

Beyond the Line

Cultural Narratives of the Southern Oceans

edited by
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Contents

Michael Mann / Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger

Introduction: 'Beyond the Line' – Constructions and Concepts with Focus on the Southern Oceans	7
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I. Studying the Ocean

Georg Berkemer

The Seaman and the Fish: Discoveries beyond the Line	31
--	----

Michael Mann

Life on the Water. Soldiers, Slaves and Other Subalterns on Board of Ships in the Indian Ocean	53
---	----

Derek L. Elliott / Sebastian R. Prange

Beyond Piracy: Maritime Violence and Colonial Encounters in Indian History	95
---	----

Margret Frenz

<i>Swaraj</i> for Kenya, 1949–1965: The Ambiguities of Transnational Politics	121
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II. Narrating the Ocean

Frank Schulze-Engler

Africa's Asian Options –

Indian Ocean Imaginaries in East African Literature159

Ute Fendler

Fabulating the Indian Ocean –

An Emerging Network of Imaginaries?179

Ana Sobral

“Oceans of Pain”:

The Sea as Memory and Metaphor

in Angolan Poetry and Rap Music199

Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger

Oceanic Modernity in Contemporary Narratives –

Remembering Slavery in Brazil and Angola233

Introduction: 'Beyond the Line' – Constructions and Concepts with Focus on the Southern Oceans

Michael Mann / Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger

1. Beyond which Line?

The title of this volume, "Beyond the Line", refers to the fact that all its contributions address constructions and concepts elaborated with regard to the Southern Oceans. "Beyond the Line" draws on the phrase "no peace beyond the line" that appeared in the peace treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis which was concluded in 1559. Both phrases became quite well known in historical research. However, the question remains what line is actually referred to? Many essays have been written on this subject and James A. Williamson, in his famous study *Hawkins of Plymouth*, seems to provide an ultimate solution:

In peace or war in Europe there was no peace beyond the line. The phrase is often quoted by people who do not explain what line they mean. The Tropic of Cancer will not by itself answer the question, neither will the lines of demarcation. "Line" is in fact a misquotation, which should be "lines". The "lines of amity" were verbally agreed upon by the French and Spanish negotiators of the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559. They were to be the Tropic of Cancer and the prime meridian passing through Ferro in the Canaries. On the European side of both lines the treaty was to be binding; west and south of them it was to be disregarded. The agreement was a belated recognition of what had long been the practice.¹

The peace treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis did not mention any concrete line as a line of demarcation. Only an oral agreement added to the treaty is said to have indicated some lines of amity. Academic research

¹ James A. Williamson: *Hawkins of Plymouth. A New History of Sir John Hawkins and of the Other Members of his Family Prominent in Tudor England*. 2nd ed. London: Black 1969, p. 46.

maintained, first, that the addition to the peace treaty did in fact refer to two lines fixing an imaginary 'Atlantic cross' based on the Tropic of Cancer and the European understanding of a global Meridian and, second, that peace was only valid on the European side of the lines.² Most legal historians and maritime historians followed this interpretation rather uncritically. More recently it is argued that hardly any concrete juridical and legal idea existed about the line.³

Williamson resumes that from the sixteenth century on the phrase "no peace beyond the line" referred to European sovereigns' well-established practice of issuing "letters of marque and reprisal". It was also in some way taken for granted that such letters created and demarcated the space for buccaneering, freebooting, and piracy in a maritime space defined by meridian and longitude. The line was constructed on the Atlantic Ocean and made the maritime territories a legal, political, and cultural construction in cartography since Early Modern History. European peace treaties among sovereigns were in almost all cases written documents and the stipulation of the validity of peace and war overseas was not congruent with contemporary European 'international' law. This might explain why no preserving text of the oral agreement exists. In essence, however, European bilateral and multilateral peace treaties were considered to be of universal value. But in reference to trade and commercial matters it was different. The Spanish persistently defended *de jure* regulations against *de facto* practice and implementation to ensure their trading monopoly with the colonies in the Caribbean and Central America, thereby trying to defend a space for their own mercantile operations.⁴

"The line" only became a matter of bilateral and multilateral regulations in the course of the seventeenth century. After the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 and the founding of the Northern European East India trading companies such as the English East India Company in 1600 and the Dutch Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie in 1602,

2 Frances Gardiner Davenport: *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies*, 4 vols. Washington, DC: Carnegie Institute 1917–1937, vol. 1: (1716–1815), p. 120.

3 Jörg Fisch: *Die europäische Expansion und das Völkerrecht. Die Auseinandersetzungen um den Status der überseeischen Gebiete vom 15. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*. Stuttgart: Steiner 1984, p. 59.

4 Fisch: *Die europäische Expansion*, pp. 74–77, 82–86.

particularly the Dutch claimed free access to all oceans of the globe. This debate basically continued the old legal question of *mare clausum* and *mare liberum*.⁵ The Dutch as well as the English claimed the right to free and peaceful trade on the seas of the world, which did not imply the establishment of peaceful conditions in overseas territories. Hugo Grotius became famous for his treatise "Mare Liberum" published in 1609 in which he rejected the Papal Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) that had divided the globe into a Spanish and a Portuguese sphere of expansion and occupation. In contrast, Grotius demanded open access for all seafaring nations to the oceans of the globe.⁶ Interestingly, at the same time, the line (always singular, never plural "lines") began to be increasingly mentioned in European treaties. It was understood that the Tropic of Cancer, i.e., the equinoctial, marked off all colonial territories, roughly distinguishing between Europe and the rest of the world.

A second line was not explicitly addressed but implicitly thought of: the meridian passing through the Canary Islands and the Azores. According to present day geography, it is not possible to draw the line that way but, in accordance with nautical knowledge in the sixteenth century when methods of determining latitudes did not exist,⁷ cartographers placed the Azores on the same meridian as the Canary Islands.⁸ In a restricted sense, as it was understood at that time, "beyond the line" basically confined the broad maritime space of the Caribbean,⁹ which became a legendary region for European adventurers seeking their fortune. This might explain the enormous success of the first fiction book on pirates, *De Americaensche Zee-Rovers*, written by the French Huguenot Alexandre Exquemelin and published in Amsterdam in

5 Garrett Mattingly: No Peace Beyond What Line? In: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 13 (1963), pp. 145–162, cf. pp. 145–147.

6 In 1604 Hugo Grotius started writing his treatise on *De Jure Praedae* (On the Right of Prize) which was only published in 1868. The chapter on "Mare Liberum" however was published in 1609 and became famous as well as influential with respect to the emerging international law. Cf. Hugo Grotius: *The Freedom of the Sea – Or, The Right Which Belongs to the Dutch to Take Part in the East Indian Trade*. New York: Oxford University Press 1916.

7 David Sobel: *Longitude. The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time*. Harmondsworth etc.: Penguin 1995.

8 Mattingly: No Peace Beyond What Line?, p. 148.

9 Fisch: *Die europäische Expansion*, pp. 119–122.

1678. The book was immediately translated into German, Spanish, English, and French and has been often rewritten ever since.¹⁰ While it seems clear that in Early Modern History “the line” was the Tropic of Cancer, the northern equinoctial and the equator were, however, often mixed up, both denominations being used at the same time in different documents.

During the eighteenth century the equator became “the line”, indicating the growing maritime dominance of England, a country that at all refused to accept the Caribbean as a maritime space outside the sphere of treaties.¹¹ It was also taken for granted that “beyond the line” implied a maritime space with ‘internationally’ valid rules and regulations governing shipping, trade, and commerce, which included the mutual acceptance of trading monopolies. “Beyond the line” was never a legally fixed category, but a political instrument to enforce favourable conditions when negotiating treaties dealing with overseas maritime and territorial spaces.¹² At the same time, the meridian disappeared as the complementary line of the ‘Atlantic cross’ (the Tropic of Cancer and the meridian). From the eighteenth century on, the equator separated a northern civilised “West” from the sharply contrasting rest of the world, in particular the “East”. Along with this change, the meaning of the line shifted from a geopolitical to a more cultural one.

As part of the cultural divide, rituals on board ships marked the transition into another world during the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. According to Francis Rogers, when sailing to the “West Indies”—and therefore crossing the Tropic of Cancer!—at the beginning of the eighteenth century, all people on board the ship had the choice of either paying a bottle of brandy and a pound of sugar or, instead, of being ducked into the ocean. The person who refused to pay was plunged into the water from the main yardarm secured only by a rope and was then hauled up again. This procedure was repeated three times.¹³ And Jean François Michel described another

10 James A. Arnold: From Piracy to Policy: Exquemelin’s Buccaneers and Imperial Competition in America. In: *Review* 40,1 (2007), pp. 9–20.

11 Mattingly: No Peace Beyond What Line?, pp. 154–156.

12 Fisch: *Die europäische Expansion*, pp. 113–119, 131.

13 “The Journal of Francis Rogers”. In: Bruce S. Ingram (ed.): *Three Sea Journals of Stuart Times*. London: Constable 1936, pp. 143–230, here p. 152. The edited volume includes the diary of Dawtrey Cooper, 1628, kept during the expedition to relieve La

ritual that took place on the *Burg von Emden* when it crossed the equator some decades later. The captain ordered a bowl of seawater and a plate with some zwieback and salt to be placed on a table in the back. The gunman was asked to prepare a gunshot to greet the arriving Neptune. Neptune, obviously a member of the crew, came down from the foresail mast, covering his head with a sheep's coat topped by a crown made of paper. His face, hands, and feet were blackened, his beard consisted of old ropes and he carried a trident. The captain invited Neptune to the table. The crew, which had assembled on deck, was asked to sign a paper pledging a donation for the poor of the town of Emden (situated in northern Germany). Everyone signed and was offered a piece of zwieback and salt by the first officer. The captain then 'baptised' everyone with a handful of water, in some instances with a ladle of water.¹⁴ At some stage at the end of the eighteenth century, these rituals disappeared, at least from the travelogues.

Walter Scott was the first author to argue in a leaflet on Walter Raleigh in 1806 that it was generally assumed that in Raleigh's time "there was no peace beyond the line".¹⁵ From then on the phrase became part of an English invented historical and cultural tradition romanticising the pirates of the Caribbean and the 'Age of Sail' on the one hand and, on the other hand, transforming them into national heroes by turning Her Majesty's agent Sir Francis Drake into the first and most prominent English opponent to Spanish colonial claims in America. Thus, during the 'Age of Steam', the phrase "no peace beyond the line" became prominent as a catchphrase, at least in the English cultural and literary tradition.¹⁶

In short, it is quite interesting to note that initially "the line" once indicated a political, juridical or military category defining a maritime space of commercial and mercantile law understood or claimed as

Rochelle; the journals of Jeremy Roch, 1666, describing voyages and adventures at sea under Charles II, James II and William III; and the diary of Francis Rogers, kept on his voyages to the West Indies, the East Indies, and elsewhere in 1703 and 1704.

14 Journal du voyage a la Chine, et courte description de la ville d'Emden par J.F. Michel (unpubl. manuscript), parts published and translated into German, *vide* Dok. 35: Der Unterkaufmann Jean François Michel über die Äquatortaufe auf dem Chinafahrer *Burg von Emden* (1752). In: Eberhard Schmitt (ed.): *Indienfahrer 2. Seeleute und Leben an Bord im Ersten Kolonialzeitalter*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2008, pp. 240–245.

15 Fisch: *Die europäische Expansion*, pp. 141–145.

16 Mattingly: *No Peace Beyond What Line?*, pp. 161–162.

mare liberum. However, this claim never corresponded with reality. In the twentieth century “the line” definitely refers to the equator and had become a legal and, additionally, racial and civilisational category defining the “West’s” legal differences with respect to labour and civic rights. Today nobody speaks of the “line” and many present-day contemporaries have forgotten its existence as well as the meaning of the phrase. But “the line” is still there though not explicitly referred to. For example—and one example may suffice at this point—when Western media or politicians of the G8 speak of the “Global South”, they roughly denominate what were termed “developing countries” during the second half of the twentieth century, all of which were former colonies or countries indirectly ruled by European or imperial(ist) powers. And of course, the “Global South” is a zone where things are entirely different.

2. The “Global South” in the Twentieth-First Century

At the end of the twentieth century, the changing role of the “Global South” ran parallel with geopolitical modifications in which the ocean as such became an increasingly important space. This was not the same in the past. Research projects usually chose as its objects a country’s people, landscape, and societies. Until recently, seas and oceans were considered only to the degree that they offered communication routes in the context of economic relations, i. e., trade routes and commercial connections. In historical terms, seas, like mountain ranges, tended to be viewed more as separating than as connecting elements. Yet, as many recent studies have demonstrated, seas and oceans were zones of cultural encounter and communication. This was first elaborated for the Mediterranean Sea¹⁷ and, meanwhile, an increasing number of studies of this kind on the Atlantic¹⁸ and Indian Oceans¹⁹ have

17 Fernand Braudel: *Das Mittelmeer und die mediterrane Welt in der Epoche Philipps II*, 3 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1990 [*La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque Philippe II*. Paris: 1949].

18 Douglas R. Egerton / Alison Games / Jane G. Landers / Kris Lane / Donal R. Wright (eds): *The Atlantic World: A History*. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson 2007; John H. Elliott: *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492–1830*. Yale, NH: Yale University Press 2009; Benjamin, Thomas: *The Atlantic World. Europeans, Africans, Indians and Their Shared History, 1400–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009; Leos Müller / Philipp Robinson Rössner / Toshiaki Tamaki (eds): *The Rise of the Atlantic Economy and the North Sea-Baltic Trade, 1500–1800*. Stuttgart: Steiner 2011.

19 Kirti N. Chaudhuri: *Asia Before Europe. Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990; Kenneth

come out. At present, sea-borne migrations are even considered very relevant for having established networks on a global scale thus constituting a fundamental regularity in the history of mankind.²⁰

A major historiographical event was the presentation of a special issue of *The Geographical Review*,²¹ in which the editors Martin W. Lewis and Karen Wigen offer a "maritime response to the crisis in area studies". Area studies had come under pressure from the emerging field of global studies that emphasises that all the regions of the world should play a role, restoring those that had been invisible historically on the conventional maps. Concentrating on the switches of focus in research, Lewis and Wigen claim that geography in particular was absent in global studies since the 1990s and propose correcting this by taking the maritime dimension into account. In his essay "Dividing the Ocean Sea", Lewis examines the history of global hydrography from the classical tradition until today concluding that "the Western conceptualisation of the oceans may better be described as one of aimless wanderings. In this Foucauldian story line, different ways of dividing and labeling the sea come in and out of fashion, each successive view reflecting the epistemic environment of its time without adding any cumulative conceptual purchase".²²

At the Center Modern Orient (ZMO) in Berlin, a discussion took place at the beginning of this millennium on reframing area studies around an ocean basin, specifically the Indian Ocean. The volume *Translocality. The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective* presents some results of this research.²³ The papers accuse the discussion of globalisation of having a Eurocentric world-view and of a renewed

McPherson: *The Indian Ocean. A History of People and the Sea*. Delhi et al.: Oxford University Press 1998; Michael N. Pearson: *The Indian Ocean*. London / New York: Routledge 2003; Dietmar Rothermund / Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (eds): *Der Indische Ozean. Das afro-asiatische Mittelmeer als Kultur- und Wirtschaftsraum*. Wien: Mandelbaum 2004; Sugata Bose: *A Hundred Horizons. The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*. Cambridge, MA / London: Harvard University Press 2006.

20 Donna R. Gabaccia / Dirk Hoerder (eds): *Connecting Seas and Connected Ocean Rims. Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans and China Seas Migrations from the 1830s to the 1930s*. Leiden: Brill 2011.

21 Martin W. Lewis / Karen Wigen: A Maritime Response to the Crisis in Area Studies. In: *The Geographical Review* 89,2 (1999), pp. 161–168.

22 Lewis: Dividing the Ocean Sea. In: *Ibid*, pp 188–214, here p. 210.

23 Ulrike Freitag / Achim von Oppen (eds): *Translocality. The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective*. Leiden: Brill 2010.

appropriation of the 'postcolonial' present. The latter is partly due to the fact that studies on Asia, Africa, and Latin America have seldom focused on these regions' relations among each other. This is why the editors suggest the term "translocality", so that, from the beginning, these areas in different continents are not grasped as separate from each other, but as regions with societies that are connected by means of "histoires croisées" or "entangled histories".

Today, for such entangled connections, which can be effective even across oceans, terms like "marginal mobilities", "spaces on the move", and "alternative globalities" are used in reference to the circulation of labour forces (slaves, coolies), the phenomenon of piracy, travelers' reports, living spaces on ships, and the transport of goods. The history of transport has a particular complexity in countries with a colonial background. Ravi Ahuja discusses some of its problematic aspects in *Pathways of Empire. Circulation, 'Public Works' and Social Space in Colonial Orissa, c. 1780-1914*.²⁴ He claims a critical reorientation that looks at the "historical constellations of social forces behind supposedly timeless technical necessity" and discerning a "plurality of distinct and potentially conflicting appropriations behind the appearance of consensual utilisation".²⁵ Ahuja emphasises the production of "social space", a concept he borrows from Henri Lefebvre,²⁶ to trace the changes and repetitive socio-spatial practices in long-term processes of circulation. The history of transport in India was one-sidedly concerned with the production of railways and canals, but had neglected "local" roads and sea spaces, among other things. In accordance with Ahuja's argument, the ocean, too, might serve as a conceptualised space: "the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent".²⁷

Without a doubt, oceans that wash the coasts of continents have always been transportation routes. Arab, African, and Asian ships navigated the Indian Ocean for more than a millennium and, from 1500 on,

24 Ravi Ahuja: *Pathways of Empire. Circulation, "Public Works" and Social Space in Colonial Orissa, c. 1780-1914*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan 2009.

25 Ibid., pp. 3-4.

26 Henri Lefebvre: *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford / Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell 1991 [*La production de l'espace*. Paris: 1974].

27 Ahuja: *Pathways of Empire*, p. 113.

were joined by European trading ships.²⁸ In the course of the consolidation of the dynasties in the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mogul Empires and of the Iberians' expansion into the Atlantic and Indian Oceans since the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Atlantic as well as the Indian Ocean became spaces occupied by the growing number of trading ships. Increasing interaction led to quantitatively and, even more important, qualitatively denser networks that were not based solely on economic ties and that to a great degree developed out of pre-colonial structures.²⁹

Hence, in these emerging imaginative and / or real networks, sub-Saharan, southern Africa has hardly ever been perceived as an active (and attractive) participant and seems to have been, for centuries, only a supplier of millions of slaves to be kidnapped and shipped to the Americas.³⁰ A recent overall study shows that there was a well-organised slave trade in the Indian Ocean as well.³¹ It should be noted in this context that the slave trade indeed played an important economic, social, and not least demographic role in some regions of Africa. Notwithstanding, along with the slave trade, especially in the Indian Ocean, there were much more diverse forms of interregional and intercontinental economic relations. In general, the macro-economic exchange always also contributed to cultural transfers and intertwining. Slave trafficking is not just about the transport of a labour force from one place to another, but also implies the transfer of cult, culture, and creativity as well.

Because of the historical narrative of slavery and of the disease-infested 'black continent' that was veritably carved up between the European imperial powers in the notorious "Scramble for Africa" at

28 Compare Kenneth Pomeranz / Steven Topik: *The World that Trade Created. Society, Culture, and the World Economy*. New York / London: Shape 2006. Jürgen Osterhammel / Niels P. Petersson: *Geschichte der Globalisierung. Dimensionen, Prozesse, Epochen*. München: C. H. Beck 2003.

29 Roderich Ptak: *Die maritime Seidenstraße. Küstenräume, Seefahrt und Handel in vorkolonialer Zeit*. Munich: C. H. Beck 2007; Diogo Ramada Curto / Francisco Bethencourt (eds): *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007.

30 Herbert S. Klein: *The Atlantic Slave Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002.

31 Michael Mann: *Sabibs, Sklaven und Soldaten. Geschichte des Menschenhandels rund um den Indischen Ozean*. Darmstadt: WBG 2011.

the end of the nineteenth century, essential parts of the history of Africa seem to have been lost or subsumed in the colonial-imperial narrative. The world's basically negative image of Africa is only gradually being revised after the founding of independent republics in large parts of the continent.³² African states have their own representatives in the (post-colonial) bodies of world organisations and the demand for their raw materials and energy sources is ever growing.³³ Despite the huge economic and in particular social problems that some states and their governments have to battle with, this old role has taken on new dimensions creating new forms of self-understanding and self-respect as well.

Along with this changing role of Africa as a global player, one can observe an increasing sensitivity to the historical dimension of the seas and of water in general for human history. Although Lewis and Wigen regarded the "maritime approach" as only one of the possible alternatives to area studies, in the meantime, this approach has become ever more relevant. Controlling terrestrial water seems to be a local, bilateral and international problem; the same seems true for estuaries, coastal waters, and the high seas. The contributions in the three-volume series *A History of Water* investigate historical and contemporary dealings with the organisation of water in human societies.³⁴ These studies can serve as spurs to study the cultural history of the oceans, for which the term "invisible continent" has been created.³⁵ In relation to "water management around the globe" and its "water narratives",³⁶ a changed environmental consciousness has emerged recently. Headlines like "Forscher schlagen Alarm. Weltmeere steuern auf Kollaps

32 Leonardo Villalón / Peter Von Doepp (eds): *The Fate of Africa's Democratic Experiments. Elites and Institutions*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2005; Martin Meredith: *The State of Africa. A History of Fifty Years of Independence*. The Free Press 2005.

33 John H. Ghazvinian: *Untapped. The Scramble for Africa's Oil*. Orlando: Harcourt 2007; Duncan Clarke: *Crude Continent: The Struggle for Africa's Oil Prize*. London: Profile Books 2009. African Development Bank / African Union (eds): *Oil and Gas in Africa*. Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press 2009.

34 Terje Tvedt et al. (eds): *A History of Water*, 3 vols. London: Tauris 2006–2011.

35 Marc Muguët: *Après Cousteau. Le futur de l'Océan*. Paris: Éditions Yago 2010.

36 Terje Tvedt: Introduction: Water History is World History. In: Id. / Eva Jakobssen (eds): *A History of Water*, vol. 1: Water Control and River Biographies. London: Tauris 2006, pp. IX–XXIII.

zu”³⁷ (Researchers sound the alarm. Oceans heading for collapse) are no rarity. Pollution by waste discharge, overfishing, garbage disposal, container ship disasters and the rise of the sea level are prominent themes in this discourse about oceans, which Marc Muguët has called the “clef du future”.³⁸ No one can foresee what the polluted water from the nuclear power plant in Fukushima will do to the Pacific Ocean. Genetic analysis of deep-sea giant squid³⁹ and the inauguration of an ocean park, the Great Barrier Reef, declared a Cultural World Heritage by the UNESCO, are new phenomena. In addition to that, we observe such contrastive panoramas of boat people in the Mediterranean, the Caribbean or the Indian Ocean trying to reach more prosperous coasts in dramatic circumstances whereas cruise ships attract more tourists than ever for relaxing during their holidays on these same waters.

3. Literature, Memory, and the Sea

Many studies start by contradicting the term “invisible continent” when addressing the oceanic world. This approach goes together with a broader projection toward the cultural history of the ocean. Rila Mukherjee, for instance, edited the volume *Oceans Connect: Reflections on Water Worlds Across Time and Space*.⁴⁰ Her own contribution has the title “Chasing the Many Faces of the Marine Goddess”,⁴¹ in which she analyses folktales and architectural ornaments. In addition, the terminology of water worlds is also influencing the idiom for all types of communication media and routes, operating with words such as “airport”, “airship”, and “surfing” or “navigating” in the Internet. The construction of a virtual space, in which the oceanic world plays a role, came into being from the sixteenth century on, when an increasing visual and literary construction of these spaces can be observed

37 Weltmeere steuern auf Kollaps zu. <http://www.stern.de/wissen/natur/forscherschlagen-alarm-weltmeere-steuern-auf-kollaps-zu-1697922.html> (accessed February 24, 2014).

38 Marc Muguët: *Après Cousteau*, pp. 293–295.

39 Katharina Dellai-Schöbi: Geheimnisvoller Riesenkalmar. Genanalysen aus der Tiefsee. <http://www.nzz.ch/wissen/wissenschaft/genanalysen-aus-der-tiefsee-1.18065139> (accessed February 24, 2014).

40 Rila Mukherjee (ed.): *Oceans Connect: Reflections on Water Worlds Across Time and Space*. Delhi: Primus Books 2013.

41 Mukherjee: *Après Cousteau*, pp. 39–52.

going far beyond cartography and the first forms of European travel literature.⁴²

Interestingly, in the visual art of the “Dutch Seaborne Empire”,⁴³ seascapes as well as landscapes became autonomous painting genres and were quite successful on the market. This outstanding role of visual technology, the “Art of Describing,”⁴⁴ explains the output from the overseas expedition of Count Maurits von Nassau to Brazil, Latin America, and Africa in the service of the Dutch West India Company from 1637 to 1644, offering a treasure horde of illustrations, paintings, and meticulous descriptions of people and landscapes overseas. Fauna, flora, and nature were depicted, as were the different types of workers. We owe to this collection the first modern city views of Luanda and Recife, the depictions of churches, of houses, and of public places, and the portrayal of different grades of cultural diversity and affiliation.⁴⁵

Today, seas and oceans are conceptualised as shaping entangled realities through the exchange of people, goods, thoughts, and ideas. This dynamic becomes a special dimension in literature and art. The sea as a ‘living entity’ and as an autonomous yet well connected zone of cultural exchange and its own culture was already described in eighteenth-century texts such as Elizabeth Post’s epistolary novel in three volumes *Reinhart, of natuur en godsdienst* (1791–1792), the first 43 letters of which are written by Reinhart on the ship sailing from Holland to Guyana in South America. The author addresses fish as well as birds, and let Reinhart develop his philosophy on divine Creation:

42 Compare for India / Southern Asia Gita Dharampal-Frick: *Indien im Spiegel deutscher Quellen der frühen Neuzeit (1500–1750). Studien zu einer interkulturellen Konstellation*. Tübingen: Niemeyer 1994.

43 C. R. Boxer: *The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600–1800*. London: Penguin 1990 [1965].

44 Svetlana Alpers: *The Art of Describing. Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*. London: Penguin 1989.

45 E. van den Boogaart / H. R. Hoetink / P. J. P. Whitehead (eds): *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen 1604–1679. A Humanist Prince in Europe and Brazil*. The Hague: The Johan Maurits van Nassau Stichting 1979; Pedro Corrêa do Lago / Bia Corrêa do Lago: *Frans Post 1612–1680. Obra Completa*. Rio de Janeiro: Capivara Editora 2006; Rebecca Parker Brien: *Visions of Savage Paradise. Albert Eckhout, Court Painter in Colonial Dutch Brazil*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2006; Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger: *Vision and the Representation of Africans – On Historical Encounters between Science and Art*. In: *History of Philosophy and the Life Sciences* 35 (2013), pp. 53–61.

The journey led through the Canal (Dover), southwards along Madeira, the Canary Islands, from there crossing the Atlantic Ocean in the direction of Guiana. Reinhart describes the sea under variable circumstances, at night and by day, windless or under the burning sun, with mist and storm. He also dedicates a long, partly speculative consideration to underwater life in the ocean. The sea always demonstrates God's greatness, his omnipotence and his goodness. When the ship is at risk, for example in misty weather or during a heavy tempest, Reinhart's fear disappears due to this faith in Providence: if God does not want it, no one can be hurt. Everything on the sea – from the rolling of the waves to the death of a seaman – reminds Reinhart of the vanity of man and creation.⁴⁶

Without a doubt, the sea has been most intensively studied in English-speaking literature and in the tradition of Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* in particular.⁴⁷ We find a syllabus of courses on "The Sea in Nineteenth-Century English and American Literature" in the Internet.⁴⁸ Many essays and much literature deal with the sea, with Melville's famous *Moby Dick* as the foremost example. Following up on this tradition in Anglophone literature, Bernard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun organised two volumes in which they examined the sea as a contact zone, a concept introduced by Mary Louise Pratt in her book *Imperial Eyes*, analysing its role in history.⁴⁹ Numerous authors concentrate on the Caribbean, the Pacific, or the Indian Ocean.⁵⁰ Amitav Ghosh

46 "De reis leidt achtereenvolgens door het Kanaal (Dover), zuidwaarts langs Madeira, de Canarische eilanden; vandaar wordt de Atlantische Oceaan overgestoken richting Guiana. Reinhart beschrijft de zee onder wisselende omstandigheden: bij nacht en dag, bij windstille en brandende hitte, bij mist en bij storm. Ook aan het onderwaterleven in de oceaan wijdt hij een lange, deels speculatieve beschouwing. Altijd demonstreert de zee Gods grootheid, almacht en goedheid. Wanneer het schip risico's loopt, zoals bij mist of zware storm, wordt Reinharts angst weggenomen door zijn vertrouwen in de Voorzienigheid: buiten Gods wil kan er niemand iets overkomen. Van het voortrollen van de golven tot de dood van een matroos doet op zee Reinhart alles herinneren aan de vergankelijkheid van mens en schepping." (Bert A.N. Paasman: *Nederlandse Literatuur en slavernij ten tijde van de Verlichting*. Leiden: Nijhoff 1984, p.13.)

47 Paul Gilroy: *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double-Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1993.

48 The Sea in Nineteenth-Century English and American Literature. <http://www.enotes.com/topics/sea-nineteenth-century-english-and-american/critical-essays> (accessed October 14, 2013).

49 Bernard Klein / Gesa Mackenthun (eds): *Das Meer als kulturelle Kontaktzone. Räume, Reisende, Repräsentationen*. Constance: ULV 2003; Bernard Klein / Gesa Mackenthun (eds): *Sea Changes. Historicizing the Ocean*. New York / London: Routledge 2004; Mary Louise Pratt: *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London / New York: Routledge 1992.

50 *Wasafiri* 66 (2011): Indian Oceans; Elizabeth DeLoughrey: *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Life*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 2007.

traverses the coasts of Southeast Asia in his novels *The Sea of Poppies* and the *River of Smoke*⁵¹ on the ship named *Ibis*, a trilogy whose third volume has not come out yet. In Ghosh's books, the reconstruction of the nineteenth century on the sea powerfully demonstrates the fluid line between legal and illegal situations, the Clash of Civilisations and the Tower of Babel,⁵² the intermediate zone in which people from all places come together with different goals in mind.

The Tower of Babel, of course, was a favorite topos in paintings in Early Modern History. This period created a series of new creole and pidgin languages, which are still spoken today and, in some cases, declared a national language, such as Kapverdianu in Cap Verde and Papiamentu in Curaçao. "The Burden of English"⁵³ becomes more diversified and, in the last decade, several studies address this oceanic connection beyond English-speaking literature, such as *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade* (2008)⁵⁴ by Christopher Miller, which focuses on French literature since the Enlightenment. Miller's chapter on "African 'Silence'" is especially interesting, because he examines the "borderlines between utterance in certain works of Francophone African literature and film that are concerned with the slave trade".⁵⁵

Other books, *The "Air of Liberty". Histories of the South Atlantic Past* and *Historias enredadas. Representaciones asimétricas con vista al Atlántico*⁵⁶ discuss Dutch-, Spanish-, and Portuguese-language entanglements in America and Africa. The volume *Les empires de l'Atlantique (XIXe-XXIe siècles). Figures de l'autorité impériale dans les lettres d'expression européenne de l'espace atlantique*⁵⁷ comprises essays on the Dutch, English, and Portuguese

51 Amitav Ghosh: *The Sea of Poppies*. London: Murray 2008; id.: *River of Smoke*. London: Murray 2011.

52 Beryl Belsky: A Clash of Civilizations: The Ibis Trilogy by Amitav Ghosh. <http://beryl-pieces-asia.blogspot.de> (accessed October 14, 2013).

53 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: The Burden of English. In: Id.: *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*. Cambridge, MA / London: Harvard University Press 2012, pp. 35–56.

54 Christopher L. Miller: *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2008.

55 Miller: *The French Triangle*, p. 364.

56 Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger: *The "Air of Liberty". Histories of the South Atlantic Past*. Amsterdam / New York: Rodopi 2008; ead. (ed.): *Historias enredadas. Representaciones asimétricas con vista al Atlántico*. Berlin: Ed. Tranvía 2011.

57 Yves Clavaron / Jean-Marc Moura (eds): *Les empires de L'Atlantique (XIXe-XXIe siècles). Figures de l'autorité impériale dans les lettres d'expression européenne de l'espace atlantique*. Bécherel: Les Perséides 2012.

sea empires, emphasising the outstanding role of the bestseller novel *The Belly of the Atlantic* by the Senegalese writer Fatou Diome.⁵⁸ And in another collection of essays, *Shifting the Compass: Pluricontinental Connections in Dutch Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*,⁵⁹ the collaborations examine the Dutch- and English-speaking realms, including literature in Afrikaans from South Africa and migrant literatures from Europe.

Obviously, as in historical research, also in literary criticism the intervention of the oceanic world receives more attention. The conceptualisation of this space gives way to a broad disciplinary horizon. A fascinating book that combines history and cultural studies is *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean. Cosmopolitanism, Commerce and Islam*,⁶⁰ by the former director of the Zanzibar Indian Ocean Research Institute, the historian Abdul Sheriff. He refers to Braudel's work to organise his own research on the seamen sailing in a specific wooden boat called the dhow:

The discussion about the development of the dhow has allowed the vehicle to assume a personality of its own. However, we must never forget the people behind the dhow, the lumbermen, who felled the teak forests of Malabar, the dhow builders all around the rim who built dhows, the *nakhodas*, who commanded them, the sailors who manned them, and the passengers who sailed in them across the ocean. Braudel pointed out, "The Mediterranean has no unity but that created by the movements of men, the relationship they imply, and the routes they follow." The same is true of the Indian Ocean. These dhows were commanded and manned by people who were like fish, spending nearly ten months of the year at sea.⁶¹

This quotation gives insights into the multiplicity of disciplines that are involved when beginning to study and understand the oceanic world, and such deliberations were the point of departure for the organisation of the workshop "Beyond the Line" on 22–23 June 2012 at the Institute of Asian- and African Sciences at Humboldt University, Berlin. The idea was to stimulate, in an interdisciplinary setting, some

58 Fatou Diome: *The Belly of the Atlantic*. London: Serpents Tail 2006. The first French edition *Le ventre de l'Atlantique* (Paris: Éditions Anne Carrière) came out in 2003.

59 Jeroen Dewulf / Olf Praamstra / Michiel van Kempen (eds): *Shifting the Compass: Pluricontinental Connections in Dutch Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars 2013.

60 Abdul Sheriff: *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean. Cosmopolitanism, Commerce and Islam*. London: Hurst 2010.

61 Sheriff: *Dhow Cultures*, p. 99.

contemporary discussions of the above mentioned problems in the context of the southern oceans, in order to erode “the line” debate further. The contributions in this volume express some of the general preoccupations. In the first section, “Studying the Ocean”, the subject is life *in* and *on* the water. Georg Berkemer makes a larger theoretical point about the production of historical knowledge with the example of a certain fish (*latimeria chalumnae*), found off the eastern coast of South Africa in 1938 and previously thought to have been extinct. He discusses the question of “discovery” in history and asks for evidence that might testify to earlier knowledge about the existence of this fish, drawing upon a variety of sources and not only upon written documentation.

Michael Mann shifts the focus toward the forms of everyday life and the regularities of life cycles of people during their time “on the water”, be they slaves, coolies, prisoners, or the crew of a ship, and reconstructs their daily behavior, fears, social environment, and occupations. Then Sebastian Prange and Derek Elliot describe the activities of local pirates in the Indian Ocean, who have largely been written out of history until recently. They examine the fragile line between their qualification as criminals or legal entrepreneurs, depending on the historian’s evaluation. Margret Frenz focuses on Indian migration in this same ocean after independence from Great Britain in 1947. In Kenya, some Indian migrants became involved in the process of decolonisation, introducing the *swaraj* concept, the demand for self-rule adopted from Mahatma Ghandi, and maintain a more or less continuous contact with developments in India.

In the second section, “Narrating the Ocean”, literature is a central concern. Frank Schulze-Engler presents a new interdisciplinary project on “Africa’s Asian Options,” in which several area studies centers of the University of Frankfurt am Main are involved. The goal is to center on the seminal role of the larger Indian Ocean region in the twenty-first century globalisation processes. Schulze-Engler argues that in particular the African option has to be reviewed, for which the analysis of literary texts offers an important contribution. In this sense, Ute Fendler opens the window to the sea in fictional works from Mauritius, Madagascar, and Mozambique stating that such a comparative approach is quite new. It raises the question to what degree the

literary constructions of the sea might contribute to the construction of a shared imaginary of the Indian Ocean—and beyond, with the Caribbean.

Fendler's question forms the bridge to the last two presentations, which address the Atlantic Ocean. Ana Sobral emphasises the role of poetry in Angola since the nineteenth century, drawing a line to Agostinho Neto's anti-colonial poetry in the 1950s and 1960s. In this way, she characterises the maritime space as the "ocean of pain" in remembrance of the slave trade of the past, a tradition that is continued in contemporary poetry and the lyrics of rap-musicians, in which contemporary corruption and misgovernment are crucial themes. In the essay about "oceanic modernity", Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger also analyses the memory of the slave trade in recent literature from Angola and Brazil, departing from the depiction of the port cities. Following Carolyn Cartier's argument in "Cosmopolitics and the Maritime World City,"⁶² the entanglements of their cosmopolitan lifestyle develop specific symbolic orientations and multiple interpretations for cultural practices and have significant repercussions in the selected narrative texts.

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62 Carolyn Cartier: Cosmopolitics and the Maritime World City. In: *The Geographical Review* 89,2 (1999), pp. 278–289.