'ala a l'altro se dice esser 60 passa, e con gran facillità lieva uno elefante e ogni altro grando animal e fa gran dano a li habitanti del paexe et è velocissimo nel suo volar." Transcriptions of the map's texts by Piero Falchetta. Accessed October 8, 2016. http://ge-

oweb.venezia.sbn.it/cms/images/stories/Testi_HSL/FM_iscr.pdf

4. For example, one of my future projects will research Indigenous medical knowledge in the South of today's Costa Rica and the North of Panama, comparing it with "old world" knowledge brought by the conquistadores. Sometimes we find specific endemic medical plants parallel to imported ones from the "old world", e.g. mint from the same family. Also, the healing knowledge differs and corresponds.

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"For you have given me speech!"—Gifted Ethnographers, Illiterate Primitives, and Media Epistemologies in the Poetry and Plurimedial Writing of Margaret Mead

A. Elisabeth Reichel

Introduction

In her children's book *People and Places* (1959), U.S. American cultural anthropologist and public intellectual Margaret Mead opens with an evolutionary account of human history[1]. The first chapter in this account, "Man's Discovery of Man," ends with the invention of writing, which marks the transition to what is designated as a significantly higher stage in human development, to be portrayed in the next chapter, "Man as a Being." Writing, for Mead, presents

> a next great step in human history. And as soon as people could write, they did not have to depend on the memory of living people or the stories that old people told, but could keep the knowledge of a past beyond the memory of anyone alive. As they could keep records, they could begin to know what was happening to them and to ask questions: Was the kingdom getting larger or smaller? Did the river rise at the exact same time every year? And because all the special knowledge—how to govern, how to pray, how to make offerings to the gods, how to plant crops, or how to temper metal—no longer had to be carried in their heads, it could even be lost and learned again as long as people could read what had been written down. Civilization as we think of it seems to have started approximately five thousand years ago. (Mead 1959, 34–35)

According to Mead's account, the "next great step in human history" that was taken with the invention of writing turned man from "Discovery" into "Being" and enabled significant growth and specialization of knowledge with direct and determining effects on the way people think. For as soon as people could write and as long as people could read, Mead argues, their heads could be unburdened from past and "special" knowledge and, by consequence, rendered spacious enough to consider for the first time more abstract, long-term questions. Indeed, Mead claims, writing induces the passage to "Civilization as we think of it." With an article or qualifier conspicu-

ously absent, the potential plurality and relativity of cultures as promoted by Mead's teachers Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict—non-capitalized, plural—collapses into a unified, teleological concept, *Civilization*—capitalized, singular. The latter constitutes a unique state in human development that Mead's Euro-American readers, allied with the author as "we," are assumed to be familiar with.

This passage thus resonates eerily with the writing of 19th-century cultural evolutionists, the very "armchair anthropology" that Boasian fieldworkers such as Mead notably sought to refute (Stocking 1968, 1974, 1989, 1990, 2002). Cultural evolutionist theories in the late nineteenth century prominently involved assertions about the invention of writing and particular sign systems as key milestones in the development of humankind. Isaac Taylor's monumental *The Alphabet: An Account of the Origin and Development of Letters* (1883) posits a unilinear evolutionary sequence from pictorial and pictographic writing systems over logographic and syllabic writing to, finally, an alphabetic writing system. As Bruce G. Trigger explains, "The logic underlying this scheme was the observation that phrases, morphemes [...], syllables [...], and phonemes [...] represent increasingly basic and esoteric levels of analysis but at the same time offer ever more efficient means by which to record speech" (Trigger 2004, 41). The more abstract and arbitrary the relation between signifier and signified, the logic went, the more efficient and thus conducive to progress the

respective writing system. Consequently, Taylor considered Chinese and Japanese scripts indicative of a general backwardness of East Asian societies and claimed that their industrialization was contingent on the adoption of an alphabetic writing system (Taylor 1883, 25-38). Almost needless to say, the rapid economic development that Japan and China in particular have recently gone through while maintaining largely logographic writing systems provides definite proof of the unsubstantiated nature of such pseudoscientific arguments.

In the U.S.-American nineteenth-century context, Lewis Henry Morgan gained great influence through his leadership role in the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the adoption of his evolutionist scheme by John Wesley Powell, the founding director of the Bureau of American Ethnology, thus eventually becoming synonymous on both sides of the Atlantic with the cultural evolutionism that British Victorian thinkers such as Taylor, Edward B. Tylor, and John Lubbock had initially put forward. Morgan's *Ancient Society: Or, Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization* (1877) lays out a seven-stage typology that defines Civilization against (Lower, Middle, and Upper) Savagery and (Lower, Middle, and Upper) Barbarism as the most advanced stage in human history, which sets in with "the Invention of a Phonetic Alphabet, with the use of writing" (Morgan 1877, 12). Mead's evolutionist account at the beginning of *People*

and Places shares with this rendering of human history not only the idea that Civilization started with the invention of script but also the equation of this invention with alphabetic writing. Taylor, Morgan, and Mead all acknowledge the existence of a plurality of notation systems, yet do so only by drawing up further developmental trajectories that dismiss other than alphabetic writing systems as antecedent to the present European state of media-technological innovation. By extension, following the media-determinist logic that judges civilizational progress by the "efficiency" of people's media use, they dismiss their users as inferior to Europeans in their mental and social capacities. "Picture Writing, or idiographic symbols," for instance, rank second in a five-part series of inventions that leads up to "a Phonetic Alphabet, or written sounds" in Morgan (1877, 589), while they are cited in Mead as a media-technological achievement that renders the Aztecs superior to the Incas, who "had no writing at all" and relied in their communication between "distant parts of the empire" entirely on *quipus*, that is, highly inefficient, "complicated knotted chords" (Mead 1959, 35).

Historians of writing have traced the discursive and associative entanglements between notions of literacy and culture much further back than 19th-century cultural evolutionism, exposing them as integral to a process of epistemic colonization that set in about the time of the European Renaissance. Elizabeth Hill Boone and Wal-

ter D. Mignolo's co-edited volume *Writing without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes* (Boone and Mignolo 1994) has been particularly influential in defining the colonization of writing as a constitutive part of the colonization of knowledge that establishes the Eurocentric understanding of media technologies as necessary to exclude the colonized from dominant processes of knowledge formation. As Joanne Rappaport, one of the volume's contributors avers, "the power of European institutions was constituted and maintained through the spread of [a Eurocentric notion of] literacy" in particular between the late sixteenth and the early nineteenth centuries (Rappaport 1994, 271). A great number of scholars have followed in the footsteps of this early work on the colonization of writing, answering Boone and Mignolo's powerful call for studies that explore the contested history of the world's literacies[2]. In his own research on Renaissance theories of writing, Mignolo uses the Spanish missionaries' historiographical writing on Amerindians as an example of the colonization of Native discourses, which he defines as a "situation […] in which the act of writing the history of a community means both suppressing and mistrusting the voices of a subjected community" (Mignolo 1992, 311). The Spanish chroniclers mistrust the Amerindian means of recording the past, such as picto-ideographic writing, oral narratives, and quipus, instead taking it upon themselves to present the information provided by their subjects in the medium that they consider most suited for historiography, that is, alphabetic writing.

In this article I explore some of the dynamics of this process of epistemic colonization through media colonization as it unfolds in Margaret Mead's literary and plurimedial writing from the early to mid-20th century. My critique of Mead's continued reliance on cultural evolutionist, Eurocentric media concepts in an effort to produce knowledge about non-European subjects further underlines the necessity of challenging these very technologies as an essential step toward intellectual decolonization and postcolonial knowledge formation. In response to this necessity, Boone's introduction to Writing without Words redefines writing in radically broad terms as "*the communication of relatively specific ideas in a conventional manner by means of permanent, visible marks*" (Boone 1994, 15; emphasis original). However, especially in literature-trained scholarship, the medium of alphabetic writing together with its discursive history often remains a blind spot, that is, writing is usually taken for granted in our analyses, despite widespread agreement with Marie-Laure Ryan's dictum that media are not "hollow pipelines" (Ryan 2005, 289). By contrast, I concur with Sven Werkmeister that "the medium of literature itself […] needs to be examined in terms of the hazardous legacy it derives from its role in the history of colonialism" (Werkmeister 2016, 253).

More concretely, I first argue that Mead's writing about and *with* words is continuous with the Eurocentric cultural evolutionist understanding of phonetic writing as

a marker of ultimate human advancement. In doing so, I diverge to some extent from the dominant framing of the history of anthropology as a series of paradigms, with cultural evolutionism being replaced by cultural relativism in the first decades of the 20th century. As Tracy Teslow (2014) has recently shown, this narrative considerably downplays the continued imbrication of early proponents of cultural relativism, such as Boas, Benedict, and Mead, in 19th-century evolutionist thought[3]. I claim that it is in Mead's use of different media that these continuities are particularly manifest, through my investigation of the ramifications of her association of alphabetic writing with superior development, particularly in her treatment of media other than alphabetic writing. If the capacity to write is grafted onto the default, Civilized human, does this entail an understanding of the use of other media as failure and lack of human refinement? Do media other than alphabetic writing in this way end up being isomorphically aligned with a developmental state other than—and inferior to—Civilization?

In order to probe these questions, I first focus on Mead's monomedial, poetic writing and then, in the second half of this article, branch out to consider the plurimedial work that grew out of her fieldwork in Bali. Mead stayed in Bali for two years from March 1936 to March 1938, and for another six weeks from February to March 1939. During this time she collected around 25,000 still photographs and 22,000 feet of film footage, together

with her fellow anthropologist and then husband Gregory Bateson, in the mountain village of Bajoeng Gedé. The copious materials were later screened to make selections for two photographic studies, Balinese Character (Bateson and Mead 1942) and Growth and Culture (Mead and Macgregor 1951), as well as the film series Character Formation in Different Cultures (Mead and Bateson 1951, 1952a, 1952b, 1954a, 1954b, 1978; Mead, Bateson, and Belo 1952). Within this large corpus of texts, which combines written words with photography and motion picture film, I am guided by Mead's verbal and visual portrayal of Karba, a Balinese boy to whom large portions of *Balinese Character* (Bateson and Mead 1942) and *Growth and Culture* (Mead and Macgregor 1951) are devoted, as well as the film *Karba's First Years: A Study of Balinese Childhood* (Mead and Bateson 1952b). Karba also makes a final appearance toward the end of *People and Places* (Mead 1959). Apart from the evolutionary account with which I opened this article, and which appears at the beginning of the monograph, *People and Places* (Mead 1959) presents different representational media on a second dimension, by interlacing its body text with ample illustrations. When Mead was asked to write a book on anthropology for children, she reasoned that "because children's books are expected to be lavishly illustrated," she "could make the book suit a double purpose, as a text for children as well as a history of the evolution of techniques for the presentation and recording of other cultures—from the fanciful reconstructions

of and [sic] artist illustrator, through the careful drawings of museum artifacts, early paintings, still photography and finally color photography" (Mead 1976, 8)[4].

The Poetry of Margaret Mead and the Gift of Writing

Like her close associates and fellow Boasians Ruth Benedict and Edward Sapir, with whom she exchanged drafts and criticism[5]. Mead authored a substantial body of poems, six of which were published[6] and 222 of which have remained unpublished. This corpus has been largely ignored, with the exception of the intentionalist readings of Mead's biographers that reduce the poems to an outlet of personal expression and a conduit for private thoughts (Banner 2003; Bateson 1984; Howard 1984; Lapsley 1999). This simplistic treatment partly stems from Mead's own dismissal, in her later career, of her literary endeavors as subordinate and subservient to her anthropological work (Mead 1976, 2-4; Mead 1975, 115-122). Contrary to how this body of work is predominantly received, then, I close-read Mead's poetry in a discussion of the poet-anthropologist's media practices.

The poem "Your Gift" (1927a) was compiled by Mead together with nine other poems in a small volume titled *Song of Five Springs*[7].

Your Gift

For you have given me speech!
No more I'll sit, an anxious child
Awed by articulate elders,
Dumb in envy of the melodies
That fall from human lips, while mine
Can only give straight, formal kisses,
And the slight, unfreighted syllables
Of infancy.

No more I'll fear that love
Will strangle in his two swift hands
A speechless heart.

Nor must I train my feet to rest,
Crossed impotently in crowded valleys,
And never venture up those slopes of light,
Gleaming with pain to those
Who have no way of utterance.

All travelled and untravelled ways
Are for me now.
For all encountered beauty I may press
Upon your lips of loveliness. (Mead 1927a, n.pg)

With great enthusiasm and force, the first line announces the poem's eponymous gift to be "speech," the ability to speak articulately. The empowering nature of this gift, suggested by this forceful introductory exclamation, is accounted for in the remaining poem, as the perso-

na draws up images of former identities that have now turned into deficient alterities: "No more" is the persona "an anxious child / Awed by articulate elders" (Mead 1927a, n.pg) and "Dumb in envy of the melodies / That fall from human lips" (Mead 1927a, n.pg). Now that s/he has gained the power of speech, s/he has evolved from a child stupefied by eloquent elders into a full human being, who emits out from "human lips" "melodies" rather than "straight, formal kisses" and "slight, unfreighted syllables" (Mead 1927a, n.pg). "No more," either, can love do violence to her "speechless heart" (Mead 1927a, n.pg), now that s/he has the ability to express her/himself; "[n]or must [s/he] train [her/his] feet to rest" (Mead 1927a, n.pg). For the gift of speech, the poem's last two stanzas argue, also comes with the power to move: No more is the persona confined to "crowded valleys" (Mead 1927a, n.pg); no more is s/he one of those who have to look up "with pain" to "those slopes of light" that s/he is now able to "venture up" (Mead 1927a, n.pg). The curious link between the ability to move and to articulate oneself is resolved in the final stanza: Only if the "encountered beauty" (Mead 1927a, n.pg) may be expressed and "press[ed] / Upon [the addressee's] lips of loveliness" (Mead 1927a, n.pg), the reasoning goes, is the persona granted access to "[a]ll travelled and untravelled ways" (Mead 1927a, n.pg). It is important to note that travel has both literal and figurative meanings here, with movement being semanticized in such a way as to render it a metaphor

for knowledge gain. Thus, the persona's journey up the "slopes of light" (Mead 1927a, n.pg) that "[g]leam[] with pain" (Mead 1927a, n.pg) to those who are left behind in "crowded valleys" (Mead 1927a, n.pg) also signifies an increase in knowledge. Crucially, then, this rise in both knowledge and altitude appears as conditional on speech in Mead's poem. It is this gift that enables the persona to move up and above "those / Who have no way of utterance" (Mead 1927a, n.pg) and who rest with their feet "[c]rossed impotently" (Mead 1927a, n.pg), to a supreme stage in human development characterized by epistemic prowess.

Given this portrayal of an educational process set in motion by the poem's eponymous gift, one could even go as far as to argue that the persona belongs to a group of people that turn-of-the-century scholars such as Mead considered primitive or savage. The image of a people resting motionless in dark valleys until a benevolent, knowledgeable visitor introduces them to a superior way of communicating clearly hearkens back to the rhetoric of Enlightenment thinkers that saw it as the duty and necessary burden of the Civilized to educate savage peoples by bringing light into darkness, that is, European knowledge to presumably ignorant dark-skinned people. In this frame of thought, the uncivilized savage is conceived in ways strikingly similar to the portrayal of the persona in Mead's poem prior to receiving the addressee's gift: as an impressionable child in "awe"

and "envy" of those who are more advanced in human development measured by a Eurocentric standard. The childlike savage is depicted as "[d]umb," lacking in both intellect and the ability to speak articulately, but also as "unfreighted" and unburdened by the complexities of civilized life, which are represented by "the melodies / That fall from human lips" (Mead 1927a, n.pg) and contrast with the "straight" and "slight" utterances "[o]f infancy." As soon as the persona receives the addressee's gift, she/he embarks on a metaphorical path toward an enlightened, civilized state of being, leading up "slopes of light" (Mead 1927a, n.pg) which "[g]leam with pain to those / Who have no way of utterance" (Mead 1927a, n.pg). The progress that the persona achieves, in the logic of the poem, thanks to the gift of her/his civilized benefactor remains painfully out of reach for the other dwellers in the "crowded valleys" from which the persona started her/his journey. Since these savages as opposed to the persona have not been subjected to a benevolent civilizing mission undertaken from a Eurocentric perspective, they remain "impotent[]," helpless, and unable to progress beyond their primitive state of existence.

While this shows the poem's entrenchment in the cultural evolutionist notion of a superior state in human development and knowledge that is initiated by an innovation in verbal practices considered indispensable to European ways of communication, what at this point

of my analysis still sets "Your Gift" apart from such accounts of human development as Morgan's in *Ancient Society* (1877), but also Mead's at the beginning of *People and Places* (Mead 1959), is the latter's presentation of alphabetic writing as the necessary innovation and threshold to this superior state, not speech. However, a comprehensive analysis of "Your Gift" and its assessment of different media practices also requires taking the poem's own mediality into account. Critically, in "Your Gift" the persona's celebration of the gift of speech comes in written speech. It is not "press[ed]" on the addressee's "lips of loveliness" (Mead 1927a, n.pg) in an oral act of communication, as the persona proposes in the last stanza, but the exchange between persona and addressee—the report on the "beauty" "encountered" upon receiving "[y]our [g]ift"—takes place in alphabetic writing. Note again the first, exclamatory line, "For you have given me spech!" (Mead 1927a, n.pg), which is a conjunctional phrase seemingly in response to something that the addressee has expressed beforehand. Yet the exact reference remains unknown. Oral speech as well as other than alphabetic systems of notation are excluded from the literary text, and those who use them—such as the addressee, tellingly characterized by her/his "lips of loveliness" (Mead 1927a, n.pg)—are positioned among "those / Who have no way of utterance" (Mead 1927a, n.pg) in the media regime of the poem. The treatment of differences in media use is isomorphic, that is, media and systems of notation are defined negatively by their

lack and failure of being the default, alphabetic writing. Knowledge production is limited to phonetic writers, those who have ascended to a state of enlightenment.

Writing Balinese Culture: Mead's Plurimedial Monographs

In Mead's ethnographic work on Balinese culture, similarly, alphabetic writing is pitted against other media and ways of writing as well as people that are "less" literate in Mead's Eurocentric view. As the author makes sure to inform her readers in the very first pages of *Balinese Character* (Bateson and Mead 1942), her first monograph on Bali, "Writing there was, but only a half-dozen semi-literate individuals who were barely able to keep records of attendance, fines, etc." (Bateson and Mead 1942, xiii)[8]. 'Fully' literate and well able to keep records, by contrast, Mead and Bateson take it on themselves to write up the Balinese, thus both suppressing and mistrusting their subjects' records and engaging in the disenfranchising gesture that Mignolo found constutive of Spanish missionaries' colonization of Amerindian literacies (Mignolo 1992, 311). Mead and Bateson follow their ethnographic precursors, who continued this colonial practice in order to appropriate the right to study colonized subjects and lend authority to the knowledge that they generated in this way.[9] However, *Balinese Character* applies a methodology that combines alphabetic writing with photography, at the same time also breaking with

accepted conventions of ethnographic textualization. Mead and Bateson explain that the conventional method of writing up a group of people is flawed on several grounds:

> This method had many serious limitations: it transgressed the canons of precise and operational scientific exposition proper to science; it was far too dependent upon idiosyncratic factors of style and literary skill; it was difficult to duplicate; and it was difficult to evaluate. Most serious of all, we know this about the relationship between culture and verbal concepts—that the words which one culture has invested with meaning are by the very accuracy of their cultural fit, singularly inappropriate as vehicles for precise comment upon another culture. (Bateson and Mead 1942, xi)

Being sensitive *avant la lettre* to some of the predicaments that prompted the 1980s *Writing Culture* debate[10] in anthropology, that is, ethnography's failure to meet its own self-set standards of scientificity, the ineluctable literariness of ethnographic writing, and most damning, the fact that verbal representation is always already culturally inflected and hence "inappropriate as vehicle for precise comment upon another culture," Mead and Bateson construe photography as a representational medium that is diametrically opposed to alphabetic writing. Given their frustration with conventional ethnographic writing, the significantly younger media technology comes

to serve as a foil onto which they project their desire for a medium that is not characterized by an "accuracy" of "cultural fit" and not "inappropriate" therefore for cross-cultural representation. Hence, their naïve contention that "[e]ach single photograph may be regarded as almost purely objective" (Bateson and Mead 1942, 53). As Mead first explained in the rationale for her funding application with the Social Science Research Council, the camera is taken "as an automatic correction on the variability of the human observer," whose "cultural understanding" is subject to change during the fieldwork stay (Mead 1936, 3; also Mead 1956, 85; 1963, 172)[11].

Notwithstanding Mead and Bateson's acute awareness of writing's cultural partiality and their consequent invocation of photography as an impartial medium, the one hundred plates that make up the body of *Balinese Character* (Bateson and Mead 1942) contain a large portion of alphabetic writing. Besides an introductory statement, they feature lengthy captions for each photograph (Fig. 1 and 2):

> We have assumed that the objectivity of the photographs themselves justifies some freedom in the writing of the captions. We have not hesitated, therefore, to select for emphasis those features of the photograph which seemed most revealing, and to describe those features in words and syntax which might convey a sense of the emphases of Balinese culture as we understand it. (Bateson and Mead 1942, 53)

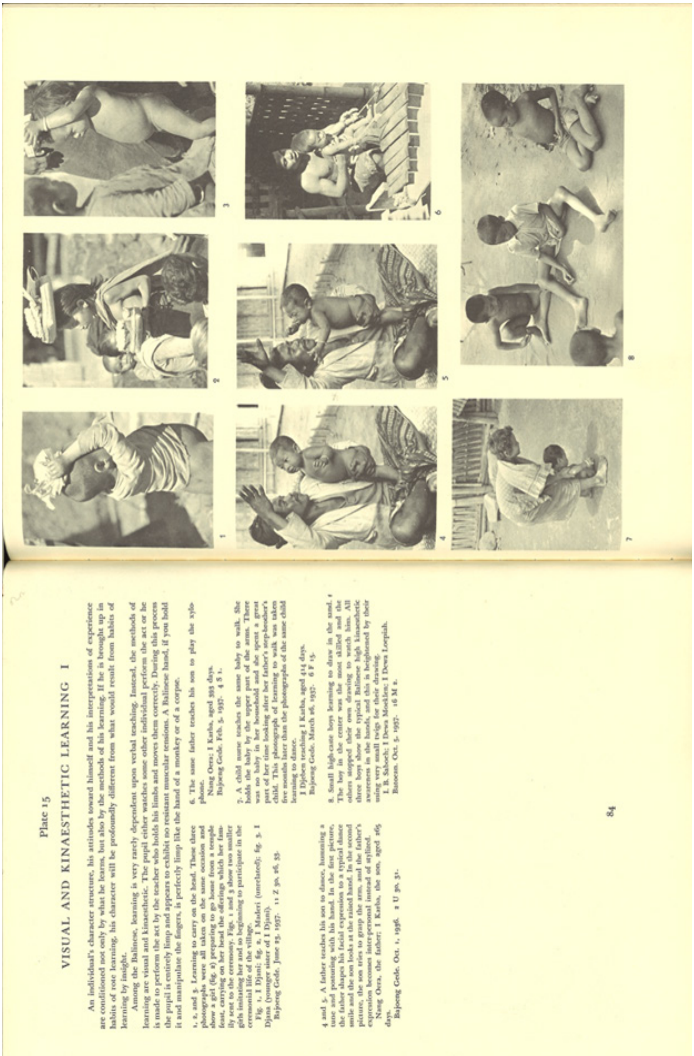

Plate 15

VISUAL AND KINAESTHETIC LEARNING I

An individual's character structure, his attitudes toward himself and his interpretations of experience are conditioned not only by what he learns, but also by the methods of his learning. If he is brought up in habits of rote learning, his character will be profoundly different from what would result from habits of learning by insight.

Among the Balinese, learning is very rarely dependent upon verbal teaching. Instead, the methods of learning are visual and kinaesthetic. The pupil either watches some other individual perform the act or he is made to perform the act by the teacher who holds his limbs and moves them correctly. During this process the pupil is entirely limp and appears to exhibit no resistant muscular tensions. A Balinese hand, if you hold it and manipulate the fingers, is perfectly limp like the hand of a monkey or of a corpse.

1, 2, and 3. Learning to carry on the head. These three photographs were all taken on the same occasion and show a girl (fig. 2) preparing to go home from a temple feast, carrying on her head the offerings which her family sent to the ceremony. Figs. 1 and 3 show two smaller girls imitating her and so beginning to participate in the ceremonial life of the village.

Fig. 1, I Djani; fig. 2, I Maderi (unrelated); fig. 3, I Djana (younger sister of I Djani).

Bajoeng Gede. June 23, 1937. 11 Z 30, 26, 33.

4 and 5. A father teaches his son to dance, humming a tune and posturing with his hand. In the first picture, the father shapes his facial expression to a typical dance smile and the son looks at the raised hand. In the second picture, the son tries to grasp the arm, and the father's expression becomes inter-personal instead of stylized.

Nang Oera, the father; I Karba, the son, aged 265 days.

Bajoeng Gede. Oct. 1, 1936. 2 U 30, 31.

6. The same father teaches his son to play the xylophone.

Nang Oera; I Karba, aged 393 days.

Bajoeng Gede. Feb. 5, 1937. 4 S 1.

7. A child nurse teaches the same baby to walk. She holds the baby by the upper part of the arms. There was no baby in her household and she spent a great part of her time looking after her father's step-brother's child. This photograph of learning to walk was taken five months later than the photographs of the same child learning to dance.

I Djeben teaching I Karba, aged 414 days.

Bajoeng Gede. March 26, 1937. 6 F 15.

8. Small high-caste boys learning to draw in the sand. The boy in the center was the most skilled and the others stopped their own drawing to watch him. All three boys show the typical Balinese high kinaesthetic awareness in the hands, and this is heightened by their using very small twigs for their drawing.

I. B. Saboeh; I Dewa Moeklen; I Dewa Loepiah.

Batoean. Oct. 5, 1937. 16 M 2.

84

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Fig. 1: Bateson and Mead 1942, 84-85.

The basic premise of Mead and Bateson's ethnographic study is that Balinese culture calls for interpretation, which they as anthropologists are equipped to provide. Yet with photography being annexed to alphabetic writing as a transparent medium exempt from cultural bias and processes of meaning construction, it is only in the captions' "words and syntax" that Mead and Bateson "might convey" what they consider "a sense of the emphases of Balinese culture" (Bateson and Mead 1942, 53). The alleged objectivity of photography, though, is profitably employed to heighten their scientific authority, guaranteeing data integrity to such an extent that they feel free to take greater liberties in their writing and, by implication, meaning-making of Balinese culture[12].

Growth and Culture (Mead and Macgregor 1951), Mead's second ethnography of Balinese culture, published with Frances Macgregor, relies much less on wordy captions in its signifying process. Nonetheless, it is still Mead's writing[13] that determines how the illiterate—or "semi-literate" (Bateson and Mead 1942, xiii)—Balinese are to be understood, while photography is used to substantiate this interpretation with presumably objective evidence. The first sixteen plates of the study introduce eight Balinese children individually, starting with Karba[14], who already featured prominently in *Balinese Character* (Bateson and Mead 1942; e. g. Fig. 1). In Mead's opening remarks, Karba is characterized as "the only surviving son" of his parents and "the gayest baby in the village of Bajoeng

Gedé" (Mead and Macgregor 1951, 64). She admits that "[t]here are more pictures of Karba than of any other child," and that "this is not entirely a result of circumstances" but of Karba's extraordinary "liveliness, intelligence, and responsiveness, which made him the most actively interested participant" and "the center of observation" even when he was not intended to be (Mead and Macgregor 1951, 64)[15]. Having thus portrayed Karba as a unique and positive character—strong, energetic, intelligent—Mead goes to great lengths to defend this reading against contrary photographic evidence. On the second plate dedicated to Karba and with regard to a photograph in which he sits sulking next to a group of more actively engaged children, Mead concedes that there is a "period of withdrawal through which Balinese children characteristically go" (Mead and Macgregor 1951, 66). However, "even in this period," she immediately counters, "his [Karba's] gaze is level and appraising; he is withdrawn into himself, but still presents a picture of a well-integrated child" (Mead and Macgregor 1951, 66). Mead's writing in this way evokes a picture in competition with the photograph, the "picture of a well-integrated child" with a "level and appraising" gaze; and since photography, in Mead's understanding and use of it, is devoid of cultural meaning and depends on the writer-anthropologist for interpretation, it is the latter's picture that prevails in how readers of *Growth and Culture* (Mead and Macgregor 1951) look at Karba.

It is also this image of Karba that "lives on" as the image of how "he really was in 1936," Mead notes in *People and Places*: "Karba, the little Balinese boy in a mountain village, who was photographed in 1936, lives on—on the covers of books, in films, and in the textbooks which one generation of students after another study—just as he really was in 1936" (Mead 1959, 207–208). The film *Karba's First Years: A Study of Balinese Childhood* (Mead and Bateson 1952b), for instance, also starts with a description of Karba as creative and "gay" in phonetic writing, in white letters scrolling upwards against a dark background, before the viewers are presented with camera-recorded evidence to support this characterization[16]. In *People and Places* (Mead 1959), as well, he reappears as the "actively interested" and "gay[] baby" (Mead and Macgregor 1951, 64) that Mead presented in her two monographs on Balinese culture. However, as Mead continues, there is a twist:

> [Karba lives on] just as he really was in 1936. And this is strange too, for in the years between, Karba has grown up and married; now he has children who will go to school in modern Indonesia and live a very different life from his own. But this grown-up Karba is not yet known to all the thousands of people who know the little Karba, for this picture, taken in 1953, is the first to be published of Karba as a man. (Mead 1959, 208)

A photo of a grown-up Karba appears, without further comment[17]. In this instant, Mead gives over the gift of speech to the photograph, granting it the power to complicate her former, written portrayal of Karba. The photo, then, which appears in the chapter "Where Are They Now?" and follows Mead's portrayal of five different cultures, "The Eskimo," "The Indians of the Plains," "The Ashanti of West Africa," "The Balinese," and "The Minoans of Crete," frustrates what Johannes Fabian (2014 [1983]) has influentially termed the "denial of coevalness," the "*persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse*" (31; emphasis in original). The photographic appearance of grown-up Karba thwarts the positioning of coexisting people in an earlier, more "primitive" or "savage" stage of human development, which has been a defining feature of anthropological discourse. Responding to the question "Where Are They Now?" the photo situates Karba firmly in the present of the 1950s, in which Mead writes *People and Places*. In the process, it acknowledges Karba's capacity for growth and development. Not only does he appear to have outgrown the characteristic gayness and active interest that Mead observed in her earlier photographic studies, with "Karba as a man" gazing languidly into the distance rather than engaging with the observer (Mead 1959, 208); more importantly, the photo breaks with the evolutionist myth that the most advanced, contemporary

stage of human development is conditional upon "the Invention of a Phonetic Alphabet, with the use of writing" (Morgan 1877, 12). Even without what Mead considers 'full' literacy, Karba has been able to evolve from infancy to maturity and an advanced state of knowledge. "No more," indeed, is he "an anxious child / Awed by articulate elders" and "Dumb in envy of the melodies / That fall from human lips" (Mead 1927a).

Even more, in this instant, Mead goes as far as to reconstruct the Balinese, a "primitive" people in Mead's 1936 funding application (Mead 1936, 2), as "a modern people" (Mead 1959, 207). However, a caveat is due, in order to put what is ultimately an isolated incident into perspective. Just as their portrayal in *Balinese Character* (Bateson and Mead 1942) and *Growth and Culture* (Mead and Macgregor 1951), the repositioning of the Balinese as modern and coeval at the end of *People and Places* (Mead 1959) still very much relies on alphabetic writing, the very medium whose full mastery the Balinese are denied and whose absence, in fact, rendered them Mead's "primitive" subjects of anthropological investigation in the first place[18]. To be sure, the photo of "Karba as a man" is framed by written words (contextualized by a monograph that consists largely of alphabetic writing) which provide the clues necessary to read it as an affirmation of coevalness. Most notably, it submits a response to the chapter's titular question "Where Are They Now?" Thus underneath the rupture in media practices

that Mead's plurimedial work signals—and which Mead calls for in her theoretical writing, most famously in her essay "Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words" (Mead 2003 [1975])—lie the same epistemic and political dynamics that are at play in her monomedial work. As alphabetic writing is established *in* alphabetic writing as integral to the most advanced stage in human development and knowledge, Mead's subjects of representation are deprived of their capacity to intervene in the very discourses that construe them as illiterate and underdeveloped, and by extension, unable to add to the knowledge of humankind. This capacity remains limited to those who qualify as literate in the Eurocentric taxonomy of media and writing systems that has been in use since Renaissance travelers first colonized Indigenous knowledge, that is, phonetic writers such as Mead. The formation of postcolonial knowledges therefore has to unsettle the media concepts employed in the production of colonial knowledge and the constitution of the power of European institutions.

Conclusion

While my analysis has shown that both Mead's poetic, monomedial writing and her plurimedial work extend well into the 20th century the process of epistemic colonization that her cultural evolutionist precursors had pushed forward in the 19th century, I want to conclude by returning to the second, more exploratory research

question formulated at the beginning of this article: If alphabetic writing is grafted onto the default, Civilized human, what does this entail when it comes to how other media are understood and treated? Mead's plurimedial writing has provided a particularly valuable platform to probe this question, given the anthropologist's simultaneous imbrication in 19th-century cultural evolutionist conceptions of writing and pioneering experimentation with photography and cine film. The analysis of Mead's first plurimedial study of the Balinese, *Balinese Character* (Bateson and Mead 1942), showed that media alterity, i.e. the use of media other than alphabetic writing, is defined isomorphically as a lack and the failure of being the default—alphabetic writing. That is, photography is cast as that which alphabetic writing is not; it is construed negatively (and falsely) as an "almost purely objective" (Bateson and Mead 1942, 53) medium of representation, which is not subject to the cultural imprint that makes alphabetic writing transgress the "precise and operational scientific exposition proper to science" (Bateson and Mead 1942, xi). It thus depends on the writer-anthropologist for interpretation; because of its presumed immediacy and transparency, photography does not produce the knowledge that Mead's Euro-American audiences require to make sense of the subject of representation. In this way, ideas about cultural and media alterity dovetail to corroborate the authority of the writer-anthropologist and the epistemology compounded by her work. Photographs and primitives, despite being ontological-

ly different entities, align discursively as subservient to a meaning-generating, knowledge-producing phonetic writer. Sven Werkmeister's study *Cultures beyond Writing: On the Discourse of the Primitive in Ethnology, Cultural Theory and Literature around 1900* [Kulturen jenseits der Schrift: Zur Figur des Primitiven in Ethnologie, Kulturtheorie und Literatur um 1900] (Werkmeister 2010) arrives at related results, noting a marked parallelism between notions of cultural and media alterity around the turn of the 20th century—a "curious affinity of subject and method, observed and observer" [eine "eigentümliche Affinität von Gegenstand und Methode, Beobachtetem und Beobachter"] (Werkmeister 2010, 165)[19]. In his discourse analysis of a range of fields, from travel writing to linguistic anthropology and ethnomusicology to theories of perception, semiotics, and media to modernist literature, Werkmeister argues that proponents of these fields imagined the cultural primitive and media and sign systems other than alphabetic writing in intricately interrelated ways. What connects these fields at bottom, he contends, is an opposition between symbolic and analog systems of notation in which the former is associated with the idea of a rational European equipped with cognitive skills such as abstraction, and the latter with the image of a more sensually perceptive primitive. While Werkmeister (2010) compellingly demonstrates the pervasiveness of this dualism, his discussion in the process also reveals an isomorphic relationship between media other than alphabetic writing and people other than Eu-

ropeans. In fact, the title *Cultures beyond Writing* already suggests as much: Whereas one pole of the dichotomy is formed by alphabetic *writing*, the other comprises an indefinite number of *cultures*, which are cast as primitive due to their common lack of script.

What is further evident by the end of *Cultures beyond Writing* is that this "media primitivism" ["medialer Primitivismus"] (Werkmeister 2010, 11 et passim) also involves a fascination with and desire for non-symbolic systems of notation and mediation due to their presumed immediacy in representation. Werkmeister's monograph closes by reading the modernist literary experiments of writers such as Hugo Ball, Alfred Döblin, and Robert Musil as being prompted by precisely this media primitivist longing. I have shown that Mead's work, too, is informed by a need for other than alphabetic, written media of representation to provide the unmediated directness that a symbolic sign system, requiring decoding of the relation between signifier and signified, fails to offer. However, the default against which photography and film are in this way measured and defined remains phonetic writing, the 'gift' of written speech. As in the logic of Mead's poem, where this capacity empowers the persona to explore "[a]ll travelled and untravelled ways" (Mead 1927a), knowledge gain is conditional upon alphabetic writing. It is also this ancient European media-technological innovation that vests the knowledge that Mead generates during her fieldwork with academic

authority, via its long-standing equation with a supreme stage in human development distinguished by epistemic prowess. Given the outcome of my analysis, it may not surprise that Mead went on to publish more than 1,300 written texts in her lifetime[20]. "Monuments to writing are built by writers," as Stephen Greenblatt already noted in his critique of Todorov's *Conquest of America* (Greenblatt 1991, 12; Todorov 1984). Surely, then, what we witness in Mead's poetic and plurimedial writing is a particularly apt writer building a monument to her craft.

Notes:

1. This article grows out of the Swiss National Science Foundation project "Of Cultural, Poetic, and Medial Alterity." I want to thank Philipp Schweighauser, his co-directors Gabriele Rippl and Walter Leimgruber, and the SNSF for their generous support. This institutional frame allowed me to access the archival materials necessary for the present article, which are held in the Margaret Mead Papers at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. I am indebted to the friendly assistance of the LoC's Manuscript Division. Figure 1 is reprinted by permission of the Bateson Idea Group, kindly granted by its President Phillip Guddemi. I further thank Philipp Schweighauser and Sven Werkmeister for their thoughtful feedback on an earlier version of this article. My critical reading of Mead's treatment of media alterity through the lens of isomorphism (Irigaray 1985 [1977]) has been inspired by Patricia MacCormack, who makes profitable use of the concept

in the context of posthuman studies. I am also grateful to Silvy Chakkalakal for providing me with a digital copy of the film series Character Formation in Different Cultures (Mead and Bateson 1951, 1952a, 1952b, 1954a, 1954b, 1978; Mead, Bateson, and Belo 1952). Finally, I want to thank Kerstin Knopf and Janelle Rodriques for their thorough editing of my manuscript and their thoughtful suggestions.

2. Recently, Liu (2010; 2015), Rath (2014a; 2014b), Brander Rasmussen (2012), Cohen (2010), and Teuton (2010), for example, have added valuable contributions to this body of research. Michel de Certeau's *The Writing of History* (1988 [1975]) forms another important early investigation that starts with the Renaissance alliance of writing with Civilization, antedating by two decades Mignolo's 1990s work and contributing to the debate in continental philosophy that Lévi-Strauss's "Writing Lesson" stimulated (Lévi-Strauss 1961 [1955], 286–297; Derrida 1997 [1967], 101–140; Barthes 1977 [1968]). Finally, and almost needless to say in the postcolonial studies context of the present volume, Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicism also involves an acute awareness of the complicity of notions of writing and semiotic conceptions with colonialist endeavors (Greenblatt 1990; 1991).

3. Teslow (2014) should also be approached with some caution, however. While profitably emphasizing the continuities between cultural evolutionism and Boasian anthropology to qualify the dominant narrative, Teslow's criticism of historian of anthropology George W. Stocking for popularizing this narrative, by applying Kuhn's concept of the paradigm to the history of anthropology (Teslow 2014, 3–12), does not sufficiently acknowledge the tentativeness and critical self-reflection with which Stocking puts forward his account. Espe-

cially in his book-length publications, Stocking makes sure to note that he "regard[s] Kuhn's schema not as a precise model […] but rather as a very fruitful heuristic metaphor which may help us to understand particular movements" (Stocking 1968, 302), "not as a model of how that development 'actually' takes place, […] but as an orientation toward certain aspects of certain episodes in the history of the [social sciences]" (Stocking 1987, xiv). Stocking's own unease with the disjunction that Kuhn's concept of the paradigm implies is further evident in his later move toward the term "tradition" (Stocking 1990; see also Stocking 1987, xiv).

4. Apart from the evolutionary account with which I opened this article, and which appears at the beginning of the monograph, *People and Places* (Mead 1959) presents different representational media on a second dimension, by interlacing its body text with ample illustrations. When Mead was asked to write a book on anthropology for children, she reasoned that "because children's books are expected to be lavishly illustrated," she "could make the book suit a double purpose, as a text for children as well as a history of the evolution of techniques for the presentation and recording of other cultures—from the fanciful reconstructions of and [sic] artist illustrator, through the careful drawings of museum artifacts, early paintings, still photography and finally color photography" (Mead 1976, 8).

5. For analyses of Benedict's poetry, see Schweighauser (2006) and Roffman (2010, 143–181); for Sapir's poetry, see Handler (1984; 2005a; 2005b; 2007), Reichel (2015), and Reichel and Schweighauser (2017). For a useful overview of the literary work of the latter, see also Carpenter (2014). What remains

of the correspondence in which the three anthropologists exchange and discuss each other's poetry is held in the Margaret Mead Papers (box T3, folder 6; box T4, folders 1-2; box S15, folder 2).

6. "The Penciling of Pain" in the *Barnard Barnacle* (1923a), "For a Proud Lady" (1925a) and "Rose Tree of Assisi" (1925b) in *The Measure*, "Misericordia" in *Poetry* (1930), "Absolute Benison" in *The New Republic* (1932), and "And Your Young Men Shall See Visions" in Eda Lou Walton's anthology *The City Day* (1929).

7. The hand-bound volume was probably compiled for Benedict (Library of Congress 2001). Apart from "Your Gift" (Mead 1927a), it comprises the poems "Drifted Silence" (Mead 1923b), "The Closed Door" (Mead 1924a), "A Craven's Technique" (Mead 1924b), "Traveler's Faith" (Mead 1925c), "Refutation" (Mead 1926), "The Need That Is Left" (Mead 1927b), "A Rueful Valentine" (Mead 1927c), "Green Sanctuary" (Mead 1927d), and "Cradle Song" (Mead 1927e) and is held in the Margaret Mead Papers (box S9, folder 5). The Mead Papers also contain two other typescripts of "Your Gift" (Mead 1927a; box Q15, folder 15), one of which features a handwritten note under the poem's title, "(For R.F.B.)," which further supports the idea that "Your Gift" was written for Ruth (Fulton) Benedict.

8. An early report published in *The New York Times Magazine* reveals a bias that contributed significantly to the production of such a "semi-" or illiterate subject of investigation. Because of limitations in time and resources, the readers learn, Mead and Bateson "decided not to work with the elaborate

high culture" of Bali but to settle down in Bajoeng Gedé, "a village of dour peasants, which lies in a closed hollow in the hills" (Mead 1939, 12). As opposed to Bali's "high culture," which features "two archaic religious languages with which the Balinese write their sacred texts on books made of sheaves of palm leaves" and an "intricate vocabulary for each of the dozens of styles of dances," in Bajoeng Gedé, "[t]he ceremonies were so simple that it was easy to master them" (Mead 1939, 12). Mead and Bateson's early decision to ignore the former and opt for the latter is downplayed in all later publications.

9. By the time Mead and Bateson did their fieldwork in Bali, the expression "to write up" a people had become ethnographic jargon (Handler 2005c, 143; Asad 1986, 159).

10. Clifford and Marcus (1986); but also Marcus and Fischer (1999 [1986]), Clifford (1988), Fabian (2014 [1983]), Hymes (1972), Rosaldo (1993 [1989]), and Manganaro (1990).

11. Mead would later use quotation marks, claiming that photography "present[ed] more 'objective' evidence" (Mead 1956, 104). However, the idea that the camera "provid[ed] reliable data" and "information independently of language" (Rouch and Hockings 2003 [1975], 533) still prevails in Mead and Bateson's (in)famous interview "For God's Sake, Margaret," where Mead vigorously rejects Bateson's view that the photographic record is never independent from the observer's subjective perception (Brand 1976, 39–40).

Mead's firm belief in the objectivity of photographic documentation is frequently noted—and criticized—among schol-

ars of visual anthropology, such as Sullivan (1999, 6–18, 20–21), Poole (2005, 168–169), and Blake and Harbord (2008, 217, 219, 221–222). Few scholars have so far followed Sol Worth's suggestion to read Mead more charitably as spearheading an "anthropology of visual communication" which breaks with the myth of photographic truth prevalent in nineteenth-century ethnographic photography (Worth 1981). For a good overview of the early history of visual anthropology, see Poole (2005) as well as Ruby (1996) and Wacowich (2010).

12. It has been argued that Mead's mobilization of photography and cine film as ethnographic tools also served to counter previous criticisms that had accused her of not providing sufficient objective evidence to support her cultural interpretations. Tara Blake and Janet Harbord thus describe Mead's use of the camera "on an unprecedented scale," to an "extreme extent," in martial terms: as "a type of re-arming" and "a re-assertion of her professional prowess" (Blake and Harbord 2008, 221–222; see also Sullivan 1999, 29–30).

13. Mead produced all the writing for *Growth and Culture* (Mead and Macgregor 1951), whereas Macgregor was responsible for arranging the photographs, taken by Bateson. In the collaboration out of which came *Balinese Character* (Bateson and Mead 1942), Mead wrote the introduction, which presents the study's theoretical and methodological framework, and Bateson took over the photographic analyses that accompany each plate.

14. *I Karba*, to be more precise. "Personal names in Bajoeng Gedé," Mead explains in a short "Note on Orthography and Pronunciation of Personal Names and Balinese Words,"

which precedes the book's body matter, "are prefixed with an I (pronounced *ee*) until an individual becomes a parent, and then the word *Nang* (father of) or *Men* (mother of) is prefaced to the name of the oldest child" (Mead and Macgregor 1951, 2).

15. In the second paragraph of Plate I, Mead continues to describe Karba using such categories as "outward rotation," "fluidity," and "flexibility" (Mead and Macgregor 1951, 64). Mead and Macgregor's interest in these observational categories is due to their application of a new methodology developed contemporaneously by child psychologist Arnold Gesell and pediatrician Frances Ilg at Yale (Lakoff 1996, 18).

16. There are two differences, though, to *Growth and Culture* (Mead and Macgregor 1951) in how Karba is portrayed in *Karba's First Years* (Mead and Bateson 1952b): First, the opening sequence of the film describes him further as characteristically "withdrawn," whereas the monograph dismisses Karba's withdrawnness as a mere phase through which all Balinese children go (Mead and Macgregor 1951, 66). Second, and even more important, in contrast to *Growth and Culture*, which emphasizes his uniqueness, in the filmic study of Balinese childhood, Karba stands synecdochically for Balinese culture as a whole: Karba is depicted as he "begins to develop a *Balinese* character, gay, artistic but withdrawn" (own emphasis), the opening crawl also notes.

17. This photograph was not taken by Bateson but by Ken Heyman, who would go on to collaborate with Mead on two photo-books, *Family* (Mead and Heyman 1965) and *World Enough: Rethinking the Future* (Mead and Heyman 1975). In

World Enough (Mead and Heyman 1975), Mead recapitulates how she met up with Heyman in Bali in 1956 (sic!) to re-photograph some of the people that Bateson had taken pictures of twenty years earlier and how she then decided to include some of the new photos in *People and Places* (Mead 1959), juxtaposing them with Bateson's pictures. "The children I had studied in the late 1930s were grown now," she explains the arrangement (Mead and Heyman 1975, xxi).

18. In her autobiography, Mead puts forward a definition of "the primitive" as her research subject that directly echoes Morgan's influential conception of "the savage" and "the barbarian" as those who lack script—despite Mead's manifest intention to distance herself from precisely the cultural evolutionism of her precursors: "Our training equipped us with a sense of respect for the people we would study. They were full human beings with a way of life that could be compared with our own and with the culture of any other people. No one spoke of the Kwakiutl or the Zuñi—or any other people—as savages or barbarians. They were, it was true, primitive; that is, their culture had developed without script and was maintained without the use of script. That was all the term 'primitive' meant to us" (Mead 1975, 151).

19. For an essay that translates some of the numerous findings and rich analyses that Werkmeister (2010) contains from German into English, see Werkmeister (2016).

20. Her *Complete Bibliography* 1925–1975 (Gordan 1976) lists 1,397 published writings. Mead remained an active writer until her death in 1978 and Adams (2016, 14, 276) claims that Mead published around 1,500 titles.

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On Volubility: Scholastic Commentary, Racial Capital and the Birth of the Modern Literary Field

Pierre-Héli Monot

Introduction

There is much criticism, not on deep grounds; but an affirmative philosophy is wanting.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Among the terms and metaphors that structure our casual, non-technical, non-specialized understanding of political participation, *affirmation* and *assertion* stand as somewhat bewildering cases. We casually employ these

terms, as well as their linguistic derivatives, when we describe societal policies such as "affirmative action". We use them as open categories in political deliberation, when we assert a thesis as "originary" (or as predating any dialectic elaboration), or when we want to signify agreement in a discussion. We also use these terms to describe broad processes of political emancipation, especially when we wish to attribute the agency of this emancipation to those who eventually benefited from it (as, for example, in the African-American tradition of "self-assertion" described by W. E. B. Du Bois [Du Bois 2007, 25]). As to what Hans Blumenberg called "absolute" metaphors of political agency (Blumenberg 2010, 7), "affirmation" and "assertion" function as signposts for the point where our ability to conceptually (as opposed to metaphorically) describe the concrete, functional content and meaning of our actions and opinions breaks down[1]. However, affirmation and assertion, as opposed to the other signposts Blumenberg most frequently wrote about (the absolute metaphors of "the naked truth", the "source", or the "book" as a metaphor for the legibility of nature, the cosmos, the heart, or history), do not, at first sight, appear to result from the historical sedimentation of successive layers of meaning, a process typical of the "absolutization" of metaphors. The historical unpacking of the past discursive practices in which *affirmation* and *assertion* once operated proves difficult, if not entirely fruitless, and does not lead us far beyond simple etymological insights.

Taking this conceptual poverty or "thinness" (Scott 1998, 257) as its starting point, this article will address the short-lived appearance and subsequent invisibilization of affirmative and assertive discourse during the height of American Romanticism. In his technical writings on metaphorology, Blumenberg points to "the power of metaphors which are related to claims which are difficult to ground in argumentative or indeed in any other terms."[3] I contend that the rise of affirmative and assertive discourse, understood as a counter position to the Romantic "culture of interpretation" (Lundin 2007, 55), marks a crucial step in the establishment of an anti-foundationalist strain in American political culture that paved the way for discursive modes that are essential to postcolonial cultural and literary history. As such, assertive discourse enabled both the propagation and eventual recognition of a number of basal claims in the public sphere (such as the anthropological personhood of African Americans, predating the recognition of their legal personhood) and the denunciation of the covert racial implications of Romantic volubility, i.e. the structurally legitimized hyperproduction of commentary and its incorporation as a racialized disposition by some participants in the public sphere. I begin by somewhat lengthily outlining how several central tropes of German Romanticism were replicated and disseminated in the American literary and academic fields, and conclude with a discussion of Frederick Douglass's conception of an affirmative hermeneutics and affirmative poetics. As

the rhetoric of affirmation developed by Douglass principally sought to disrupt the verbosity of the literary and political cultures of American Romanticism, I conclude this essay by outlining what affirmative poetics purports *not to be*, rather than attempting its positive, normalizing description. By doing this, this article addresses the philological background of much of American Romanticism from a postcolonial perspective and puts forth one overarching argument: the boundless production of academic commentary, that is, the legitimation of *volubility* by the philological field for the philological field, was first legitimized by Romantic theorists of interpretation in Europe and the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century and equated the production of philological discourse with the distribution of racial prestige, or racial capital. Those who participated in the philological and literary fields as producers of this kind of discourse were demonstrably aware of its inherent racial contents. Thus, I contend that current attempts to decolonize literary theory must seek to avoid the reproduction of a philological, hermeneutic economy that circulated "whiteness" in place of "meaning". The example set by Douglass, whose *affirmative* hermeneutics proposed to interrupt this circulation of racial capital, also points to the value of affirmative hermeneutics as a model for a self-reflexive approach to academic commentary, an activity itself predicated upon the production of discourse on a quasi-industrial scale.

The Lisp: American Indistinction as German Theory

It is an old joke, and a likeable one at that: "How do you think the unthinkable? With an itheberg." Edgar Allan Poe, who married a young lisper (Lauvrière 1935, 140), maintained a theoretical interest in lisping and other speech impediments (also: in shipwreck)[4] throughout his life, beginning with the composition of the early poem "Romance" in 1829, when he was twenty years old:

> Romance, who loves to nod and sing,
> With drowsy head and folded wing,
> Among the green leaves as they shake
> Far down within some shadowy lake,
> To me a painted paroquet
> Hath been—a most familiar bird—
> Taught me my alphabet to say—
> To lisp my very earliest word
> While in the wild wood I did lie,
> A child—with a most knowing eye. (Poe 1984, 53)

In this first stanza, Poe's first bird, a parakeet, perorates on early German Romanticism's most notorious *credo*: the originary "indistinction" of art and science, phonetics and semantics, consciousness and nature[5]. Friedrich Schlegel, by way of Rousseau, based early *Romantik* around this premise in the founding document of the Romantic sensibility, the 1798 *Athenaeumsfragment* on "progressive, universal poetry" (Schlegel 1958, 37). A decade later Friedrich Schleiermacher expounded, in his

Ethics (1812/1813) and *Hermeneutics* (first edited 1838)[6], on the implications of phonosemantic indistinction (or what we may call "universal onomatopoeticism" [cf. Jakobson and Waugh 2002, 161-168]) for language acquisition in children. Indistinction and its most undefined antonym, the production of *differences*, became the absolute metaphors of post-Enlightenment interpretation theory.

It is worth noting that Johann Gottfried Herder had laid the ideological groundwork for the advance of indistinction as one of the central tropes of Romantic aesthetics and epistemology. In his monumental philological study *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* (1783), Herder developed a theory of hermeneutic indeterminacy according to which interpretations do not merely ascertain meaning, but also circulate and attribute racial markers to interpreters. For Herder, texts are akin to the "jungle" of plantation slavery. Interpreters must develop the ability to ascertain the "logick of ancient figurative language" in order to transform this "jungle" into plantations of legible textual material (Herder 1833, 35-36)[7]. The attribution of racial prestige was predicated on the demonstration of philological abilities, naturalizing the access to cultural participation as a racial "trait", as well as disseminating a racist equation of philological literacy with whiteness across the literary and philological fields. Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was an astute reader of the works of Schlegel, Schleiermacher and Herder, institut-

ed this racial and technocratic content in *Nature* (1836), which reads like a reinvestment of Herder's hermeneutic doctrine:

> Every word which is used to express a moral or intellectual fact, if traced to its root, is found to be borrowed from some material appearance. *Right* means *straight*; *wrong* means *twisted*, *Spirit* primarily means *wind*; *transgression*, the crossing of a *line*; *supercilious*, the *raising of the eyebrow*. […] Most of the process by which this transformation is made, is hidden from us in the remote time when language was framed; but the same tendency may be daily observed in children. Children and savages use only nouns or names of things, which they convert into verbs, and apply to analogous mental acts. (Emerson 1983, 21)

Emerson's understanding of historical and biological processes is strikingly ambiguous, although it is couched in a transparent supremacist equation of children with "savages": in this passage, "root" denotes both etymology and natural growth; the "transformation" of material appearances into words is *both* a natural process and cultural procedure. The hypothetical reader who, like Herder's "slave", does not know "when to quit", and who uncovers the contradictions of Emerson's metalinguistic expositions, is in effect deprived of a primary text. Of course, Emerson is not being tritely proto-deconstructive, even though deconstructive critics readily exploited such fault lines to further their own program

(Monot 2016, 182-186)[8]. Rather, Emerson is drawing upon the anthropometric and racial content of Herder's theory of interpretation. Emerson's *Nature* signals to its own metaphorical and metonymic tangledness in order to prompt Herderian renunciation (the ability to "quit" interpreting a text) as the sole adequate hermeneutic attitude amongst its readers, and thus enable the performance and self-attribution of racial markers amongst his almost exclusively white readership.

Emerson's later works, *English Traits* (1856) in particular, have helped substantiate the claim by recent critics that Emerson ought to be recognized as a "full contributor to white race theory" (Painter 2010, 183), rather than as an admittedly reluctant supporter of the abolitionist movement. In a passage from one of his more popular later lectures, Emerson supplements his familiar Neoplatonic doctrine of the One and the Many (Emerson's entirely dehistoricized and Romanticized rephrasing of "German Idealism") with, quite strikingly, a discourse on economy, anthropometry, and community. Emerson ponders the sums worth paying for "a superior slave, secretary and manager, an educated slave; a man of genius." He explains:

> Time was, in England, when the state stipulated beforehand what price should be paid for each citizen's life, if he was killed. Now, if it were possible, I should like to see that appraisal applied to every

> man, and every man made acquainted with the true number and weight of every adult citizen, and that he be placed where he belongs, with so much power confided to him as he could carry and use. In the absence of such anthropometer I have a perfect confidence in the natural laws. I think that the community […] will be the best measure and the justest judge of the citizen, or will in the long run give the fairest verdict and reward […]. (Emerson 1888, 49)

For Emerson, however, such judgments are only valid if the community that pronounces them limits its judicial efforts to the narrow confines of *disinterested interpretation*. This, too, Emerson had learnt from Herder: white readers "cheerfully" interpret poetry without any instrumental intent and without receiving a salary (or "bread") for doing so[9]. Emerson had taken this logic equally far in his resignation sermon from Boston's Second Church in 1832, in which he explained that he was "not interested" in administering the Eucharist, yet outlined a complex set of interpretive reasons that declared "disinterest" the sole appropriate stance for biblical—and, by extension, literary—interpretation (Emerson 1993, 194). Conversely, communities of *interest*, understood as temporary, instrumental coalitions mediating as "the Few" between the individual and totality ("Society," "Nature"), yet doing so along the line of a definite hermeneutic or political intent are, as Emerson has it in "The Divinity School Address", necessarily "sick and faithless" (Emerson 1983, 87; Monot 2016, 60–61).

We do not know how Emerson's first readership dealt with the metalinguistic aporias that speckle his texts, yet D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923) suggest that, by the late 1830s, the questions raised and the racial promises made by Herder and Emerson had become pervasive across the American literary field. In his essays on Poe, Lawrence summarizes what he considers the crucial preoccupation, as well as the crucial indeterminacy, of Poe's major tales: "The central law of all organic life is intrinsically isolate and single in itself. […] Each individual organism is vivified by intimate contact with fellow organisms: up to a certain point" (Lawrence 1971, 71; Monot 2016, 69). In Lawrence's account, Poe's tales obsessively stage situations where this limit is transgressed, and where "individual organisms" ultimately break down as a result of *indistinction*. Arguably, Lawrence does not point to the political contradiction of American individualism or to the "horrible pottage of human parts" (171) of Whitmanian democratic sentiment. Rather, Lawrence seems to suggest that the phronetic identification and regulation of the "certain point" at which ontological and political equilibrium gets thrown off is also the central difficulty of Romantic hermeneutics. Let me briefly retrace how this tension was brought to a pitch in the early decade of the 19th century in Schleiermacher's work on a "general", post-Enlightenment theory of interpretation.

Schleiermacher's and Herder's radical transformation of Enlightenment hermeneutics into a *general* Romantic

theory of interpretation consisted, among other advances, of the slow elaboration of an additional interpretive tool, variously described as *identification* or *divination*, that claimed that a direct and unmediated insight into another's "constitution" was not only possible, but also could produce interpretive material worthy of being reintroduced into the hermeneutic process. As such, unmediated intersubjective insights, or what Emerson described as "without experience, to divine" (Emerson 1983, 662), required a number of anthropological reductions in order to secure the status of *Divinatorik* (hermeneutic divination) as a stable methodological device. Emerson, who had read Schleiermacher's first essays on hermeneutics during his formative years as a Unitarian minister, drew upon the most consequential of these anthropological reductions—the trivialization of pain—in order to explain why he did not believe that the Eucharist had to be commemorated, and consequently preferred to resign from his position at the Boston Second Church. In his resignation sermon, Emerson offhandedly explained that Jesus, "sitting with his countrymen celebrating their national feast", thinks of his impending death and speaks, as "a friend to his friends", with "natural beauty and feeling" (Emerson 1993, 190) of the coming covenant—and crucifixion. Of the Eucharist itself, Emerson unambiguously stated that the cultural, bodily and national "constitution" of New-England Unitarians would not tolerate the use of such an "Eastern" ritual: "*the use of the elements*, however suitable to the

people and the modes of thought in the East, where it originated, is foreign and unsuited to affect us. Whatever long usage and strong association may have done in some individuals to deaden this repulsion I apprehend that their use is rather tolerated than loved by any of us" (Emerson, 192; Monot 2016, 73). As such, Emerson's reading of Romantic hermeneutics brought the covert culturalist and ethnicist content of his philological and philosophical source material (Schleiermacher, Herder) to the foreground.

Let us return briefly to Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* to further elucidate Schleiermacher's indirect[10] contribution to the emergence of racial ideology in American Romanticism. Lawrence's argument, to which I broadly subscribe, contends that the theory of interpretation in German and American Romanticism was unable to reinvest its own ideological determinations in the hermeneutic processes it attempted to formalize (Lawrence 1971, 75). Deprived of the ability to question not only the interpreter's own perspective, but also his methodological apparatus, Romantic hermeneutics merely remained the application of a system of interpretive patterns derived from a circumscribed body of texts, practices, and uses, rather than a truly "general", self-elaborating and self-revising descriptive and interpretive apparatus that could produce an abstract description of *any* process of understanding.[11]
Poe himself gave a twofold response to this problem in

"The Gold-Bug" (1843) and "The Raven" (1845). The first line of "The Gold-Bug" sketches out a central narratological and epistemological indeterminacy: "Many years ago, I contracted an intimacy with a Mr. William Legrand" (Poe 1984, 560). Very well. But *from whom?* And an intimacy *with what*? If Legrand and the unnamed narrator contract an intimacy with each other, they also contract, as I would like to argue, an intimacy with the covert workings of American letters. It is Jupiter, Legrand's black servant, who "infects" (560) Legrand and the narrator with a knowledge of the blind spot in their hermeneutic rationalities; as Poe liked to suggest, epistemics and epidemics bear more than a phonetic resemblance. Jupiter, Legrand and the narrator reach the summit of a hill that, akin to Herder's textual "jungle" and Emerson's metalinguistic commentary, is "thickly overgrown with brambles" (570). Jupiter, perched birdlike in the upper limbs of a large tree, strictly follows Legrand's erratic, pre-Romantic orders:

> 'Well now, Jupiter, do exactly as I tell you—do you hear?'
> 'Yes, massa.'
> 'Pay attention, then!—find the left eye of the skull.'
> 'Hum! hoo! dat's good! why dar aint no eye lef at all.'
> 'Curse your stupidity! do you know your right hand from your left?'
> 'Yes, I nose dat—nose all bout that—tis my left hand what I chops de wood wid.'
> 'To be sure! you are left-handed; and your left eye is

> on the same side as your left hand. Now, I suppose, you can find the left eye of the skull, or the place where the left eye has been. Have you found it?'
> Here was a long pause. At length the negro asked, 'Is de lef eye of de skull pon de same side as de lef hand of de skull, too?—cause de skull aint got not a bit ob a hand at all—nebber mind! I got de lef eye now—here de lef eye! what mus do wid it?' (574)

This very first step in practical interpretation runs along the line of Enlightenment hermeneutics, and draws upon advances in Higher Criticism (Grusin 1991) to exhaust the linguistic and discursive possibilities of a given text without bringing the properly subjective dimension of hermeneutics into play. In his last question, Jupiter draws attention to two ambiguities concealed in Legrand's command to "find the left eye of the skull." Firstly, Legrand assumes an anthropological standard as a hermeneutic blueprint that neither fits the object of interpretation (a skull does not possess "hands", and an eye socket is not an "eye") nor the interpreting subject (Jupiter himself, who is left-handed, and both an "infernal black villain" and Legrand's "guardian"[12]). Secondly, Jupiter eruditely draws attention to possible phonetic and phonosemantic ambiguities in his master's orders (for instance the homonymity of the relative direction "left" and "lef"—this homonimity would still exist without Jupiter's Gullah dialect [Shell 1982, 20]). Philologizing without any sense of restraint, Jupiter embodies the overzealous textual critic of Herder's pre-Romantic her-

meneutic anthropology—and it is only as the laborious practitioner of a technical, philological, pre-Romantic form of hermeneutics that Jupiter becomes racialized. Fearing Legrand's impatience, and perceiving the aporias of Legrand's technical interpretation, Jupiter turns to a divinatory, prophetic amendment to pre-Romantic hermeneutics; this step remains concealed by Jupiter's elusive "nebber mind", and eventually leads to his choosing the wrong eye socket. Yet Legrand, too, has perceived the hermeneutic processes that underlie Jupiter's ultimate choice:

> We had taken, perhaps, a dozen steps in this direction, when, with a loud oath, Legrand strode up to Jupiter, and seized him by the collar. The astonished negro opened his eyes and mouth to the fullest extent, let fall the spades, and fell upon his knees.
> 'You scoundrel,' said Legrand, hissing out the syllables from between his clenched teeth—'you infernal black villain!—speak, I tell you!—answer me this instant, without any prevarication!—which—which is your left eye?' 'Oh, my golly, Massa Will! aint dis here my lef eye for sartain?' roared the terrified Jupiter, placing his hand upon his *right* organ of vision, and holding it there with a desperate pertinacity, as if in immediate dread of his master's attempt at a gouge.
> "I thought so! —I knew it! —hurrah!' vociferated Legrand, letting the negro go […]. (Poe 1984, 576; emphasis in original.)

The ability to *divine*, that is either to "imaginatively and temporarily become" the author of the text to be interpreted, or to intersubjectively "guess" (Schleiermacher 1977, 317-318) the linguistic combinations that covertly structure the text at hand, distinguishes the Romantic interpreter from his pre- or anti-Romantic counterpart. Convoluted as they are, and taking place either in "profound silence" (Poe 1984, 576; Monot 2016, 278)[13] or during dialogical gaps ("nebber mind"), neither Legrand's divinatory retracing of Jupiter's decision-making nor Jupiter's own probabilistic interpretation of Legrand's orders correspond to the "technical" interpretation of Enlightenment philology. Both Legrand and Jupiter commune in a hermeneutic practice that is founded on the temporary suppression of their assumed anthropological differences, and posit that intersubjective, collaborative, and indistinct hermeneutic processes are not only possible, but also necessary for the continued unfolding of the plot—no indistinction, no treasure, no tale.

In this respect, Legrand's later didactic elucidation of the successive interpretive steps that lead him to discover Captain Kidd's buried treasure is nothing if not the *obscuring* of the actual "decoding" that took place below the surface of narrative explicitness. Legrand is rewriting a non-linguistic and collaborative interpretation as a philological and autonomous exercise in "decyphering", as a strictly rational exercise that is "more than a mere

guess", more than mere "probabilities," as an exercise that will remain "insoluble" to "the crude intellect of the sailor" (Poe 1984, 587-588). Appropriately, when Legrand explains how he managed to decipher the paper slip, he begins by covering up all traces of indistinction, and by wiping out its phonosemantic cipher: "we are enabled, at once, to discard the "th" ". Thus, the "natural division" (589–591) between different words and different races is reinstated, while the necessity of non-racialized, collaborative hermeneutic practices is ironically demonstrated by the unfolding of the plot itself.

Poe's second response to the aporias of Romantic hermeneutics leads us back to our originary Titanian joke. Of all of Poe's narrative poems "The Raven", with its extremely dense layering of the sibilants /s/ and /z/, is also the poem lisping readers are most likely to mispronounce:

> Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
> Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
> What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
> Meant in croaking "Nevermore." (Poe 1984, 83; my emphasis)

While the Jupiterian "nebber mind" functions as a floating signifier that stands in for tabooed, collabo-

rative and necessary hermeneutic practices, the raven's "Plutonian" answer, "Nevermore", serves the opposite function, precisely that of equating indistinct, collaborative "thinking" with sinking, disintegration, and downfall. While "Nebber mind" lingers on the textual surface of the narrative *because* of its tenuous (and illicit) referent, the signifier "Nevermore"—half croaked, half heard—elicits an unbridled production of referents through the narrator's questions, thus becoming a "supersaturated" (Garber 2001, 141) signifier, burdened with ever superadded meaning. In "The Gold-Bug", the imbalanced power relation between Jupiter and Legrand is temporarily suspended, although it remains framed by its linguistic markers—commands and insults. Although Legrand's discourse formally supersedes Jupiter's own, the plot finds its resolution in a dialectical gap. Jupiter's "nebber mind" hence encapsulates the tale's dialectic of hermeneutic revelation and racial prohibition, while the Raven's "Nevermore" discloses the literary, that is, Romantic, necessity of this dialectic. Like "the Gold-Bug", "The Raven" stages the hazards of indistinction, while revealing its aesthetic productivity. The narrator explicitly sets out on a hermeneutic process, seeking to determine

> What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
>
> Meant in croaking "Nevermore."
>
> This I sat engaged in *guessing*, but no syllable expressing

> To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
> This and more I sat *divining*, with my head at ease reclining
> On the cushion's velvet lining […]. (Poe 1984, 83-84; emphasis added)

The raven answers the narrator's question explicitly; the narrator is complicit, through his ceaseless questioning, of the raven's production of meaning. The narrator and the raven are thus engaged in an explicit hermeneutic dialogue that discloses both the inner workings of Romantic interpretation, as the hermeneutic categories of divination ("divining") and induction ("guessing") emerge on the textual surface, while also disclosing its limits: the dialogical and communal production of meaning is unable to produce anything other than the self-continuation of dialogue. We are led to witness the resulting collapse both of the narrator's sanity and of the dialogue itself, the last stanza ending on a "nevermore" that is not the raven's, but the narrator's own—a collapse that is preceded by the symptomatic return of voiceless dental fricative (θ / "th"):

> "Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee
> Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;
> Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!"
> Quoth the Raven "Nevermore." (Poe 1984, 84)

Metahermeneutic Authorship and Affirmative Authorship

How does an authorial construction based on the production of hermeneutic aporias affect the political field from which it claims to be independent? First, by legitimizing volubility as both a category and a style of public and institutional discourse, that is, the unbounded production of academic and para-academic commentary; for this, Poe's "Raven" stands as a kind of paradigmatic fable. To take a more contemporary example which, I think, is representative of this circular economy of text and commentary—or structurally legitimized *volubility*—let us turn briefly to a passage from Emerson's essay "Nominalist and Realist" (1844):

> Thus we settle it in our cool libraries, that all the agents with which we deal are subalterns, which we can well afford to let pass, and life will be simpler when we live at the centre, and flout the surfaces. I wish to speak with all respect of persons, but sometimes I must pinch myself to keep awake, and preserve the due decorum. They melt so fast into each other, that they are like grass and trees, and it needs an effort to treat them as individuals. (Emerson 1983, 580)

While Emerson here purportedly puts forth an identifiable socioethical position, commentators have fundamentally differed in their interpretation of this passage.

Sharon Cameron contends that Emerson is venting "his disillusion with the conventional idea that persons are separate and integral entities" (Cameron 2007, 80). On the other hand, David M. Robinson reads this passage as one of Emerson's crucial Declarations of Self-Reliance: "it is individuals and their particular lives that finally constitute the texture of social life, and the only sphere of moral action" (Robinson 1993, 73). Alex Zakaras in turn interprets the metaphor of the "melting" individuals of mass democracy as Emerson's discovery of a proto-Hegelian theory of recognition: "the observer's view is salient: individuals are unable to impress others even with the bare fact of their own discreteness" (Zakaras 2009, 46; Monot 2016, 69-70). In light of the hermeneutic figures described above, I would like to argue that the variety of meanings in Emerson's text is arguably circumscribed by the intention of making these contradicting interpretations possible: Emerson's covert reinscription of the hermeneutic dialectics of the One and the Many as the sole condition of possibility of interpretive, philological commentary suggests that "Nominalist and Realist" does not mean much beyond its interpretive scope, narrow as it may be.

The construction of Emerson's authorship is *metahermeneutic* in that it reintroduces politically connoted hermeneutic categories in the production of literary texts that, once "interpreted" along the lines of the same hermeneutic principles, covertly reframe philological com-

mentary within these originary conditions of possibility. Against this form of *metahermeneutic authorship*, the American literary and political fields produced an alternative construction, *affirmative authorship*, from around 1840 onward. I want to suggest that while *affirmative authorship* proved effective as a counter-position to the dominance of hermeneutism[14] in the literary and political fields, it nevertheless failed to produce corresponding responses from institutional criticism: philologists are left, uncommonly, without an adequate *théorie* to deal with assertive poetics.

Emerging during a time when public intellectuals, Emerson included, viewed it as their socio-ethical duty to engage in sophisticated discussions of the anthropological status of African Americans—and indeed, pointed to the sophistication of these discussions as their incontrovertible form of legitimacy—and routinely argued for a deferral of a possible military intervention of the North, the emergence of affirmative authorship nevertheless drew upon the non-foundationalist strain that had become apparent in Romantic and democratic epistemology around the 1830s.[15] Yet while Emerson, in West's somewhat evasive account of the roots of American pragmatism, indeed asserted "the primacy of power-laden people's opinion (doxa) over value-free philosopher's knowledge (episteme)" (West 1989, 212-213), authors who based their authorial legitimacy on affirmation pointed out the contradictions and risks inherent

in any deliberative culture that refused to trace "power" back to reasons other than doxological.

Frederick Douglass's affirmative and assertive rhetoric is enlightening in this respect. In "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered" (1854) Douglass begins by drawing attention to the artificial proliferation of "elaborate arguments" in the public sphere, asserting that

> The Negro is a MAN. His good and his bad, his innocence and his guilt, his joys and his sorrows, proclaim his manhood in speech that all mankind practically and readily understand. […] The horse bears him on his back—admits his mastery and dominion. The barn-yard fowl know his step, and flock around to receive their morning meal from his able hand. The dog dances when he comes home, and whines piteously when he is absent. All these know that the negro is a MAN. NOW, presuming that what is evident to beast and to bird, cannot need elaborate argument to be made plain to men, I assume, with this brief statement, that the negro is a man. (Douglass 1999, 284)

Douglass is highlighting, here and elsewhere, the always implicit anthropological construction of a "human language" as the common denominator of Romantic hermeneutics, of ante-bellum political participation, and of philological legitimacy. The disruptive intent of

his speech is then multiple: to unveil the coupling and permeability of the literary and political fields, and to interrupt the redundant discursive productivity of each field individually, to cut off the constant flow of verbal waste that constituted the Romantics' proudest alchemical activity, converting words into power, Unitarians into Public Intellectuals, and Slaves into "secondary men"—some of the Romantics being candid enough to acknowledge the resemblance of their philological pursuits with digestion or, in other more colloquial words, with "talking shit" (cf. Meehan 2011, 97–121). Derrida and Frege are of course right when they point out that assertive speech acts respectively entail a "coup de force" (Derrida 1986, 11) or the deployment of an "assertive force" (Frege 1956, 294), for these speech acts must produce their own legitimacy as they formulate their intended illocutionary effects. Yet it seems to me that in the case of classical abolitionist writing such as Douglass's addresses and autobiographical works, these assertive speech acts, such as that of declaring oneself "a man" or "a human being", do not produce a legitimacy that is *their own*, but rather point to the illegitimacy of the foundations of public discourse in ante-bellum political culture, and trace these foundations back to the anthropological contents of Romantic hermeneutics. Douglass pits the elaborate linguistic aporias of Romanticism against his own conception of public discourse, proclaiming his "manhood in speech that all mankind practically and readily understand" (Douglass 1999,

284; Monot 2016, 218-221). In this, Douglass seems to have clearly identified the anthropological reductions of Schleiermacher's and Emerson's *divinatory* mode of interpretation, as well as the banalization of pain these reductions ultimately consist in:

> It was a most painful situation; and, to understand it, one must needs experience it, or imagine himself in similar circumstances. Let him be a fugitive slave in a strange land—a land given up to be the hunting-ground for slaveholders—whose inhabitants are legalized kidnappers—where he is every moment subjected to the terrible liability of being seized upon by his fellowmen, as the hideous crocodile seizes upon his prey!—I say, let him place himself in my situation—without home or friends—without money or credit—wanting shelter, and no one to give it—wanting bread, and no money to buy it,—[…] I say, let him be placed in this most trying situation,—the situation in which I was placed,—then, and not till then, will he fully appreciate the hardships of, and know how to sympathize with, the toil-worn and whip-scarred fugitive slave. (Douglass 1994, 90)

While Douglass begins by inviting his readers to "imagine" the situation of a slave, the passage ends with a clear disavowal of identification—or, to speak with Emerson and Poe, of indistinction. With Douglass, the Emersonian rhetoric of "experience" finds its entirely deromanticized counterpart: Douglass does not reject divination on the grounds of the theoretical indefensi-

bility of intersubjective understanding, but because divination has demonstrably buttressed the "colonizing tendency" of the Romantic culture of interpretation, and enacted its "imperious insensitivity to other voices and [reduced] the complex variety of human experience to its own terms" (Davey 2006, 21)[16].

What, then, is metaphorical about affirmation and assertion? It seems to me that an era that predicated the survival of its subalterns upon linguistic conventions and literary diversions could not avoid seeing these subalterns rephrasing their most basal existential claims in linguistic terms. While Emerson considered slavery little more than a "horrid story" (Emerson 1995, 10), while the abolitionist John A. Collins considered the whip scars on Douglass' back a "diploma" (Douglass 1994, 661; Monot 2016, 232), while William Lloyd Garrison took Douglass "as his text" (365-366), Douglass himself adequated assertive speech acts with the attempt at literalizing the condition of African Americans as *human beings*, rather than as "metaphorical men" or, as Emerson put it, "imitative, or secondary […] men" (Cabot 1887, 430). In this respect, Rorty's insightful discussion of the respective functions of literal and figurative language in the liberal democratic project is quite to the point, in that the possibility of a literal language, a language "irrelevant to the Romantics" (Rorty 2009, 19), was precisely the object of sustained inquiry and elaboration by mid-century heterodox public figures.

Arguably, the adequation of assertive speech acts and *self*-assertion had been outlined as a hermeneutic possibility by the early German Romantics themselves, Schlegel and Schleiermacher alluding to "behaupten" ("to affirm") as one of the means, along with the inferential and divinatory modes of interpretation, of extracting meaning from opaque texts (Schleiermacher 1977, 317-318). Yet it is precisely because the possibility of an affirmative mode of interpretation was ultimately discarded by the Romantics that Douglass' disruption of the hermeneutic culture of the mid-century must be understood as a fully developed philosophical contribution to interpretation theory. As a reaction against the dominance of a type of voluble, technocratic hermeneutics that was typical of early German and later American Romanticism, Douglass put forth a counterposition that arguably overrides a long tradition of philological, post-Herderian commentary: "I cannot, however, argue; I must assert" (Douglass 1999, 283; Monot 2016, 219).

This then, confronts the current attempt to decolonize literary theory with the question of the legitimacy and function of the discipline's most constitutive systemic necessity, the large-scale production of scholarly discourse. Scholastic reiteration is a particularly insidious form of insult, adding futile volubility to historical injury. The affirmative hermeneutics initiated and developed into a philosophical counterposition by Douglass point

towards an alternative discursive style for postcolonial literary theory, a style in which investigative, reinvestigative, problematizing and reproblematizing inquiry makes way for constative utterances and the willful termination of specific public and academic debates. This type of affirmative discourse must however remain predicated upon normative criteria that enable the reliable identification of those debates that are artificial, redundant, overdrawn and, in many cases, long settled. The definition of these criteria, I would like to suggest, would be a worthy object of postcolonial literary theory, if only on account of the historical legitimacy of affirmative discourse.

Notes:

1. Blumenberg pits conceptuality against metaphoricity, a set of terms he discusses in the frequently anthologized introductory chapters of *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, yet occasionally does so metaphorically (rather than conceptually). "To break down" is my own metaphor, which summarizes Blumenberg's much more expansive and evasive ones.

2. "Assertion": Livy uses the Latin *adsereret*, form the stem *assere*, "to claim rights over something, state, maintain, affirm", in the sense of a speech act, and in the context of slavery: "He commissioned a client, M. Clau-

dius, to claim the girl as his slave […]" (Livy 1912, 44). It is doubtful whether a "Begriffsgeschichte" (conceptual history) of *assertion* can properly distinguish the term's general usage from the much more uncommon topical meaning that is the subject of this essay. The source from Livy (mentioned in footnote 2) perhaps wrongly suggests that the connotation of the Latin assere with slavery and emancipation was generally known. The Latin *manumissio* ("affranchisement"), however, has a well-known conceptual history that has been studied by classicists and scholars of African-American history alike.

3. I roughly translate Blumenberg's more detailed original explanation: "Die Stärke der Metapher, die sich einer argumentativ schwer oder gar nicht fundierbaren Behauptung zugesellt, beruht auf der manifesten Anschaulichkeit ihres Transplantationsmaterials, dem 'die Natur' als Fundus legitimierender Qualitäten dient" (Blumenberg 1971, 201).

4. The joke refers, of course, to the Titanic, nicknamed "The Unsinkable". Poe's "Raven" not only puns on thinking/sinking, but also suggests that the narrator's mental breakdown is akin to a shipwreck (and respectively depicts the shipwreck in *Arthur Gordon Pym* as a mental breakdown).

5. Romance, an art form and a secular scripture, teaches

a linguistic abstraction, the alphabet. The lyrical "I" as a pre-conscious babe in the woods, to whom *episteme* is taught through song, is a topos in theories of pre-romantic and early romantic pedagogy, especially those of Friedrich Schlegel, Rousseau and Schleiermacher.

6. Schleiermacher's writings on hermeneutics, which consist of sketches, lecture notes, brief essays and uncompleted manuscripts, were compiled and published posthumously.

7. I have often written about Herder, Emerson, Schleiermacher and, much more succinctly, Poe, notably in a recently published monograph in German, in which many of the primary sources discussed here are examined in greater detail. Some repetitions in argumentation and wording are unavoidable (Monot 2016, 154-164).

8. See also Paul de Man's discussion of linguistic and organic "origination" in Hölderlin's "Brod und Wein" (1800), and his eventual trivialization of "pain" as a "specifically linguistic" effect of translation (de Man, 1984; de Man 2002, 85-86).

9. Alciphron is a youth; he studies this poetry not from compulsion, not from the necessity of his profession, or of bread, but from a love of it" (Herder 1833, 21; see also Monot 2016, 154-164).

10. Schleiermacher's more direct contribution, at least on a structural level, would arguably reside in the notorious antijudaism of his early work (Blum 2010, 50–51).

11. I am rephrasing Gadamer's concluding remarks in *Truth and Method* on Schleiermacher's conception of universality: "When we read this, we can see how tremendous was the step that led from Schleiermacher's hermeneutics to a universal understanding of the historical sciences. But however universal the hermeneutics that Schleiermacher evolved, it was a universality with very perceptible limits. His hermeneutics, in fact, had in mind texts whose authority was undisputed" (Gadamer 2013, 201; Monot 2016, 104-106).

12. "It is not improbable that the relatives of Legrand, conceiving him to be somewhat unsettled in intellect, had contrived to instill this obstinacy into Jupiter, with a view to the supervision and guardianship of the wanderer" (Poe 1984, 561).

13. The motif is recurrent in Poe's "hermeneutic" tales, notably in "The Purloined Letter", in which the narrator is "mentally discussing" the events that had united him to Dupin in a previous tale, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", yet does so in "profound silence" (Poe 1984, 560).

14. "This perspective is the foundation of the 'philolo-

gism' which, according to Bakhtin, leads to treating language as a dead letter destined to be decoded (and not to be spoken or understood practically); more generally, it is the foundation of the *hermeneutism* [sic] which leads to conceiving any act of comprehension according to the model of *translation* and turns the perception of a cultural work, whatever it may be, into an intellectual act of decoding which presupposes the elucidation and the conscious application of rules of production and interpretation" (Bourdieu 1992, 314; emphasis in original).

15. As outlined in Cabot's notoriously unreliable *Memoir*, Emerson's earliest address on slavery (1837) is unambiguous: "The degradation of that black race, though now lost in the starless spaces of the past, did not come without sin. The condition is inevitable to the men they are, and nobody can redeem them but themselves. The exertions of all the abolitionists are nugatory except for themselves" (Cabot 1887, 429).

16. Nicholas Davey explains this tendency with respect to Gadamer's critique of Schleiermacher: "The 'will to method' exhibits a colonizing tendency. On one level, the focus and drive that attaches to the organizing power of the will to method is philosophically attractive. However, the energetic impetus toward orderliness and closure betrays an imperviousness toward alterity. The will to method has an imperious insensitivity to

other voices and reduces the complex variety of human experience to its own terms. This reductive impetus is not an expression of invincibility but an inability to face the risks of dialogical exposure" (Davey 2006, 21; Monot 2016, 98, 241).

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