2-15-2016

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Michelle Burnham
Santa Clara University, mburnham@scu.edu

Recommended Citation
Burnham, M. (2016). Oceanic Turns and American Literary History in Global Context. In Hester Blum (Ed.), Turns of Event: Nineteenth-Century American Literary Studies in Motion (pp. 151–171). University of Pennsylvania Press.

Chapter 8

Oceanic Turns and American Literary History in Global Context

MICHELLE BURNHAM

An unusual map titled "Atlantic Ocean, Toscanelli, 1474" appeared in J. G. Bartholomew's 1911 *Literary and Historical Atlas of America*. This composite map superimposes onto a modern cartography of the Atlantic world Toscanelli's premodern map of that same space. The earlier 1474 map was drawn, of course, without any knowledge of the existence of the Americas, and the effects of combining pre-Columbian with post-Columbian geography are both fascinating and disorienting. The large island of Japan (then called Cipangu) hovers over the western half of Mexico, the enormous landmass identified as Cathay (or Northern China) swallows the Aleutians and shoulders its way onto southern Alaska, while a busy constellation of East Indian islands fills up the sea between Manji (or Southern China) and Japan, as well as much of what we now recognize as the Rocky Mountain time zone. Perhaps the most interesting effect of this blended map, however, is the peculiar confusion it creates between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, which appear here to compete for exactly the same water: when we look from the land on the west (or left side of the map), we automatically recognize the Pacific; from the land on the east (or right side), we instantly register that same water as the Atlantic.

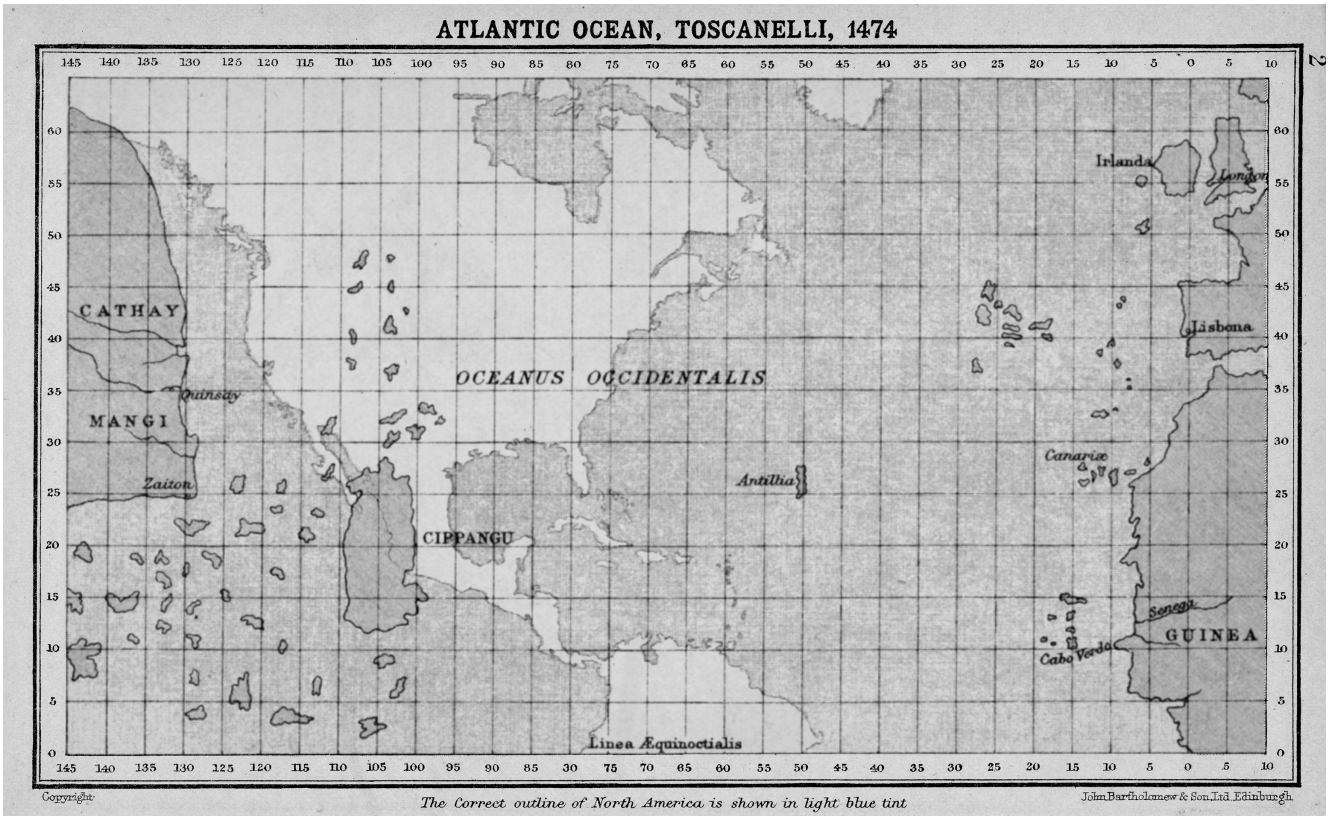

Figure 8.1. "Atlantic Ocean, Toscanelli, 1474." J. G. Bartholomew, *A Literary and Historical Atlas of North and South America* (London: J.M. Dent, 1911; rev. 1930), 201.

Narratives of American literature and history like to begin with what was wrong about this older map, and scholars such as Peter Hulme and others have taught us to understand that it was the power of maps like Toscanelli's that convinced Columbus that Cuba was really Cathay, and that Hispaniola must be Japan.[1] Anecdotes about Columbus's cartographic and continental confusion now usually circulate as humorous early modern warnings about the failure to ask for directions or the humiliating consequences of bad geography. But this perspective only encourages students and scholars alike to ignore what is perhaps most revealing about this story—the incredible intensity of Europe's desire to reach Asia, not only in 1492 but also for centuries after. It is as if the East Indies literally fall off the map as soon as the West Indies appear on them. As a result, the Eastern hemisphere has essentially been exiled from accounts of American literary and cultural history, as a space too impossibly distant and irrelevant to matter. Narratives of American literature conventionally begin with this simultaneous temporal and spatial reorientation set off by the unexpected landfall of 1492, for the historical clock also gets re-set once this geographical space is re-mapped. Recognizing the Americas, in other words, has long meant forgetting Asia—despite the fact that Europe's encounter with America continued in many ways to be managed, understood, and recorded through its sustained interest in reaching the products and markets of the East. This chapter asks what it might mean to recover this wider, transhemispheric, global context for American literary studies, and how a turn toward the oceans might help us get there.

Precisely because the sea offers an alternative dimensionality, what Hester Blum has described as a "methodological model for nonlinear or nonplanar thought," it has the capacity substantially to reorient both the maps and the narratives we use to study, teach, and understand American literary history.[2] As I noted above, the name and identity of the ocean on Bartholomew's map shifts entirely depending on which continental coast one stands on and looks out from. But what if one is positioned instead at sea? How might such an oceanic perspective bring a

global dimension to a literary history that has always been framed in terrestrial terms?

Narrative

The Atlantic world framework that has so powerfully reoriented the field of American studies over the past several decades has already given a new kind of centrality to the ocean. Or so it would seem. As several scholars have pointed out, the apparently aquatic focus on the Atlantic remains in many ways undermined by a residual terrestrialism. Despite Atlanticism's shift from the nation to the ocean, the paradigm is nonetheless sustained by a land-based imaginary in which the ocean figures predominantly as a liquid road that connects solid pieces of land to each other—what Philip E. Steinberg describes as "a space of connection that merely unifies the societies on its borders." The result is too often an Atlantic in which one "never gets wet" or an approach to oceanic studies that, in Kären Wigen's words, "rarely peers beneath the waves."[3] This Atlantic model limitation might be extended to its Pacific and Indian Ocean counterparts, each of which likewise positions a major ocean at the liquid center of a transnational, transcultural, and multilingual world, rimmed and held together by a container of land.[4] Indeed, these models might be better labeled with Felipe Fernández-Armesto's term "rimlands" to describe those stretches of "land at the water margin," spaces devoid of that "complex, four-dimensional materiality" so evocatively tied to oceanic space itself.[5] But another result of this rimlands emphasis is to disconnect the oceans from each other, an especially strange effect considering that the movement of oceanic water mostly merges, melds, and mixes with more water—with bays and inlets, with rivers, gulfs and seas, but also with other oceans. Alison Games has insisted that "It is time to restore the ocean to Atlantic history," and I suggest that the best way of doing so may be to restore the Atlantic itself to its global transoceanic connections.[6]

The extraordinary appeal of Atlantic studies might be identified less with its ocean, then, than with the ready-made transnationalism its rimlands focus makes possible. Unlike an earlier nation-centered model of literary history, transatlanticism positions America within an Atlantic rimland characterized by an extraordinary multiplicity of national, cultural, and linguistic traditions. The effect of this reorientation is especially visible in the by now routine inclusion of translated colonial Spanish, French, Dutch, and Portuguese texts alongside colonial English writings in anthologies of American literature. But as Ralph Bauer has noted, there is a curious partiality to these selections, for they are invariably limited to descriptions of lands that would later come to be part of the current United States, excluding work (even sometimes by the same author or from the same text) describing lands that are now outside U.S. boundaries.[7] In other words, beneath the apparent transnationalism of our current anthologies persists a residual nationalism. This residual nationalism cooperates, I suggest, with the residual terrestrialism Steinberg identifies in current Atlantic studies work, for anthology selections that favor depictions of U.S. lands obviously already favor depictions of land itself, despite the fact that a large number of these early texts are taken up by extensive passages describing sea travel. My point here is not really one about narrative inclusion but rather one about narrative dimensionality. A shift from a rimlands to a transoceanic context would exchange a linear or planar narrative for a multidimensional one that emphasizes America's ongoing material connectedness with the rest of the globe.

The limitations of linear terrestriality as a framework for American literary history become even more evident in those anthology sections devoted to representing texts published after the colonial period, when the non-English texts and traditions that enrich the early pages of most contemporary American literature anthologies disappear altogether. As one approaches, more or less, the magical date of 1776, these transnational and multilingual beginnings suddenly become moored on the familiar monolinguistic and nationalist sandbar of the American Revolution. Bauer observes that the multilingual and transnational representation of colo-

nial texts "vanishes into thin air after the initial phase of the European discoveries and conquests has been completed," a disappearance that moreover implies the absence of non-English-speaking peoples and their experiences from subsequent American literary and cultural history.[8] In other words, American literary history is at once grounded by a spatial imagination that is land-based and tethered to a temporal logic that remains nation-centered in large part because its central narrative remains revolution-centered. As I have argued elsewhere, revolution itself is routinely narrativized in almost exclusively national terms.[9] Indeed, the American Revolution functions something like the temporal counterpart to American continental space on Toscanelli's map: it is an obstacle as much as an opportunity, a highly productive resource that is also an astonishingly blinding roadblock. Together, the terrestriality of the continent and the temporality of the Revolution ground a fundamentally linear national narrative that both retrospectively and prospectively shapes the story of American literary and cultural history.

The traditional classroom pedagogical tools used to teach American literature—the survey and the anthology—both still overwhelmingly bear the residual armature of this older, linear narrative dominated by the nation, however many multicultural and transnational modifications have since been surgically grafted onto it.[10] Sarah Rivett identifies what is at stake in this persistence when she notes that the traditional narrative about American exceptionalism continues to be happily claimed and reinforced by the political Right in the United States, perhaps especially in the absence of any compelling alternatives to it. She argues that scholars and teachers of American literature currently

> see the arc from the Puritans to the present day as potentially useful in the classroom but too teleological and too singular for our scholarship. Narrative and genealogical histories of America from the colonial period to the present day have become increasingly elusive with the transnational, hemispheric, Atlantic, and comparative conceptual frameworks that we have all

> come to accept as not only more historically accurate but also politically efficacious.[11]

Rivett's observation suggests that while these newer models have allowed for various *remappings* of American literature, history, and culture, they have not yet generated any postnational *narratives* of American literary history in its long form; we've not yet translated these maps into story (see Martin Brückner's chapter in this volume on critical "remappings"). Doing so, I suggest, requires not just changing the protagonist of this story (replacing the nation with, for example, religion) but changing its narrative form. What if our literary and cultural histories of America began not with the "discovery" of land but with the movement of water? What if we emphasize not what was wrong about Toscanelli's older map, but what may be unintentionally right about Bartholomew's disorientingly layered map, which presents us with an image of transoceanic connection over the space of an America that is both in the middle of it all and yet not quite there?[12] A focus on transoceanic connection across a half-present continent might provide a way into an alternative narrative that accounts for the movement of and resistance to global empires by tracking the transportation and translation of goods, bodies, and texts through and across terraqueous space.

A global framework that acknowledges the intercontinental and transoceanic context for American literature and culture would emphasize that sea travel has materially connected continents, peoples, and products from the colonial period to the present day; that the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans (as well as the Caribbean and Mediterranean Seas) were tied to each other through exploration, empire, and commerce; and that indigenous peoples both participated in and vigorously resisted all three. A transoceanic turn that moves toward imagining American literary history in the context of the planet's multiple, and interconnected, oceans might change the way we think about space, about archives, about materiality, textuality, and translation. But it might also allow us to position American literature within a global literary history

by narrating a story about the connections between America and its writing with the rest of world.

Geography

An American literary history framed within a transoceanic global context would combine the materialist commitments of world-systems theory and global history with the maritime emphasis of oceanic studies and empire studies. As historian Peter Coclanis observes, the "degree of separation between the 'Atlantic World' and the rest of the world is chronically overstated," and in a recent interview titled "Are We All Global Historians Now?" David Armitage more specifically suggests that "one of the futures of Atlantic history is precisely joining it to other oceanic and trans-regional histories" in order to "think about the interrelations between these oceanic arenas and how in some sense they add up to a global or proto-global history." Americanist scholars like Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Antonio Benítez-Rojo have begun to point in this direction by recognizing the ways in which the administrative coordinates and material networks of early modern empires linked multiple oceans—as Spain, for example, moved resources extracted from both the Atlantic and the Pacific through Mexico and the Caribbean.[13] The work of global historians makes it clear that connections between the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific waterworlds were moreover forged and maintained as a way of reaching another ocean altogether—the Indian Ocean, whose trading networks, ports, and goods dominated global trade not only at the time of Columbus's voyages but for centuries beyond. As Robert Marks puts it, it was the Indian Ocean that at this time figured as "the most important crossroads for global exchanges of goods, ideas, and culture, with China, India, and the Islamic Near and Middle East meeting there as the major players, and Europe a peripheral, marginal player trying desperately to gain access to the sources of wealth generated in Asia." Enrique Dussel likewise emphasizes that Europe's eventual cen-

trality within the modern/colonial world-system arrived only as an unexpected result of its desperate efforts to reach China and India by a western oceanic route that happened to lead Europeans into resource-rich continents they hadn't known existed. Such accounts offer an important geographical and historical extension to a Wallersteinian model of a capitalist world-system that is often assumed only to begin spatially with Europe and temporally in 1492.[14]

In fact, even when astonishing mineral resources were discovered in the Americas, they were primarily of interest as a ticket that finally gained Spain access to highly coveted Asian ports and trade goods.[15] The Spanish galleon trade that connected the Atlantic and Pacific as early as 1565 transported silver mined in Mexico or Peru and exchanged it in the Philippine markets of Manila or Cavite for products like silks, spices, and porcelain that arrived there from China and India. The ships that carried these sought-after goods from the East also carried Chinese, Filipino, and Indian sailors and slaves, at least some of whom ended up in the Americas, in locations like Mexico or Louisiana or California.[16] The Spanish galleon trade generated two centuries of histories and archives of writing that have hardly begun to be recovered, much less read together with literatures of the Spanish Americas or of the British and Dutch Atlantic slave trades.

Spain was hardly alone among European nations in persisting in its goal of reaching Asia by connecting oceans. The transoceanic voyages of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century privateers like Francis Drake, Woodes Rogers, and William Dampier pursued, on behalf of the English crown, the wealth transported from Asia on Spanish ships. These journeys documented movements between such far-flung sites as Puerto Rico, Virginia, the Bahamas, Mexico, Panama, Campeachy, Peru, California, Guam, the Molucca islands, China, Australia, Sumatra, Juan Fernandez Island, Ecuador, and the Bahamas. But as they did so they occupied a largely liquid terrain whose nameless locations were (and still remain) nearly impossible for readers to imagine or differentiate from each other outside the abstract orientations of latitude and longitude.

Similarly, seventeenth-century Dutch explorers like Jacob Roggoveen, Willem Shouten, and Jacob LeMaire generated accounts of maritime exploration to and between the Falkland Islands, Cape Horn, Chile, Easter Island, and Indonesia. Russians arrived in the north Pacific in the early eighteenth century and eventually reached as far as Fort Ross in northern California in pursuit of the fur trade with China, inspiring Spain's response in the form not only of competing voyages but the California mission system's attempts to lay claim to Pacific coast territory and control over the region's indigenous peoples. Subsequent French and English expeditions finally tapped into the riches of the East by virtue of this lucrative Pacific fur trade, facilitated by northwest coast natives and Aleutian and Kodiak islanders, to trade with the Chinese for the fine porcelains, silks, and teas that ended up in markets, shops, homes, and books throughout the Americas as well as Europe.

Accounts of such exchanges and discoveries circulated widely in the many eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century reprints and translations of global circumnavigations by the Englishmen Cook and Vancouver, the French expeditions by Lapérouse and Bougainville, and Spanish voyages by Maurelle and Bodega. These were in turn followed up by countless commercial voyages from Europe and the United States in pursuit of such oceanic commodities as fur, whales, sandalwood, and sea cucumber. The texts that document this laborious and often violent movement of bodies, goods, and ships represent a centuries-long transnational archive of waterlogged writing that remains excluded from a simultaneously terrestrialized and nationalized American literary history. These unfamiliar texts moreover provide access to the materialist transoceanic contexts for much more familiar writing, for those texts that we have in many cases been looking at for a long time. Jim Egan, for example, has identified a profound engagement with the East in the texts of such colonial writers as John Smith and Anne Bradstreet, while Geoffrey Sanborn has brought to light the Pacific influences on and context for James Fenimore Cooper's otherwise landlocked novel *Last of the Mohicans*.[17] Such transoceanic movement can be inscribed in as mundane a moment as

the description in Catherine Maria Sedgwick's 1824 historical romance *Hope Leslie* of John Winthrop's Boston home, which contains "great looking-glasses, turkey carpets, window-curtains and valance, picture and a map, a brass clock, red leather back chairs, a great pair of andirons," and whose pantry is stuffed with "Madeira wine, prunes, marmalade, silver-tankards and wine-cups."[18] Governor Winthrop dines here with his family, several recently arrived English colonists, the Narragansett chief Miantonomo, his councilors, and an interpreter. In this brief passage, global relations between laborers, traders, sailors, financiers, and consumers are embedded in the imported foreign objects among which local New England colonial negotiations take place. What kinds of linguistic contacts, acts of force and violence, and financial mechanisms across oceans brought these objects and people to John Winthrop's imagined dining room? How might that thick network of contacts, exchanges, and movements provide a context in which to understand literary genre, linguistic style, prose aesthetics, and book form?

This long history of transoceanic, global empires also suggests why—even three centuries after the Columbian arrival—nearly every European nation was still sending ships to find the imagined route of a "Northwest passage" through the North American continent to the Pacific. Although the late eighteenth century is routinely associated with revolution and nation-building in the Atlantic, it was also characterized by an enormous surge in Pacific voyages. In the South Pacific as well, those same European nations continued, for far longer than was reasonable, to seek a fabled "great Southern continent" whose resources and commercial value were expected to eclipse that of the American colonies. Like the account of Columbus asking an Arawak Indian how to get to the Chinese palace of the Grand Khan, these stories tend to get dismissed as ridiculous navigational follies and geographical fantasies, but in fact they provide striking evidence of the extraordinary commercial commitments by early modern global empires to reaching the markets and products of the East, efforts that folded the Americas—and writing about the Americas—into transoceanic networks. American literary his-

tory has been dominated by a land-revolution-nation matrix whose almost gravitational force has kept scholars from recognizing an alternative ocean-empire-globe paradigm. Along the way, it has also prevented us from asking what revolutionary nation-building and transoceanic commerce-building might have to do with each other.

Recently, planetary models for an American literary history have offered compelling alternatives to the global, in part by adding to this extensive horizontal reach a vertical dimension that takes into account the biospheric interrelations of human with other life forms, expanding to include that dimension Robert Cox describes as constituting a "thin envelope encompassing the planet from the upper atmosphere to the seabeds." Joyce Chaplin, for example, argues that the recent focus on globalization has prevented our attention to the history of planetary awareness that dates back to the circumnavigation narratives of the 1500s. In contrast to a global emphasis on the social, she advocates for a planetary focus on the physical that might supplant a possessive nationalism and lead Americans instead to take "the physical Earth seriously as an expression of its world-wide obligations and privileges."[19] Chaplin's advocacy of a planetary over a global turn allows her to emphasize the ecological concerns of the former too often clouded by the economic emphasis of the latter.

Wai Chee Dimock similarly advocates a planetary model for American literary study that quickly distinguishes its orientation from the global approaches of Wallerstein, whose focus on the capitalist world-system she eschews for "other phenomena, not reducible to capitalism." Dimock zooms in from Franco Moretti's distance reading approach to engage with "the phenomenal world of particular texts," locating a stunning history of global textual exchange, influence, and translation, especially among nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts.[20] But as Gretchen Murphy has pointed out, the networks of books and readers that emerge from this planetary phenomenalism leave out both those "forms of culture that might not make it onto library shelves and the material forces that channel circuits of culture." The resulting model is one that risks

engaging in what Trish Loughran describes as a "transhistorical act of reading across space and beyond local time" and that comes to resemble the detached and transcendent qualities of Emerson's transparent eyeball.[21] In other words, an exclusive emphasis on the histories of reading and the movement of texts overlooks the multidimensional oceanic materiality to which world-systems theory and global history remain committed.

Indeed, one might argue that this contest between global and planetary frameworks is a false one that asks scholars to choose between ecological and economic orientations, when the two forces remain fundamentally and critically intertwined. It is, of course, impossible to separate the social and economic relations of a capitalist world-system from the mechanisms by which some books (and not others) get transported onto library shelves around the world, just as it is impossible to separate the environmental destruction Chaplin and others are so right to deplore from the economic relations that lead to such results. Recent news stories about the movement of predatory air-breathing Asian fish into the waterways of New York or the arrival of a Japanese dock encrusted with radioactive sea life on the coast of Oregon point toward the combination of economic and environmental, manmade and natural, forces that tie the social and the physical worlds to each other. Global history and world-systems theory can bring an oceanic materiality to bear on an otherwise transcendental textuality, making the stories we tell about America and the maps on which we chart them far more watery ones than they have been.

Translation

A more specifically oceanic literary history would draw attention not only to the transportation of commodities, bodies, and raw materials (and to the residues of that movement left behind in character, setting, plot, and theme) but to the material movement and circulation of texts.

Oceans are spaces with little regard for the coherence of national languages or claims to textual originality, and a more aquatic (or at least more amphibian) orientation to literary history demands our engagement with underexplored archives, with translations, with reprints, with periodical circulation. Meredith McGill recognizes a reprint culture in which "authorship is not the dominant mode of organizing literary culture" and in which "texts with authors' names attached take their place alongside anonymous, pseudonymous, and unauthorized texts." Reprint studies aim to recover those texts that evade terrestrial boundary lines and inhabit the submerged underside of the "author-centered literary nationalisms" with which literary history has traditionally been preoccupied.[22] Reprints, abridged editions, and pirated texts are the literary historical versions of sunken ships, drowned bodies, jetsam. Translations, too, are akin to textual castaways left behind for their presumed lack of authenticity in relation to an "original," to whose language and meaning they can be quite egregiously unfaithful. Because translations say as much if not more about the translator than they do about the text translated, they have traditionally invited scholarly skepticism and avoidance. But these textual categories gain new relevance if we understand literary history in the way James Clifford has taught us to think about cultures: not only as fixed in place, like continental land, but as moving about like a ship or like the unstable multidimensionalities of water, whose currents, waves, and tides possess at once regularity and unpredictability. Clifford argues that anthropology has privileged the village as the authentic site of a culture, ignoring the often far-flung reaches of a culture's own travels. If we think of a textual original as the literary historical equivalent to Clifford's "authentic" anthropological village, then that text's many translations, reprints, and rogue editions are the equivalent of his hotel lobbies and airport terminals (or, in oceanic terms, ship decks, holds, and ports) around the globe—sites through which texts (like cultures) travel, and in response to which they change in selective and adaptive ways. Epeli Hau'ofa has made precisely this argument in describing Pacific cultures as continually traversing "national

boundaries, the international dateline, and the equator," moving through "seaports and airports throughout the Central Pacific." Hau'ofa's vision of Oceania as a "sea of islands" recognizes the oceanic multidimensionality of a "universe comprised not only [of] land surfaces but the surrounding ocean as far as they could traverse and exploit it, the underworld with its fire-controlling and earth-shaking denizens, and the heavens above with their hierarchies of powerful gods and named stars and constellations that people could count on to guide their ways across oceans."[23]

Of course, it bears remembering that our current anthologies already traffic considerably in translation, nowhere more than in their colonial selections. Colleen Boggs compellingly argues for the centrality of translation to a transnational American literature, and emphasizes the ways translation "may defamiliarize the domestic and erode the very borders of linguistic distinction."[24] This framework might be extended to include transoceanic networks between Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian waterworlds that in turn transport texts and inspire translations, of which we have many. Such a perspective also offers a reprieve to scholarly objections that the limits of our linguistic competence and geographical knowledge impede any rigorous transatlantic or hemispheric approach.[25] Those concerns would seem only to be impossibly exacerbated by a global transoceanic scope that includes not only Spanish and French (the more traditional Atlantic partners to English), but Russian and Chinese and Dutch texts as well as the astoundingly diverse oral cultures of native peoples—from the Kamchatka peninsula in Siberia, to Cavite in the Philippines, the Hawaiian islands, the Pacific northwest coast, Acapulco, Chile, Polynesia, New Zealand, Goa, as well as equally far-ranging Atlantic locations. Rather than resign before the stumbling blocks of linguistic facility or geographical expertise, we might turn to the paired oceanic practices of translation and transportation as productive responses to them.[26]

Christopher Columbus's fifteenth-century confusion between Asian and Antillean islands might be ascribed to the botched spatial translation embedded in Toscanelli's map. But as Elizabeth DeLoughrey ob-

serves, this interoceanic Atlantic-Pacific overlap was repeated many times over, perhaps most famously by Daniel Defoe's 1719 *Robinson Crusoe*.[27] The English story of Alexander Selkirk (first told by privateer Woodes Rogers) is usually nominated as Defoe's crucial predecessor. But unlike Crusoe, Selkirk was discovered not in the Atlantic or Caribbean but in the Pacific, on the island of Juan Fernandez off the coast of Chile. To complicate matters even farther, Selkirk's story was preceded by an earlier one recorded by William Dampier about his crew's recovery of a Mosquito Indian who had been abandoned, also on Juan Fernandez Island. A more comprehensively global literary history, however, would have to begin even earlier and farther away, with a fourteenth-century Arabic text by Ibn Tufayl that tells the story of a "self-taught philosopher" who grew up alone on a deserted island in the Indian Ocean. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* was translated into Latin and Dutch before appearing in several English translations in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, after which it generated an extraordinary number of imitations, revisions, and adaptations—including such Atlantic stories about shipwrecks and islands as Ambrose Evans's 1719 *The Adventures, and Surprizing Deliverances, of James Dubordieu and His Wife*, Penelope Aubin's 1721 *The Strange Adventures of the Count de Vinevil and His Family*, and the anonymous 1767 *The Female American*. An even longer and wider literary history, however, would be compelled to track the drifting and turbulent locations for these water-soaked stories into the Indian and Pacific oceans.[28]

It may seem that these texts simply pick up their islands and move them from one ocean to another. But the experience of reading these texts alongside each other suggests a different dimensionality of movement altogether, one in which the islands stay in place while the globe repeatedly turns around them, situating each story within a new body of water. Read within an oceanic rather than terrestrial logic, these texts escape both the stable fixity provided by anchors and the satisfying linearity of the chains or ropes that hold them; instead, their relations collaborate in a literary history whose form emphasizes the fluidity, mobil-

ity, and inconsistency of water over the firm certainty and singularity of land. Such a narrative engages with the shifts and spirals of what Kaumu Brathwaite describes as tidalectics when he sees a Jamaican woman ritually sweeping her doorstep and suddenly recognizes her as walking on water rather than sand, "travelling across that middlepassage, constantly coming from where she had come from—in her case Africa—to this spot in North Coast Jamaica." The spatial and temporal curvature of this tidalectic movement is "like the movement of the ocean she's walking on, coming from one continent/continuum, touching another, and then receding ('reading') from the island(s) into the perhaps creative chaos of the(ir) future."[29] DeLoughrey describes Brathwaite's tidalectics as "an 'alter/native' historiography to linear models of colonial progress" that resist "the synthesizing telos of Hegel's dialectic by drawing from a cyclical model, invoking the continual movement and rhythm of the ocean" and argues that it is precisely such a model that is needed to read transoceanic archives. Translations and adaptations similarly traffic in the indeterminate regions outside definitive authorship, beyond the anchored certainties of geographical location, national identity, and determinate authorship. The relations between these texts compose an international, multilingual, and transoceanic narrative in which categorical belonging and national groundedness dissolve in an oceanic logic of shift and flux that refuses the "myth of island isolation."[30]

Some may argue that such global reach has dangerously spongelike properties that threaten to absorb into American literary history a great many texts that belong instead to other national traditions of writing. Such a claim would be right if "American" signals a national identity governed by a terrestrial logic. Of course, American literary history already violates this national-territorial logic by including in current anthologies colonial writers, many of whom wrote in places other than America and in languages other than English, and few if any of whom identified as American. But "American" might signal instead a particular spatial orientation within a global geography governed by a logic of oceanic movement, by a dynamics of blending and flux rather than one of boundaries

and possession. Indeed, texts like the diaries of Christopher Columbus, the narratives of the *Jesuit Relations*, or the novels of Susanna Rowson bear just such an oceanic and imperial, rather than a terrestrial or national, relation to America. Importing transoceanic multidimensionalities into a globalized American literary history is neither to assign to texts some kind of American identity nor to claim some kind of American possession of them (for indeed they simultaneously belong to other globalized literary histories that remain centered elsewhere), but it is to insist on the complex material connections that entwine America with the world. Only by attending to the transoceanic movement of ships, labor, and books might we understand, for example, how the East Indian man in Susanna Rowson's remarkably nonlinear novel *The Inquisitor* came to be begging on the streets of London, much less how this narrative later circulated in Philadelphia when it was published there in 1793. Such a perspective also brings into view a forgotten text like *The Adventures of Hildebrand Bowman*, written and published anonymously in England in 1778, which describes an Englishman's fantastical travels through the South Pacific. This novel does not take place in America, was never printed in America, and does not include any characters who identify as American, but it does include a scarcely veiled allegory of the American Revolution in its account of an uprising by the imaginary Pacific colony called Armoseria against the empire of Luxo-volupto. While neither terrestrially bound to the continent nor politically bound to the nation in the way we imagine the contemporaneous writings of, say, Benjamin Franklin or Phillis Wheatley to be, *The Adventures of Hildebrand Bowman* bears a transoceanic relation to America that has something critical to say about empire, revolution, and American literary and cultural history.

Global models for American literary history have often been met with concerns about categorical absorption on the one hand and categorical dissolution on the other. The first worries about the potential disappearance of the rest of the world within an expanding category named America, while the second worries about the disappearance of America

as a distinct and meaningful category. The first can be thought of as the "we are the world" problem, or the sense that global expansion is a disciplinary expression of American empire, yet another American act of claiming ever more of the world for itself. The second wonders instead whether there is any longer a discernible America or American literature, as the boundaries between it and the rest of the world and its texts become increasingly blurred. In response to both of these anxieties, we might turn again to Bartholomew's strange map to see the shadowy presence of the Americas beneath conjoined oceanic waters as a visual representation of a globalized literary history in which the nation is decentered, the continent itself half drowned. The map's orientation alone gives it an American perspective, a perspective that might easily be rotated or adjusted to align with a different geographical perspective (an English or African or Chinese literary history, for example) and its attendant aquatic contexts. But much like the island castaway stories described above, these literary histories invariably overlap, blend, and mix.

Miles Ogborn has offered three epistemological approaches to Atlantic studies that might also be seen as three modes of narration: the survey, the network, and the trace. The survey attempts to encapsulate or accommodate the whole, and depends on territorialized maps of continental land. The network depends instead on the work of comparison, and replaces the "surveyor's map" with "a skein of lines and points" that represent routes and ports—a version, perhaps, of the rhizomatic or fractal designs several scholars have advocated for Atlantic or global studies. The trace, on the other hand, is a kind of microhistory in which small-scale intimacies and large-scale developments intersect—stories, for instance, of the slave trade, or naturalists, or political radicals. Atlantic traces are for Ogborn underscored by "violence, friendship, love, and labour" and are characterized by what Joseph Roach has termed "surrogation," or collective attempts to fill in the narrative and material spaces left vacant by death, loss, and departure.[31] Transoceanic narratives of literary history might be thought to locate such traces of historical surrogation while also continuing the work of surrogation—not to fix literary

history into any final or even definitive form, but to add new dimensions and materialities that may well deform the familiar or the stable. Matt Matsuda has argued that "refashioning" the narratives of Pacific history "will be the work that runs below and through islands and continents connected by water, spaces, times, and places that in their multiple conjunctures define the histories of an Oceanic Pacific," and we might simply stretch this claim and its image across the globe and its waters.[32]

A transoceanic American literary studies does not insist that there is anything particularly or uniquely American about the texts it studies, but it does insist that this larger archive and context must be taken into account in any attempt to rewrite American literary history in relation to the globe. It asks us to imagine America as both there and not there, at once central to and yet profoundly decentered from the globe and its connections, part of both Atlantic and Pacific waterworlds that are in turn linked to other seas and oceans. Monique Allewaert has suggested that the image of a continentally coherent North America has dominated conceptions of American literary history, and offers in its place the image of a dissolving continent, a landmass that is instead fragmented by "a liquefying natural world."[33] I would like to think of Bartholomew's map as one representation of that possibility. A transoceanic version of American literary history might accommodate some of the best features of both the Atlantic studies and the hemispheric paradigms. It might also allow the multinational and multilingual commitments of earlier, colonial American literary history to be sustained not only on the other side of the American revolution, but right through it, much as the merged waters of the Atlantic-Pacific on Bartholomew's map have a certain blithe disregard for the continent. If this model leaves America as a nation at times strangely displaced from its own narrative, it also ties America and its literature to the world through its materialist relations with the globe's often overwhelming and far-flung network of routes and relations. Steinberg argues that the sea is not "an abstract point on a grid" but must instead be recognized for the material relations otherwise obscured by precisely such a perspective.[34] An oceanic literary history must

remain committed to recognizing and tracing those material relations, even and particularly when they do not conform to linear narrative forms.

In this chapter, I have nominated water as a material in which simultaneously to remap and renarrativize American literatures in global context. Whether we ultimately maintain or abandon the familiar tools of literary surveys and anthologies, we do need to challenge the assumption of both that any expansion of scope means covering, including, or accumulating more.[35] We need to replace a terrestrial model of stockpiling texts with an oceanic one of exploring them. Historian Thomas Bender writes that the global approach "is not in any way a brief for writing global histories"—or, I would add, in the case of English studies, for writing histories of world literature. "The point is not to displace the monograph," he continues, "only to thicken the layers of context it incorporates."[36] Bender's language of layering here might be supplemented with the drifting, blending, and mixing qualities of water, by the liquid properties of four-dimensional fluidity. It is not that we need to understand the world before we can understand a text, or that we should all now write histories of world literature. Instead, we should read a text so that we are able to locate the world, the materiality of intercontinental and transoceanic connection and circulation, within it. Doing so means heading into oceans, and recognizing the routes across as well as between them, their surfaces as well as their depths and dimensions. American literature is and always has been connected to the world—commercially, politically, and textually—and is bound in surprisingly intimate ways with places and peoples at great distances away. These material connections are recorded in the content, publication, and circulation of texts, and in the bodies, materials, and goods that circulate with them. Our task should be to locate and analyze the multidimensional materialities of these historical, cultural, and literary networks in order to tell stories about the connections between America and the rest of the world—what they have been, what they are now, and what they might be in the future.